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Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

ENTHUSIASM AND CHARISMATIC MANIFESTATIONS IN
SABBATARIAN ADVENTISM WITH APPLICATIONS
FOR THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
OF THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
James Michael Wilson

June 1995

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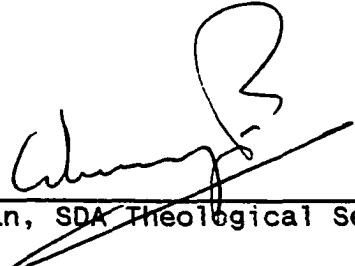
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James Michael Wilson

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:


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May 3, 1995
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ABSTRACT

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by

James Michael Wilson

Adviser: George R. Knight

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: ENTHUSIASM AND CHARISMATIC MANIFESTATIONS IN
SABBATARIAN ADVENTISM WITH APPLICATIONS FOR THE
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF THE LATE TWENTIETH
CENTURY

Name of researcher: James Michael Wilson

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Ed.D.

Date completed: June 1995

Task

It was the purpose of this study to discover what charismatic manifestations were extant among the Sabbatarian Adventists and to determine why those manifestations decreased. This information was then analyzed in the light of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the late twentieth century in order to find ways of stimulating spirituality and a healthy approach to the Holy Spirit and charismatic manifestations.

Method

The historical section of this project focused on the charismatic manifestations and enthusiasm of the Sabbatarian Adventists between the Great Disappointment of 1844 and the development in formal organization in 1861. The types of experiences of this period were dealt with topically, not chronologically. The study used a documentary/historical approach based on both published and unpublished primary and secondary sources. The second half of the project proposed a practical plan for the application of the findings for the church today.

Findings and Conclusions

It was found that the Sabbatarian Adventists believed that the Holy Spirit was the cause of charismatic manifestations such as visions, healings, melting power, slaying power, shouting, weeping, impressions, dreams, and feelings of freedom, liberty, joy, and peace. True charismatic manifestations were a result of reaching out to God in prayer, confession, and submission to Him. False manifestations could be generated through human effort. Nine possible reasons were given for the decline of charismatic experiences.

People of the 1990s were found to have a desire for supernatural, experiential religion. This desire could be met with a prayer meeting styled after that of the Sabbatarian Adventists. The content and format of an experiential prayer meeting was discussed.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this dissertation is to discover what charismatic manifestations were extant among early Sabbatarian Adventists, and to recognize what they believed to be the source of those manifestations. The paper also attempts to determine why those manifestations decreased. This information is then analyzed in the light of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the late twentieth century in order to find ways of stimulating spirituality and a healthy approach to spiritual gifts.

The dissertation begins in chapter 1 by examining enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations among American Christians in the decades prior to the rise of Sabbatarian Adventism. American Christianity was strongly experiential in character during this period, and many Christians expected to sense God's presence in their meetings. This paper shows that the leaders of the Sabbatarian Adventists were very much a part of the revivalistic, enthusiastic, and charismatic mainstream of their time.

Chapter 2 catalogs the various charismatic and enthusiastic actions of Sabbatarian Adventists, which they believed to be a result of God's presence among them. These actions include the more dramatic, such as visions,

as well as the not so obvious, such as a sense of liberty in speaking. The Sabbatarian Adventist understanding of the difference between true manifestations of the Holy Spirit and fanaticism is also treated in chapter 2.

Chapter 3 then explores sociological and religious reasons that may have been responsible for the decline of charismatic manifestations among Sabbatarian Adventists. One of the possible reasons for the decline is the large number of cases of fanaticism that threatened to discredit the work of God. Another reason may be that emotional expression was becoming less and less socially acceptable through the 1850s and 1860s. Chapter 3 then shows that there is a felt need for experience among the people of the late twentieth century.

Early Sabbatarian Adventist actions and spirituality are used in chapter 4 as a basis for suggesting a model for revival in the church in the late twentieth century. Essential elements of experiential religion are delineated and explained. Suggestions are then given to aid in teaching experiential religion in the church. Several topics are suggested with appropriate content, which may aid in fostering a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Studying these topics may also prepare church members to allow the Holy Spirit to empower them in ways they may have not yet imagined possible.

In chapter 5 an example is given of the results of teaching and modeling experiential religion. In a church in Brazil I found that teaching and modeling experiential religion in a prayer meeting led to the experience of the presence of God and to manifestations of His presence.

I am indebted to Dr. George Knight for his guidance through this project. I also wish to thank my wife, Kathy, who encouraged me at each step.

PART ONE
HISTORICAL STUDY

CHAPTER I

ENTHUSIASM AND CHARISMATIC MANIFESTATIONS IN THE BACKGROUND OF SABBATARIAN ADVENTISM

Revivalism, Methodism, camp meetings, and Millerite Adventism strongly influenced Sabbatarian Adventist practice. This first chapter chronicles the existence of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations in these selected areas of American religion. Revivalism was an important force in shaping American religious practice. It also had a strong impact on Sabbatarian Adventism.

Revivalism

Many American settlers tended to be individualists, carving out an existence from untamed nature. They came to America to find freedom of worship. They believed in themselves and in their ability to think and to do. Under the force of this pioneer spirit, the Calvinistic determinism of the Puritans became modified in the direction of Arminianism and freedom of the will, opening the door to the preaching of repentance as the immediate duty of every sinner. Beginning with Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, William and Gilbert Tennent, and Jonathan Edwards in the 1730s, revival preaching became the primary means of attracting members to the voluntary

church system on American soil. Alternately scolding and cajoling, threatening with hellfire and offering salvation through immediate repentance, the revival preachers brought their hearers to an intellectual as well as an emotional encounter with eternal realities. Religion became a personal concern, and salvation depended upon individual decision.¹

Pietism was at the heart of revivalism in America.

Pietism is

a type of religion which places the principal emphasis upon what is often termed the religion of the heart, rather than a religion of the head. It is a religion which appeals primarily to the emotions. Its principal theme is redemption for individuals. Its object is to awaken men and women to a personal repentance.²

Jonathan Edwards was a spokesman for emotional religion in the first great revival in America. He considered religion to be an inner experience. Conversion, however, would often be sensed through what he termed "comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance with God." Some of the outward physical evidences of conversion were tears, laughter, loud weeping, and crying-out with a loud voice. Some thought that he should isolate those who were physically exercised in the process of conversion, but Edwards considered this "news of

¹William Warren Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840 (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1963), 146.

²William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America, Its Origin, Growth, and Decline (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 24, 25.

other's conversion" to be the best means of promoting God's work. Edwards studied carefully the various emotional states of his hearers until he believed he could understand the condition of the heart of each person by outward signs. He saw the emotional reaction as a type of language showing what was happening in the soul of the affected one.¹ It should be understood that while Edwards believed that the physical signs were important, he did not hold that everyone who had them was converted.

There was a great deal of criticism of the emotional result of Edwards's preaching, but he had a reasoned answer for his critics:

To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly without much ado, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit; for though the degree of the influence of the Spirit of God on particular persons is by no means to be judged by the degree of external appearances, because of the different constitution, tempers, and circumstances of men; yet if there be a very powerful influence of the Spirit of God on a mixed multitude, it will cause, some way or another, a great visible commotion.²

Edwards preached with great earnestness the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The resulting revival contained many physical manifestations. Many fell prostrate and cried aloud for mercy. Others were

¹Jonathan Edwards, Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, 1740. To Which is Prefixed A Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in Northampton, Mass. 1735 (New York: American Tract Society, n.d.), 30, 259.

²Ibid., 49.

convulsed or benumbed.¹

Edwards made religious emotion theologically and intellectually respectable. His writing on the subject of revival gave a lasting substance to the first great American revival, and became the pattern to be followed by later revival preachers. John Wesley and George Whitefield were two students of Edwards's books in Great Britain. Whitefield later consolidated local revivals in America into what became known as the Great Awakening.²

The First Great Awakening set the stage for future American revivalism. The second great American revival began around the year 1800 and continued for about thirty years. Pastors were afraid of the physical manifestations that were reported to have been a part of the awakening in 1740 and often reported the revival in their churches as not being "attended with outcry or noise." Or, while "some received comfort," there was no "wild enthusiasm or disorder."³ The fear of fanaticism no doubt biased reporting on the part of many pastors.

Likewise, in their plan of union in 1801 the eastern Presbyterians and Congregationalists characterized a genuine revival as one in which there was "no wildness

¹Matthew Simpson, ed., Encyclopaedia of Methodism (Philadelphia: Everts and Stewart, 1878), 752.

²Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America, 3d ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), 66, 67; Sweet, Revivalism, 84, 85.

³Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1958), 61, 62.

and extravagance" and "very little commotion of the animal feelings," and where "the word of God distill [sic] upon the mind like the gentle rain, and the Holy Spirit comes down like the dew, diffusing a blessed influence on all around."¹

Individual preachers (especially in the West) were not so restrained about their methods or reporting. By the early 1800s revivalism had become a technique of turning on the heat and getting quick decisions. Whereas the eighteenth-century awakening was more passive--preach the Word and revival will be the by-product--now there was a more direct appeal to the emotions.² Peter Cartwright, a Methodist circuit rider, related one experience that illustrates the results of this type of preaching:

While I was preaching, near the close of the discourse, suddenly the power of God fell on the congregation like a flash of lightning, and the people fell right and left; Some screamed aloud for mercy, others fell on their knees and prayed out aloud; Several Baptist members fell to the floor under the power of God. . . . About 12 persons were converted in the good old way, and shouted aloud the praises of God.³

Charles G. Finney was a Presbyterian minister who became a leader in revival techniques in the 1820s. Among his "New Measures" were the ideas of inviting people under conviction to come forward and occupy the "Anxious Bench,"

¹Sweet, Revivalism, 125.

² Ibid., 136.

³Peter Cartwright, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1856), 119.

praying for people by name in public meetings, and permitting women to pray in public. The "Anxious Bench" was a front pew roughly analogous to the witness stand in a court of law where attention was centered upon those seeking salvation. Their experience dramatized the struggle for heaven in the soul of everyone present. Prayer meetings were held at unseasonable hours in revival meetings following Finney's model. Protracted meetings were held each night, and bands of workers visited in homes.¹

Finney preached in an earnest, simple manner. It was said that he poured out fire upon his hearers when he preached.² Men and women toppled from their seats and cried for mercy under this kind of preaching.

Revivalism crossed denominational lines, leaving the whole of America with a similar idea as to what constituted true religion. The physical manifestations followed what some considered a Methodist tradition. Bernard Weisberger writes that

in De Kalb, Presbyterians had long looked down their noses at the enthusiastic religion of Methodism, which countenanced "falling under the power." But the first man to fall from his seat under Finney's spell was a Presbyterian, as were several who followed him.³

Finney permitted agonies and hysterics, which were

¹William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), 142, 143.

²Sweet, Revivalism, 137.

³Weisberger, They Gathered at The River, 99.

considered violent demonstrations of the Lord's redeeming power. Some of the adjectives used to describe his hearers were "blistered," "broken down," and "crushed." Finney, himself, would employ "abject groanings" and "writings of his body."¹

We have seen that physical manifestations were widespread in many American denominations as a result of revivalism. On the other hand, these manifestations had always been an important part of Methodism.

Methodism

Methodism began in England as a revival that was similar in its outward form to what was happening in America at the same time under Edwards and others. Under strong preaching, the groans and sighs of the penitent were mixed with the joy and shout of the convert. Conversion was a direct experience of salvation initiated by the Lord and a necessary qualification for membership in the Methodist organization.²

"Methodists," writes Charles Ferguson, "were shouters and great cries might come from the congregation, either out of sheer ecstasy in the middle of a service or in the moments of deliverance at the altar."³ The

¹Ibid., 101.

²Dickson D. Bruce, And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-folk Camp-meeting Religion, 1800-1845 (Knoxville: Univ. of Tenn. Press, 1974), 38.

³Charles W. Ferguson, Organizing to Beat the Devil: Methodists and the Making of America (Garden City,

preachers would prod the emotions deliberately in the hope of breaking through to the heart. Wesley called this prodding "heart-work." Many times the result would be that listeners, or even whole congregations, would fall to the floor under the power of God.¹

The Methodists believed that God's favor or disfavor was subjectively felt or experienced. The movings of the Spirit of God that were felt inside were often vocally or physically acted out. The actual presence of the Holy Spirit was to be sought with soul-searching, agonizing, and tears. His presence was an indication of His favor and was sensed as peace, joy, or other phenomena. This experience was seen as the essence of Christianity. The Holy Spirit witnessed to the individual Christian of his or her state of salvation through these experiential means. The absence of internal peace was an indication that some sin was separating the person from God. Such terms as "peace with God," the "Christian experience," and "seeking the Lord in prayer" express a belief in the essence of religion as the felt presence of God.

Methodist preachers were more revivalists than instructors of the Word of God. "The training necessary for preaching this message," writes George Baker, "was mostly practice in telling one's own experience, together

N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1971), 146.

¹Ibid., 140.

with learning the methods of revivals and regular meetings."¹ John Wesley believed in the power of such preaching. He wrote to Alexander Mather on August 6, 1777:

Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven upon earth.²

The Methodist preacher brought the hearers face to face with their sins and their awful result in the judgment of God. Utilizing emotional appeals, tears, and groans, the preacher led his hearers to sense emotionally the enormity of their sin. The sinners were called to the "mourner's bench" where they plumbed the depths of sorrow for their sin; they were told to pray, to forgive the wrongs of their neighbors, to surrender to Christ, and to give up the vices of worldly pleasures. Upon reaching the bottom rung of despair, the sinner was to trust in the forgiving grace of God. At times the convicted ones would fall on the floor and cry for mercy. The forgiveness of sins was then felt in a sudden rush of peace and the favored one would often shout in praise to God. Other times there was a quiet exclamation that all was peace. This was considered to be a personal assurance of the

¹George Claude Baker, Jr., An Introduction to the History of Early New England Methodism, 1789-1839 (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1941), 72.

²John Telford, ed., The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley: Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, 7 vols., (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 6:272.

pardon of sin by a direct communication of the Holy Spirit. Conversions of this type were also frequently seen in the smaller class meetings, where others would kneel in a circle around the stricken one, praying for his or her release. Examples of this experiential view of salvation are seen in the conversions of John Emory and Stephen Olin.

The evening before Emory's conversion on August 18, 1806, several members of his family "assembled to sing hymns and converse about experimental religion." That was followed by family prayer. The next morning at the Sunday morning love feast, Emory began calling upon "God and angels, heaven and earth in a solemn manner that he was determined to see the salvation of his soul." He fell to his knees calling on God for the pardon of his sins. Others formed a circle around him, and many prayed for him. All at once he rose and "declared he felt peace and comfort--all was calm."¹

Stephen Olin, a prominent Methodist preacher in the nineteenth century, tells of his conversion on September 20, 1821.

I groaned, and prayed and wept alone. . . . The Blessed Jesus poured the oil and wine into my wounded spirit. It was a glorious moment--a happy moment! I passed from hell to paradise. . . . I still feel the sacred flame glowing within me. Cherish it.²

¹John Emory, quoted in John M'Clintock, ed., Sketches of Eminent Methodist Ministers (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1854), 106.

²Steven Olin, quoted in *ibid.*, 322.

Prayer, especially secret prayer, was a central feature of Methodist devotion. It required no elaborate technique but had to be earnest and sincere. It was the outpouring of a child's heart to his Father. Prayer was the gateway to communion with God and was often accompanied by agony and tears. The Bible and Hymnal were used in secret prayer as well as in public prayer meetings.

When Robert R. Roberts was ten years old, he felt himself to be a sinner and wept and trembled in prayer to avert impending wrath. He resolved to be better. He was fourteen when he began pleading in secret "in the language of heartfelt trouble and grief" for the pardon of his sins. The "light dawned" and his mind was suddenly at rest, everything changed. In his own words: "Nature wore a new aspect as I arose and went with cheerfulness to my work."¹

Later in life Roberts's prayers made a strong impression on his hearers:

It was the boldness with which he came to the throne of grace, his wrestling energy, and his faith that made even a deeper impression than . . . his sermons. He communed with God. His hearers felt that it was even so, and a solemn awe rested upon them.²

Contrary to the majority of his Methodist colleagues, Roberts disliked loud shouting, jumping, clapping of hands, and falling prostrate on the floor.

¹Robert R. Roberts, quoted in *ibid.*, 140-143.

²*Ibid.*, 150.

When these types of demonstration showed themselves, he would stop preaching and wait until they passed. There was always deep feeling in his services. The half-stifled sobs of the penitent were heard, but the people controlled the more boisterous manifestations.¹

Tears were one phenomenon commonly reported as an evidence of God's presence. J. Ernest Rattenbury states:

Adoring penitents, Charles Wesley or Fra Angelico, arrive at the very heart of truth by cries and tears, penitence and adoration. . . . It may still be questioned whether any lenses have yet been constructed as perfect for visualizing Jesus as penitent tears, Charles Wesley shed many, which though they dimmed his sight, clarified his vision.²

The Methodist class meeting was composed of from four to fifty persons, and was presided over by the circuit preacher or the class leader. The classes held weekly meetings for testimony, prayer, study, hymn singing, admonition, and mutual encouragement. These meetings kept the members growing spiritually between pastoral visits to the community. Testimonies of individual members taught them how to share their experience. Listening to the others' trials and victories gave encouragement. All was done in a warm, loving atmosphere. The emphasis, even here, was less on teaching than on experimental (experiential) religion. One class

¹Ibid., 145.

²J. Ernest Rattenbury, The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns (London, 1941), 101, 158, cited in Gordon S. Wakefield, Methodist Devotion (London: Epworth Press, 1966), 29.

meeting that followed a revival sermon in the church was reported in these terms: "They fell like men slain in battle. Some wept aloud for mercy, others shouted for joy. . . . My soul was on the wing."¹

The profession of faith was considered necessary to the experience of sanctification in early Methodism. A true Christian was to stand marked before the world, testifying of his or her faith.² Ample opportunity was given in the various meetings to give testimonies of individual experience.

The class meeting was where differences between members were ironed out and wrongs were confessed and forgiven. Pride was the problem most often confessed. Spiritual direction was given on a group basis. Members were to care for one another and help each other in the work of putting away sin in order to reach yet deeper experiences of God's love. Women entered into these activities as well as men.

The most devout members of a class came together to seek an even deeper experience in band meetings and meetings of the select societies. They were similar to the class meetings, but were composed of a more select group of those who were serious about attaining Christian perfection. "Heart searching was no lonely introspection"

¹Baker, New England Methodism, 21.

²Phoebe Palmer, Entire Devotion to God (Salem, Ohio: Schmul Pub., n.d.), 42.

in these meetings. "It was a group activity, and doubtless took place in depth."¹

Singing was an integral part of the experience of the class meeting, as it was on every level of Methodism. The songs of the Wesleys were songs of experience. They were tailored to every stage of the conversion experience and the Christian life. The hymn, "Help Us to Help Each Other, Lord,"² is about the examination of the soul in the setting of the class meeting.

American Methodist perfection was a state of total commitment to God in which the person was not consciously sinning. It was arrived at in a similar manner to conversion: through penitence, tears, and surrender to God. Phoebe Palmer maintained that "it is only by an entire and continual reliance on Christ, that a state of entire sanctification can be retained." "Exterior things stand in . . . close connection with deep internal piety." "If you shrink from any duty, you will take the offering from off the altar, and then you will fall from a state of entire sanctification."³

Although there was usually some time between conversion and sanctification, John Wesley related the testimony of one woman who was converted and sanctified in

¹Wakefield, Methodist Devotion, 41.

²John Wesley, A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists (London: Hayman, Christy and Lilly, 1876), 158.

³Palmer, Entire Devotion to God, 76-78.

one day:

In a short time all my trouble was gone, and I did believe all my sins were blotted out; but in the evening I was thoroughly convinced of the want of a deeper change. I felt the remains of sin in my heart, which I longed to have taken away. I longed to be saved from all sin, to be cleansed from all unrighteousness. . . . During the last prayer I was quite overwhelmed with the power of God. I felt an inexpressible change in the very depths of my heart; and from that hour I have felt no anger, no pride, no wrong temper of any kind; nothing contrary to the pure love of God, which I feel continually. I desire nothing but Christ; and I have Christ always reigning in my heart.¹

Ellen Harmon, one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, grew up in a devout Methodist home. After a fateful accident at the age of nine years, Ellen became aroused at the thought of dying, and prayed earnestly for the forgiveness of her sins. She felt a peace of mind as a result. This continued for several months. At the age of twelve, she realized that because of her accident she would not be able to become the scholar she had set her hopes on and began to murmur against the providence of God in letting this happen to her. The result, she wrote, was that "the happy confidence in my Saviour's love that I had enjoyed during my illness was gone . . . and heaven seemed closed against me."² In her understanding, salvation and the assurance of salvation were very much connected with feelings in

¹G. P. as told to John Wesley, cited in *Ibid.*, 44.

²E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1948), 1:13.

true Methodist fashion.

In March 1840, as a result of a Millerite meeting, Ellen felt that she dared not rest or sleep until she was sure that God had pardoned her sins. She spent most of the night after the meeting agonizing in prayer and tears for the pardon of her sins. Her mind remained in this condition for months. She felt that in order to be a Christian she would have to put forth some peculiar effort. This continued until the Methodist camp meeting at Buxton, Maine, the following summer, where she continued her search for pardon:

I earnestly sought the pardon of my sins, and strove to give myself entirely to the Lord. But my mind was often in great distress because I did not experience the spiritual ecstasy that I considered would be the evidence of my acceptance with God, and I dared not believe myself converted without it. How much I needed instruction concerning the simplicity of it!¹

The spiritual ecstasy was soon provided in answer to her prayer. As her burden suddenly left her, her heart was light. Jesus seemed very near to her. She stated that this experience taught her a great deal about the divine character of Christ. "Everything in nature seemed changed. . . . The trees were more beautiful and the birds sang more sweetly than ever before."² Her description of her feelings following this experience compares remarkably with the description of the conversion of Robert Roberts and many other Methodists. As Mrs. Harmon heard her

¹Ibid., 17.

²Ibid., 18.

daughter's description of her experience, she recalled her own similar experience.¹ It was the classic Methodist conversion.

Following her conversion, Ellen Harmon decided to be baptized by immersion. In describing her experience as she came out of the water following her baptism, she said:

My strength was nearly gone, for the power of God rested upon me, and my soul was filled to overflowing with his love. Such a rich blessing I never experienced before. I felt dead to the world, and that my sins were all washed away.²

It can be seen that the Methodist idea of conversion and religion in general was based upon a personal experience of the power of God. Church membership was not based on adherence to a creed, but on the ability to testify to a personal experience of conversion and an ongoing experience of communion with God. This belief in experiential religion found its way into Adventism through Ellen Harmon and other early Adventists with Methodist roots. Methodism also had a large influence on the development of camp meetings.

Camp Meetings

Camp meetings began on the American frontier as extended revival meetings. They soon turned into annual gatherings at which people camped out for several days of preaching, singing, and converting souls. In the first

¹Ibid., 19.

²E. G. White, Youth's Instructor, December 1852, 14.

camp meetings in the early 1800s, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists worked side by side to bring about the desired effect. People came in crowds from the surrounding country to see and hear the wonderful works of God. The greatest drawing factor was the belief that those present would personally experience the actual power of God, and in this they were not disappointed. They expected to be emotionally stirred and see people fall "like corn before a storm of wind."¹ Many found peace of mind and assurance of salvation through a consciousness of the Divine presence.

At camp meetings, a sermon or exhortation, regardless of its content, writes Dickson D. Bruce, would bring out "simultaneous audience response in the form of almost constant cries of 'Amen!' or 'Jesus!' or 'Glory! Glory!'" As the minister prayed, the congregation would respond with cries of "Amen!" or "Glory!"²

The camp meeting compressed the usual cycle of guilt, despair, hope, and assurance into a few days or hours, thus intensifying the emotional stress. Peter Cartwright had a great deal of experience in revivals and camp meetings. He described one meeting:

The power of God fell on the congregation in such a manner as is seldom seen; the people fell in every direction, right and left, front and rear. It was supposed that not less than three hundred fell like

¹p. Douglass Gorrie, Episcopal Methodism, As It Was and Is (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby and Miller, 1852), 80.

²Bruce, And They All Sang Hallelujah, 84, 85.

dead men in mighty battle; and there was no need of calling for mourners, for they were strewn all over the camp-ground; loud wailings went up to heaven from sinners for mercy, and a general shout from Christians, so that the noise was heard afar off. Our meeting lasted all night, and Monday and Monday night.¹

In another camp meeting Cartwright says that

the vast crowd melted into tears. . . . Just as I was closing my sermon, and pressing it with all the force I could command, the power of God suddenly was displayed, and sinners fell by scores through all the assembly. . . . It was supposed that several hundred fell in five minutes; sinners turned pale; some ran into the woods, some tried to get away and fell in the attempt, some shouted aloud for joy.²

At the Cane Ridge camp meeting in Tennessee, it was reported that more than one thousand people would break into loud shouting at one time and their shouts could be heard for miles around.³

Weeping, shouting, running to the stand, singing, and falling were considered by most camp-meeting preachers to be legitimate expressions of the power of God.

However, there appeared other manifestations that were more generally frowned upon. Among such were jerking, barking, rolling, and dancing.

Cartwright was one who looked with disfavor on the jerking exercise. He stated that during an emotional song or sermon some of the congregation would be seized with a convulsive jerking all over their bodies. He then went on

¹Cartwright, Autobiography, 92, 93.

²Ibid., 121.

³Ibid., 30.

to describe the experience.

I have seen more than five hundred persons jerking at one time in large congregations. . . . To see those proud young gentlemen and young ladies, dressed in their silks, jewelry, and prunella, from top to toe, take the jerks would excite my risibilities. The first jerk or so, would see their fine bonnets, caps, and combs fly; and so sudden would be the jerking of the head that their long loose hair would crack almost as loud as a wagoner's whip.¹

Cartwright always saw the jerks as a judgment from God. He recommended fervent prayer as a remedy, which usually proved to be effective.

Lorenzo Dow, an early camp-meeting preacher, said that those who wanted to get the jerks in order to be able to philosophize about it were not affected by it. The most pious seldom got it. Those most affected were the lukewarm, lazy professors of Christianity, the wicked, and the persecutors. Dow said that the persecutors "have sometimes cursed and swore and damned it while jerking."²

Several other experiences were generally frowned upon. Some, for example, were said to bark like dogs while jumping around on all fours. Several would gather at the base of a tree, barking and yelping like mastiffs, spaniels, or other varieties of dogs. They were said to be treeing the devil. Other people were seen rolling like logs for hours, bounding like live fish, or rushing around shouting, "Lost! Lost!" Still others were struck down

¹Ibid., 48, 49.

²Lorenzo Dow, quoted in Grover C. Loud, Evangelized America (New York: Dial Press, 1928), 105, 106.

and "convulsed through their whole frame as if in the agonies of death."¹

Others would fall into trances and profess to see visions. They would fall, claims Cartwright,

and lay motionless for days, sometimes for a week at a time, without food or drink; and when they came to, they professed to have seen heaven and hell, to have seen God, angels, the devil and the damned. They would prophesy, and, under the pretense of Divine inspiration, predict the time of the end of the world. . . . They professed to have conversed with the spirits of the dead in heaven and hell, like the modern spirit rappers.²

As time passed and camp meetings matured, most of the objectionable physical manifestations began to die out. In 1804, the Rev. Enoch George stated that "in most places our jumping is changed to tears and prayers, groanings and supplications."³ Other changes also affected the camp meeting. What had been a joint frontier effort by the various denominations was continued mainly by the Methodists and carried northward and eastward into more civilized regions. By 1823 in the states of Pennsylvania and Maryland, one observer said that he had never seen so little disorder with a corresponding degree of seriousness and attention to the Word.⁴ Among the other denominations, the protracted meeting championed by

¹Ferguson, Organizing, 130.

²Cartwright, Autobiography, 51,52.

³Enoch George, quoted in Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting (Dallas: So. Methodist Univ. Press, 1955), 95.

⁴Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting, 96.

Finney took over at the demise of the camp meeting to marshal the group pressure for conversions.¹ The late 1850s saw a renewal of the camp meeting as part of the holiness revival. Meanwhile, the Second Advent, or Millerite, movement had taken place.

Millerite Adventism

In the mid-1830s, William Miller was in demand as a preacher in consequence of the revivalistic effect of his preaching. His message that Christ would come about the year 1843 was looked upon as his personal method of bringing about conversions in the revivalistic tradition. The pastors who invited him to preach were interested in reviving their churches and in converting new members. The revivalistic flavor continued throughout the history of the movement with a corresponding emphasis on the felt presence of the Holy Spirit in conversion as well as in public meetings.²

Religious practice varied considerably among the groups making up the Millerite movement. The movement was strongly antiformalist, rejecting any central control. From the beginning of Miller's preaching in 1831 until 1839, the main strength of the movement was in upstate New York and rural New England. Beginning in 1840, Joshua V.

¹Sweet, Religion in America, 138.

²David L. Rowe, Thunder and Trumpets: Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate New York, 1800-1850 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985), 24.

Himes of the Christian Connection assumed a leadership role next to William Miller, and the center of Millerite thought and inspiration moved to Boston.¹

Millerite leaders, however, did not exercise much control over Millerites at large. The practice of individual congregations was more dependent upon their past experience and the leading of their pastor than upon any external control. Everett N. Dick made a study of 174 Millerite pastors and found that 44.3 percent were Methodist, 27 percent were Baptist, 9 percent were Congregational, 8 percent were from the Christian Connection, and 7 percent were Presbyterian.² The practices of Millerites who were served by these different pastors reflected their varying backgrounds.

Although William Miller's preaching appealed primarily to the intellect, emotion was often present in strong crying and tears, with people coming forward to kneel in contrition.³ Looking back in December 1844, he revealed his negative attitude toward the more enthusiastic types of religious expression:

Sometimes our meetings were distinguished by noise and confusion, and . . . it appeared to me more like Babel than a solemn assembly of penitents bowing in humble reverence before a holy God. I have often obtained

¹Ibid., 28-32.

²Everett Newfon Dick, "The Adventist Crisis of 1843-4" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1930), 232, 233.

³Francis D. Nichol, The Midnight Cry (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1944), 84.

more evidence of inward piety from a kindling eye, a wet cheek, and a choked utterance, than from all the noise in Christendom.¹

Miller stated even more forcefully his attitude toward miracles:

I have no faith in those who pretend beforehand that they can work miracles. . . . Whenever God has seen fit to work miracles, the instruments have seemingly been unconscious of having the power, until the work was done. . . . I see no reason for the working of miracles in this age. . . . Since the Apostles' day none have worked miracles but the anti-Christian beast.²

Miller was also skeptical of placing confidence in impressions, dreams, and private revelations. He criticized those who claimed the power to work miracles, discern spirits, or receive resurrection bodies here in this mortal state.³

In their meetings, however, the Millerites did what they were accustomed to doing before they became believers in the soon coming of Jesus. One example of this customary behavior appeared in a newspaper account of a tent meeting. A New York newspaper stated that after a reasonable, sensible sermon,

the mourners or converts, of whom there were a very large number, threw themselves in the dust and dirt around the pulpit, and for nearly an hour, men and women were praying, singing, shouting, groaning, and

¹William Miller to Dear Brethren, December 3, 1844, quoted in Sylvester Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), 282.

²William Miller to Dear Brother, October 12, 1843, quoted in Bliss, William Miller, 235.

³Rowe, Thunder and Trumpets, 130.

weeping bitterly.¹

A second example of the enthusiasm of some Millerites is found in the account of a Millerite camp meeting in August 1842. Himes was preaching in a large tent at Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts. When he called sinners to the altar for prayers, there was a great rush toward the front of the tent. In the words of Hiram Munger, "It was a noisy place indeed. Our officers came to me and said, 'This is worse than the Methodist prayer-circle.' I suppose they meant as to the noise."²

James White, a young Millerite preacher ordained by the Christian Connection, gives another example of the charismatic power in some Millerite meetings. At the close of one sermon he recounts: the "power of God came upon me to that degree that I had to support myself with both hands hold [sic] of the pulpit. It was a solemn hour." The congregation was in tears. White stopped preaching and "wept aloud over that dear people."³ White was present in another meeting of the Connection and describes the effect of a song accompanied by a band of music.

¹Evening Post for the Country (New York), October 22, 1844, cited in Nichol, Midnight Cry, 219.

²Hiram Munger, The Life and Religious Experience of Hiram Munger (Boston: Advent Christian Publication Society, 1885), 37.

³James White, Life Incidents in Connection With the Great Advent Movement as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation XIV (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1868), 87.

As we would strike the chorus of each verse, a good Bro. Clark, who ever seemed to have resting upon him a solemn sense of the great day of God near at hand, would rise, strike his hands together over his head, shout, "Glory!" and immediately sit down. A more solemn appearing man I never saw. . . . The Spirit of God came upon the brethren, who by this time were seated ready to receive the emblems of our dying Lord.

The result was described as "Electrifying." There were many cries of "Amen!" and "Praise the Lord!" accompanied by tears.¹

One Millerite leader gave a tongue-in-cheek admission that those waiting for the second coming of Jesus were sometimes noisy. Following an enthusiastic meeting in Baltimore, I. R. Gates, the preacher that evening, was arrested and then released. Giving the reason for his arrest he understated the case thus: "Millerites would occasionally shout and praise God above a whisper."²

Alexander Campbell gave this apology for the enthusiasm of the Millerites following an account of the glories of the second coming of Jesus: "Who, of the Christian family, would not rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, that in a few months all this should transpire." The Christian might fall asleep one night

and awaken glorified in the presence of the Lord, hearing, with an immortal ear, the last echo of the grave-opening, body-reanimating, soul-transforming sound of the archangel's trumpet!³

¹Ibid., 107.

²Nichol, Midnight Cry, 254.

³Alexander Campbell, Millennial Harbinger (ca.

The hope of the second advent was capable of inspiring the most joyous shouts, and the clear, direct Millerite preaching was calculated to bring out a soul-stirring emotional response.

Not only was the Millerite preaching clear and powerful, but the singing of second-advent melodies possessed a special power as well. At one time James White held nearly one thousand persons in breathless silence as he sang,

You will see your Lord a coming,
 You will see your Lord a coming,
 You will see your Lord a coming,
 In a few more days. . . .

He states that "many wept, and the state of feeling was most favorable for the introduction of the grave subject for the evening."¹

Miller's disbelief in visions did not ensure their absence in the Millerite movement. In 1842, William Foy of Boston claimed to have received a vision from God showing the travels of the people of God to the heavenly city, and the glories there. He preached of the wonderful things he had seen. In 1844, he claimed he received another vision that he did not understand. His confusion in not understanding the vision caused him to subsequently terminate his public speaking. About that time, Hazen Foss of Poland, Maine, appears to have twice received the same vision that Foy had not understood. He also did not
 1843), quoted in Bliss, William Miller, 242.

¹James White, Life Incidents, 94, 95.

understand it and refused to tell it to others. He then received a last vision in which he was told that the vision was taken from him and would be given to the weakest of the weak. Three months later, he heard Ellen Harmon relate the content of a vision she had received, and Foss affirmed that it was the same vision.¹

With the preaching that Jesus would come on October 22, 1844, religious enthusiasm reached its zenith. N. Southard reported that

it produced everywhere the most deep searching of heart and humiliation of soul before High Heaven. It caused a weaning of affections from the things of this world, a healing of controversies and animosities, a confession of wrongs, a breaking down before God, and penitent, broken-hearted supplications to him for pardon and acceptance. It caused self-abasement and prostration of soul, such as we never before witnessed.²

With some, enthusiasm went beyond the generally accepted bounds. John Starkweather, for example, was the leader of a group in Boston that believed that some bodily manifestation was necessary to signal readiness for Christ's second coming. They believed that their every impulse was from God and must be obeyed. One young man believed that he could keep a train from moving. A woman believed she could walk on water. Many other cataleptic

¹John N. Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1905), 145-147, 182, 183.

²N. Southard, The Midnight Cry, October 31, 1844, cited by John N. Loughborough, Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists, (Battle Creek, Mich.: General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, 1892), 56.

and epileptic phenomena were greeted as the sealing power of God.¹

Another example took place in August 1844 at an Adventist camp meeting held at Exeter, New Hampshire, at which one tent full of people carried on its social worship with excessive excitement. There was a great deal of clapping and shouting at all hours of the day and night. In commenting on this group, a Millerite preacher, an Elder Plummer, stated solemnly

that he had no objections to shouts of praise to God, over victories won in his name. But when persons had shouted "Glory to God" nine hundred and ninety-nine times, with no evidence of one victory gained, and had blistered their hands in striking them together with violence, he thought it was time for them to stop.²

When the Exeter camp meeting was half over, a powerful message began to be preached showing that Christ should come on October 22, 1844. With humble prayers, confessions, and tears, the believers sought the Lord. At this the noisy ones were suddenly silent. "The time for shouting, and display of talent in speaking, singing, and praying, seemed to be past."³

When Christ did not come in 1844 as the Millerites expected, three main groups developed: (1) the main group--eventually organized at the Albany Conference--contained Miller, Himes, and most of the Millerite

¹Bliss, William Miller, 232-235.

²James White, Life Incidents, 158, 159.

³Ibid., 166.

leaders, (2) the Sabbatarian Adventists, and (3) the spiritualizers. Some spiritualizers believed that Christ had come spiritually. Others believed that Christ had separated the sinners from the righteous and shut the door of mercy. In either case, they understood that the millennium had begun. Some spiritualizers believed that they could do no wrong because they had resurrection bodies. Some would show their humility by crawling around on the floor and acting like children. Many lived together in close association in exciting social meetings. They participated in attempts to pray the dead out of their graves and heal the sick. Other excesses were seen in sanctification of the elect, promiscuous feet washing, the holy kiss, spiritual wifery, and praying for the destruction of the wicked.¹

These three main advent groups, of course, took time to separate from each other. But the excesses of the spiritualizers tended to dampen enthusiasm for spiritual manifestations. That was certainly true of the major body of Adventists, who organized at Albany, New York, in the spring of 1845.

The last week of April 1845, the Millerite leaders called a conference at which the Millerite movement was organized in a similar fashion to the traditional churches. The pietistic, antiformalistic Millerites began with this conference to adopt the trappings of formalism

¹Rowe, Thunder and Trumpets, 145-150.

in the interest of self-preservation.¹ The new organization adopted a resolution condemning many of the acts of the spiritualizers, including

the act of promiscuous feet-washing and the salutation kiss, as practiced by some professing Adventists as religious ceremonies, sitting on the floor as an act of voluntary humility, shaving the head to humble one's self, and acting like children in understanding.²

The spiritualizers provided the stimulus for the members of the Albany Conference to continue to exhibit Miller's bias against placing confidence in visions and other ecstatic manifestations.

Perspective

During the period in American religious history leading up to the beginning of Sabbatarian Adventism in the middle 1840s, much American Christianity was strongly experiential in character. In Christian meetings it was expected that God's presence would be felt and, perhaps, a charismatic gift of the Holy Spirit would be manifested. The true seeker after God was seldom denied this experience of God's presence.

There were also those who, usually with a background in the more formal denominations, did not believe in charismatic manifestations. These could point to the fanatical excesses of some professed Christians to bolster their lack of confidence in ecstatic

¹Rowe, Thunder and Trumpets, 153.

²Bliss, William Miller, 309.

manifestations.

The leaders of the Sabbatarian Adventists were very much a part of the revivalistic, enthusiastic, and charismatic mainstream of their time. They formed the branch of the Millerite movement that, while opposing the excesses of the spiritualizers, rejected the anti-charismatic stand of the Albany Conference. Enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations were essential ingredients in the understanding of true religion of the Sabbatarian Adventists. For them, doctrine and experience were to walk hand in hand.

CHAPTER II

ENTHUSIASM AND CHARISMATIC MANIFESTATIONS IN SABBATARIAN ADVENTISM

Sabbatarian Adventists were, initially, Millerites who, after the Great Disappointment of 1844, began advocating the seventh-day Sabbath and the shut door of mercy for those who had rejected the Millerite appeal. Spiritual gifts and the ministry of the Holy Spirit were the foundation undergirding what Sabbatarian Adventists considered to be true religion. In actual practice, true religion consisted of personal contact with, and submission to, the Holy Spirit. In a context of prayer, confession, and total submission to the will of God, the Holy Spirit was believed to give a variety of manifestations of His presence. This chapter illustrates the spiritual manifestations that were present among the Sabbatarian Adventists.

In the tension in Millerism between doctrine and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Sabbatarian Adventists were in a middle position. The former Millerite leaders, on the one hand, rejected spiritual gifts and emphasized doctrinal truth. The spiritualizers, on the other hand, often went to extremes in dependence upon emotion and

physical manifestations. The Sabbatarian Adventists maintained a strong doctrinal platform while, at the same time, believed that the basis of religion was found in the operation of the Holy Spirit on individuals and groups. The attitudes of Sabbatarian Adventists toward enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations are now examined more thoroughly.

Attitudes toward Enthusiasm and
Charismatic Manifestations

Enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations were believed by the Sabbatarian Adventists to be evidence of the presence and favor of God. James White, a Sabbatarian Adventist leader, defended religious exuberance by stating that

if the speaker becomes earnest in presenting all-important truths, and feels the perishing condition of his hearers, and if the Spirit of God is poured out, and the unprepared weep, and saints shout for joy, the lukewarm, deceived, hardened Laodicean is ready to call it all Mesmerism, and is joined by the multitude who have a "form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." In this way the truth is resisted.¹

It is obvious from this statement that White believed in the validity of spiritual manifestations.

That the power of the Holy Spirit was much more than a mere theory to the Sabbatarian Adventists can be seen in this statement, also by James White:

But of those who have been imbued with the spirit of the Advent faith and hope, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have been partakers of the Holy

¹[James White], "The Immediate Coming of Christ," Review and Herald, January 20, 1853, 141.

Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and have apostatized, there are few who can again enjoy the insipid piety of the popular churches.¹

Sabbatarian Adventist religion can here be seen to have its roots in a personal experience of the things of God. Sabbatarian Adventists shared a common experience of the power of the Holy Ghost and the world to come. In their meetings and in their personal lives, they "tasted" the "gift" and the "word" and the "power." Theirs was an experience encompassing the whole being: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. It was an experience so real, so exciting, so utterly satisfying that it spoiled their taste for anything less.

This charismatic idea of true Christian experience grew out of the former experience of the Sabbatarian Adventists, as we saw above. The many visions of Ellen G. White, wife of James White, no doubt helped to bolster a strong reliance on spiritual gifts. The visions, however, were only a part of the enthusiastic religious experience that all Sabbatarian Adventists shared.²

Types of Spiritual Manifestations

The Sabbatarian Adventists believed that their enthusiasm and spiritual manifestations were chosen and

¹James White, Life Incidents, 265.

²Ronald Graybill, "The Power of Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the 19th Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1983), 91.

given by the Holy Spirit and, thus, the types of manifestations were limited only by His will at any particular moment. The types of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations present among the Sabbatarian Adventists, beginning with the phenomenon of visions, are now described.

Visions

In chapter 1 we saw that various Millerites claimed to have visions originating with God. Visions were also prominent among the Sabbatarian Adventists. One vision was experienced by Hiram Edson, a Millerite who was disappointed on the night of October 22, 1844. On October 23, he invited some of the brethren to go into the granary of his barn to pray with him. Those assembled felt their necessity of divine help and prayed earnestly. The question on every mind must have been, "Why did Jesus not come? What was wrong with our belief?" Edson recalled, "We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayer was accepted, and that light should be given--our disappointment be explained."¹ After breakfast that day, Edson was walking through a field when he was stopped while, he related,

heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly and clearly that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, He for the first time

¹Hiram Edson, quoted in Nichol, Midnight Cry, 457, 458.

entered on that day the second apartment of that sanctuary.

A friend who was walking with Edson did not know he had stopped and walked on "almost out of speaking distance" during the vision.¹ This appears to have been a singular occurrence with Edson.

Two months later, Ellen Harmon, a girl seventeen years old, experienced a vision that proved to be the first of hundreds of visions. She was praying with several friends when, in her words, "the power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before. I seemed to be surrounded with light, and to be rising higher and higher from the earth." The vision continued as she witnessed the travels of the people of God, the second coming of Christ, and the glories of heaven.² This vision was soon followed by many more. Ellen Harmon became known as Ellen G. White following her marriage to James White on August 30, 1846.

In 1860, Ellen White described her visions in the following manner:

When the Lord sees fit to give a vision, I am taken into the presence of Jesus and angels, and am entirely lost to earthly things. I can see no farther than the angel directs me. My attention is often directed to scenes transpiring upon earth. . . . After I come out of vision I do not at once remember all that I have seen, and the matter is not so clear before me until I write, then the scene rises before me as was presented in vision, and I can write with freedom. . . . I am just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in

¹Ibid., 458.

²White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:58-61.

relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision. It is impossible for me to call up things which have been shown me unless the Lord brings them before me at the time that He is pleased to have me relate or write them.¹

Ellen White understood that her visions were initiated and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

John Loughborough was present during about fifty of Ellen White's visions. He gave the following description of her condition and actions while in vision:

In passing into vision she gives three enrapturing shouts of "Glory!" The second, and especially the third, fainter, but more thrilling than the first, the voice resembling that of one quite a distance from you, and just going out of hearing. For about four or five seconds she seems to drop down like a person in a swoon or one having lost his strength; she then seems to be instantly filled with super-human strength, sometimes rising at once to her feet and walking about the room. There are frequent movements of the hands and arms, pointing to the right or left as her head turns.

He continued by stating that it was impossible for anyone else to move her hand or arm.

Her eyes are always open, but she does not wink; her head is raised, and she is looking upward, not with a vacant stare, but with a pleasant expression, only differing from the normal in that she appears to be looking intently at some distant object. She does not breathe, yet her pulse beats regularly. Her countenance is pleasant, and the color of her face as florid as in her natural state.²

The statement that Ellen White did not breathe was repeated on several occasions by various witnesses. One of the most daring was Daniel Bourdeau, who witnessed a

¹Ellen G. White to Brother John [Andrews], June 11, 1860, Letter A-8-1860, EGW-AU.

²Loughborough, Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists, 94.

vision on June 28, 1857, at Bucks Bridge, New York.

Bourdeau was an unbeliever in the visions, but became convinced by this experience that the visions were of God.

He said:

I first put my hand on her chest sufficiently long to know that there was no more heaving of the lungs than there would have been had she been a corpse. I then took my hand and placed it over her mouth, pinching her nostrils between my thumb and forefinger, so that it was impossible for her to exhale or inhale air, even if she had desired to do so. I held her thus with my hand about ten minutes, long enough for her to suffocate under ordinary circumstances. She was not in the least affected by this ordeal.¹

Many times others present felt the power of the Spirit of God at the same time that Ellen White was receiving a vision. M. G. Kellogg was offering prayer in a social meeting in Tyrone, Michigan, on May 29, 1853, when Ellen White was taken off in vision. He stated that there had been no excitement or demonstrations. They had been pleading earnestly with God that He would bless the meeting with His presence, and that He would bless the work of the church in Michigan. Kellogg related that as Ellen White "went into vision everyone present seemed to feel the power and presence of God, and some of us did indeed feel the Spirit of God resting upon us mightily."²

It was common for Ellen White to go into vision while she, or some one of her group, was praying. In one

¹D. T. Bourdeau, quoted in J. N. Loughborough, The Great Second Advent Movement, 210.

²M. G. Kellogg, "Eyewitness Statement," Battle Creek, Michigan, December 28, 1890, EGW-AU.

instance in 1850, Ellen White felt very distressed over the condition of some of the Adventists. She said: "The burden was heavy. The Brethren prayed the Lord to roll off the burden. He heard (their) prayer and I was relieved of the burden and taken off in vision."¹ In many cases such as this, the vision was felt to be a part of the answer to prayer.

The visions of Ellen White were not always quiet affairs. In 1848 in connection with the healing of a Mrs. Penfield, Ellen White noted that while praying "the power came down like a mighty, rushing wind, the room was filled with the glory of God, and I was swallowed up in the glory and was taken off in vision." While Ellen White was in vision, the doctor who had been treating Mrs. Penfield came to the house, heard the shouting in vision, and would not go in. He rode off carrying the news that they were making a great noise over the sick woman. The noise may have been part of the reason that, as related by Ellen White, the neighbors "were all stirred up and mad at us because we had prayed for Sister Penfield and she had been healed."²

Ellen White often spoke while in vision. During one vision of almost four hours in Randolph, Massachusetts, her voice was described as "clear and

¹E. G. White to Sister Arabella [Hastings], Letter H-8-1850, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Sister Hastings, June 1, 1848, Letter H-2-1848, EGW-AU.

shrill." Several detractors talked, sang, and read the Bible very loudly in an unsuccessful attempt to drown out Ellen's words. "But amidst all this confusion and noise," Otis Nichols reported, "E.'s clear and shrill voice, as she talked in vision, was distinctly heard by all present." At one point in this long vision, a large family Bible was laid upon Ellen's chest. She immediately stood up holding the Bible high in one hand. For "a long time" she held the heavy Bible in one hand while turning the leaves of the Bible with the other, pointing to texts, and correctly quoting the texts with a solemn voice--all this while looking upward and not at the Bible.¹

What did Sabbatarian Adventists see as the purpose of spectacular open visions such as these? James White believed that his wife's visions were given by God for the express purpose of uniting His people. In fact, an important part of professing belief in the tenets of faith held by the Sabbatarian Adventists eventually became the confessing of belief in the visions of Ellen White.

At Waterbury, Vermont, a Brother Baker had been slow in deciding to believe in the visions. He finally stood up and, as James White wrote,

spoke of the inconsistent position of Adventists that denied the means that God had used to bring them into the Advent. "Now," said he, "God has used means to unite a people on the Third Angel's Message and if I believe the message, I must acknowledge the means he

¹Otis Nichols quoted in Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), 2:77-79.

uses. And here," said he, "I plant my feet. Set me down as a believer of the visions." O how it shook the doubting. We all wept. It was a powerful season. Sister Butler, Brother Hart, and others followed and made clean work. God's hand was with us in mighty power.

The visions of Ellen White were understood to be the God-given means to unite the true believers in one faith. The consensus at Waterbury was that the Third Angel's Message and the means God used to bring that message must be believed together. It was generally understood that a disbelief in the authenticity of the visions was not congruent with belief that the Sabbatarian Advent movement and message was of God.¹

As we have seen, the Sabbatarian Adventists believed that God spoke to them through the medium of visions. They also understood that God spoke to them or revealed His presence by many other means. One method of God's communicating to them was by dreams.

Dreams

Dreams were believed to be used, at times, by God to convince an unbeliever or to guide a believer. An interesting example of this was experienced by S. W. Rhodes. Rhodes was visiting former Millerites in Wisconsin to explain the Third Angel's Message of Rev 14. He dropped in on the Holcomb family unannounced, or so he thought. In a letter to James White, Rhodes stated:

¹James White to Brethren in Christ, November 11, 1851, EGW-AU.

The night, or a few nights before I arrived at Bro. Holcomb's, the good Lord sent his Angel, in answer to prayer, and warned one of the family, in a dream, of my coming. Let us thank the Lord for dreams.¹

Another dream helped convince a Seventh-day Adventist pioneer, John Loughborough, of the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath. Loughborough was a first-day Adventist minister, twenty years old, when he had a dream concerning two rooms. He dreamed that the room he was in was dark and contained some of his non-Sabbatarian Adventist brethren. They were trying to keep him from going into the next room, which was filled with light and contained happy people studying their Bibles. At the front of the second room was a tall man explaining the Bible and using a chart that was hung on the wall. Loughborough was deeply impressed that his dream meant that he would soon see great light on certain subjects that were troubling him. Not long after having this vivid dream, he was induced to attend a conference held by the Sabbatarian Adventists in Rochester, New York. As he looked around the room, he saw the same chart he had seen in his dream, and beside it stood J. N. Andrews, the same man Loughborough had seen in his dream. This dream and its fulfillment, undoubtedly, were important factors in Loughborough's decision to become a Sabbatarian Adventist in October 1852.²

¹S. W. Rhodes to Bro. White, quoted in Present Truth, November, 1850, 84.

²Everett Dick, Founders of the Message (Tacoma

One dream that was considered by Sabbatarian Adventists to be from God was experienced by William Miller in November 1847. He dreamed that God sent him a box filled with jewels and other precious things. It was so bright and beautiful that he set it on a table and sent word for everyone to come and see it. The people came in crowds to see the sight. Soon they began throwing the precious things around the room and tracking in dirt, sand, and shavings that obscured the jewels. They also tore up the box and mixed in counterfeit jewels and coins. In his dream, Miller tried to stop the people or to expel them from the room, but he was unable to do so. In his sorrow, he sat down and wept. As he was weeping, he remembered God and prayed earnestly for help. At that, a man with a dirt brush entered, and the people left. The man brushed away all the dirt as well as the counterfeit coins and false jewels, leaving the precious things sparkling on the floor. He then placed a much larger and more beautiful box on the table and put all the precious things in it by handfuls. The result was ten times brighter and more beautiful than the original. On seeing the beauty of the box, Miller shouted for joy, and that shout woke him up.¹

Miller's dream was reprinted in The Present Truth in May 1850 along with a commentary applying it to the

Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1938), 260-62.

¹Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller, 361-63.

work of God in raising up the Sabbatarian Adventists as the repositories for the jewels of truth. Contributors to the Present Truth later alluded to Miller's dream as having come from God.¹

Early in 1850, God gave a dream to Joseph Bates to the effect that he should drop what he was doing and hurry to the home of Elvira Hastings in New Ipswich, New Hampshire. At that time, Bates was holding a series of meetings in another part of New England with Brother Chamberlain, who prevailed upon Bates to continue helping with the meetings. The reason for the dream became apparent when news reached them that Elvira Hastings had sickened and died. She had been a close friend of Ellen White.

In a letter to Brother Hastings, Ellen White attributes the sickness that ended in Mrs. Hasting's death to the direct action of Satan. Ellen White indicates that Bates should have followed the indications given by God in his dream. Instead of asking Brother Chamberlain, Bates should have gone to God alone in prayer asking if the dream was of God. He then would have seen by the "drawings of the Spirit" as well as the dream that he should go directly to the Hastings's house. White said that by faith in God, Bates would have "wrenched her from

¹See H. S. Case to Bro. White, quoted in Present Truth, November, 1850, 85, and James White, "Brother Miller's Dream," Present Truth, May, 1850, 73, and George W. Holt to My Dear Brethren, quoted in Present Truth, March 1850, 64.

the power of the enemy. But he leaned upon Brother Chamberlain some for duty and followed his impressions instead of the light God gave him in the dream."

According to Ellen White, Bates's failure to follow the light that God gave to him in the dream cost Elvira Hastings her life.¹

In this experience, Ellen White contrasts the "drawings of the Spirit" with "following his [Bates's] impressions." The drawings of the Spirit, after presenting the case to God alone, were described as being trustworthy when combined with the dream. Following his impressions, on the other hand, led to error. In actuality, the drawings of the Spirit seem to also come under the general heading of impressions.

Impressions

Impressions were not considered reliable enough to be given implicit confidence. They could be, however, one indication of God's will, usually in conjunction with other evidences. Impressions did not take the place of the Bible or the general, revealed will of God.² In the foregoing story of Bates, there were really two types of impressions: Humanly generated impressions representing one's own will, and impressions coming from God following

¹Ellen G. White to Brother Hastings, March 10, 1850, H-10-1850, EGW-AU.

²George W. Holt to My Dear Brethren, Present Truth, March 1850, 64.

surrender to Him and a desire to know His will.

An example of John Loughborough illustrates the second type of impression, earlier termed the drawing of the Spirit. Loughborough had resisted for several weeks the impression that he should give himself to the preaching of the Sabbatarian Adventist message. As soon as he decided to obey the Lord, he felt the assurance that the Lord would open the way. Less than an hour after his decision, he had the money in hand to provide for his family while he began preaching. But where was he to begin?

Hiram Edson lived forty miles from Rochester and had decided to stay home from church that Sabbath morning. While praying in family worship, however, the strong impression came to him that he was needed in Rochester and must go there. He went to the barn alone to pray about the matter, and the conviction came even stronger that he was to go to Rochester. Upon arriving in Rochester, Edson was told by James White that he was needed to take Loughborough on a preaching tour of southwestern New York and Pennsylvania. The Sabbatarian Adventists, thus, believed that God was leading them through the use of impressions in the absence of contrary evidence from God's word or other charismatic manifestations.¹ It was, however, considered necessary to go alone to God in prayer to find out if the impression was from God or not.

¹Dick, Founders, 263-66.

Following impressions without other evidence was not considered advisable, as can be seen from Ellen White's statement concerning a fanatical group in Portland, Maine. She said that "they trusted every impression, and laid aside reason and judgment." She continued by saying about herself that "the false burdens and impressions of others" might have led her in the wrong direction if God had not given her special directions on the subject.¹

Another charismatic manifestation that at times seemed to be positive, but was not relied upon to any great extent, was speaking in tongues.

Tongues

There are several instances of speaking in tongues in Sabbatarian Adventism. In one case tongues appeared in conjunction with several other manifestations: a strong impression of duty on the part of Hiram Edson, dreams, and a vision of Ellen White. This happened in connection with an attempt to bring S. W. Rhodes out of the wilderness where he had hidden himself after the Great Disappointment in 1844. Rhodes believed that his faith had been in vain and that there was no hope for him. Hiram Edson, however, had a strong impression that he and a Brother Ralph had a work to do to help Rhodes. The evening following the close of the Centreport conference of Sabbatarian

¹Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, 4:45.

Adventists on November 17 and 18, 1849, several came together to pray about the case of Rhodes. Edson narrated what happened at that prayer meeting:

Bro. Ralph asked the Lord, in secret, to pour out his Spirit upon us if it was his will that we should go after Bro. Rhodes. The Spirit was poured out, and it settled upon us, so that the place was awful, and glorious. While I was inquiring of the Lord if he had sent his servant so far to go with me to hunt up Bro. Rhodes, that moment Bro. Ralph broke out in a new tongue, unknown to us all. Then came the interpretation--"Yes to go with thee."¹

Previous to this, some of the believers, especially James and Ellen White, had had no faith in the interest that others felt in Rhodes. Ellen White had told Ralph that she thought that his feelings for Rhodes were mere sympathy, and that Ralph should get a clear duty from the Lord before doing anything. The morning after the tongues experience, during a season of prayer, Ellen White had a vision that contradicted her former opinion. She related:

While in vision the Angel pointed to the earth, where I saw Bro. Rhodes in thick darkness; but he still bore the image of Jesus. I saw that it was the will of God that Brn. Edson and Ralph should go after him. . . . [I saw] that angels would attend them on their journey.²

Eight days before the conference at Centreport, Ralph had had a dream in which he was attending the meeting at Centreport. He wanted to go into another room, but others, including, Ellen White, would not let him open

¹Hiram Edson, "Beloved Brethren, Scattered Abroad," Present Truth, December, 1849, 35.

²Ellen G. White, quoted in *ibid.*

the door. Finally, she moved, and he opened the door and went into the other room. In that room was one bowed down to the floor, who, in Edson's words, "rose up, and put his arms around my neck, and said, 'Oh! Bro. Edson, I am in the dark. I am in the dark!'" Edson saw the developments in the Centreport meeting as a fulfillment of the above dream.¹

Ralph and Edson went together in search of Rhodes. Edson related: "As we journeyed on, we felt the presence of God and his attending angels." Two or three days before they arrived at the place where Rhodes was staying, Rhodes had dreamed that two men came to him who were going to the kingdom. Someone asked him if he did not want to go with them, and in his dream he said he did. Edson told what happened when they encountered Rhodes:

We told him that we had come in the name of the Lord to get him to go with us and see the brethren, and go with us into the Kingdom. God displayed his convincing power, and Bro. Ralph spoke in a new tongue, and gave the interpretation in power, and in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost.²

Rhodes was convinced to go with his friends. He soon became a strong preacher for the Sabbatarian Adventists. The manifestation of the gift of tongues seems to have been part of the action of God in saving Rhodes.

Another instance of speaking in tongues was in a meeting in North Paris, Maine, around the year 1847 or

¹Ibid., 35, 36.

²Ibid.

1848. In this case, Ralph spoke in an unknown tongue that was interpreted by E. L. H. Chamberlain. The message was that God had called J. N. Andrews to the gospel ministry and that he should prepare himself for it.¹

A letter from Sister F. M. Shimper to James White, editor of the Review and Herald, related another instance of speaking in tongues. Shimper stated, in cursory form, the facts of a meeting during a visit by George W. Holt in East Bethel, Vermont:

After baptizing six of our number, our dear Bro. Morse was set apart by the laying on of hands, to the administration of the ordinances of God's house. The Holy Ghost witnessed by the gift of tongues, and solemn manifestations of the presence and power of God. The place was awful, yet glorious. We truly felt that "we never saw it on this fashion."²

James White reported another instance of tongues in a prayer meeting on a Sabbath day in June of 1848. Those assembled were praying for direction concerning the time when they should begin the Sabbath--at sundown or six o'clock in the evening. White related that

the Holy Ghost came down, Brother Chamberlain was filled with the power. In this state he cried out in an unknown tongue. The interpretation followed which was this: "Give me the chalk, Give me the chalk." Well, thought I, if there is none in the house then I shall doubt this, but in a moment a brother took down a good piece of chalk.

Brother Chamberlain took the chalk and drew a figure similar to a clock on the floor. He then proceeded to

¹S. Howland et al., "Affidavit," DF 311, EGW-AU.

²F. M. Shimper to [James] White, Review and Herald, July 30, 1851, 15.

show that the day ends at six o'clock in the evening.¹ This was the same position that Joseph Bates had been advocating and continued to be the majority position until changed in the mid-1850s. At that time, a biblical study by J. N. Andrews showed that the day ended at sundown. The sundown time was soon confirmed by a vision experienced by Ellen White.

One can say that tongues were present among the Sabbatarian Adventists, although not to an important degree. There were cases that seemed to show evidence of authenticity, as in the Rhodes case. Other times, as in Chamberlain's advocacy of a six o'clock termination of the Sabbath, Bible study and a later vision contradicted the message received by way of tongues.

There were, however, other, obviously spurious, gifts of tongues that appeared. For example, in Vergennes, Michigan, the Whites came into contact with a woman who claimed, by the power of God, to speak in the tongue of a nearby tribe of Indians. Ellen White, by authority of a vision, claimed that the woman spoke in a tongue that was unknown, not only to men, but to God. The spurious nature of the tongue was confirmed when the woman was brought face to face with a man who had been interpreter for seventeen tribes of Indians.²

¹James White to My Dear Brother, July 2, 1848, EGW-AU.

²J. N. Loughborough, "Sketches of the Past," Pacific Union Recorder, December 23 and 30, 1909, 9:21,22.

It is noteworthy that the charismatic manifestation of visions condemned this instance of tongues, but did not condemn earlier instances of tongues. The visions eventually became the standard by which other manifestations were judged.

Another charismatic manifestation that often occurred in connection with the visions of Ellen White was the loss of physical strength, or, as it was sometimes called, the slaying power of God.

Slaying Power

In the section on visions we saw that the early visions of Ellen White typically commenced with a loss of strength that caused her to fall to the floor. As the vision developed, she would be given strength to stand, walk around, or even perform feats of superhuman strength. During this time it was reported that she did not breathe.

While with Israel Dammon, her husband James, and others in Exeter, Maine, in 1847, Ellen White experienced a vision that commenced with a loss of strength. She was, however, not the only one to fall to the floor under the power of God. A leader in the church, a Sister Durben, was also affected, as reported by Ellen White:

Sister Durben got up to talk. I felt very, very sad. At length my soul seemed to be in agony, and while she was talking I fell from my chair to the floor. It was then I had a view of Jesus rising from His mediatorial throne and going to the holiest as Bridegroom to receive His kingdom. . . . Sister Durben knew what the power of the Lord was, for she had felt it many times;

and a short time after I fell she was struck down, and fell to the floor, crying to God to have mercy on her. When I came out of vision, my ears were saluted with Sister Durben's singing and shouting with a loud voice.¹

The power of the Lord was understood to be something that could be felt, and Sister Durben was experienced in feeling the power. Ellen White accepted as an established fact that these manifestations, including loss of strength, had their source in the power of God.

This phenomenon of loss of strength also took place in other persons. Brother and Sister Ralph were the recipients of the power of God in the following report by Ellen White:

Last Sunday we were at Bro Ralph's and were engaged in prayer for the special teachings of God how to move, whether to go to New York or stay in Connecticut. The Spirit came and we had a powerful season. Brother and Sister Ralph were both laid prostrate and remained helpless for sometime [sic].²

The slaying power of God was again present as a conference in 1850 neared its close. The meeting turned into a revival that included various charismatic manifestations while all sensed the power of God. Ellen White reported that

before the meeting closed all were upon their knees, some were crying for mercy that had been cold and indifferent, others were begging for a closer walk with God and for salvation. It was a powerful time as I ever witnessed; the slaying power of God was in our

¹Ellen G. White to Brother Bates, July 13, 1847, Letter B-3-1847, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Hastings, May 29, 1848, Letter H-1-1848, EGW-AU.

midst, shouts of victory filled the dwelling.¹

The next year, 1851, in connection with her healing, a Sister Meade was laid prostrate by the power of God. Ellen White narrated the story:

Just as the meeting closed, Sister Meade who had been afflicted with a slow fever requested us to pray for her. We went into a room by ourselves, Brethren Holt, Wheeler, Stowell, James and self. After I had anointed her with oil we prayed over her and she was healed every whit and fell prostrate by the power of God.²

James White was no stranger to the strong power of God. Telling of an experience of his in 1860, he said: "I fell upon my face, and cried and groaned under the power of God."³

The manifestations of the Holy Spirit in Sabbatarian Adventism varied in the amount of power sensed by the recipient. They could be as gentle as an impression or as strong as a vision that completely controlled the thoughts and actions for hours. Short of the experience of being carried off in vision, as Ellen White frequently was, the experience of the slaying power of God was probably the strongest manifestation of God's power felt in the persons of Sabbatarian Adventists. The implication of the following quotation is that this type

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Loveland, December 13, 1858, Letter L-30-1850, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, November 12, 1851, Letter H-8-1851, EGW-AU.

³James White to Ellen [White], November 6, 1860, Df-718-a, EGW-AU.

of manifestation was evidence that God was with His people and His truth. This refers back a few years to a situation in Paris, Maine, in which James White rebuked the Stevens and Andrews families. These families made this rebuke a pretext for opposing the messages given by James and Ellen White. They remained opposed to the White family for many years. Ellen White noted:

Since that time God has given them unmistakable evidence of His work and wonderful manifestations of His Spirit. Repeatedly have they been slain by the power of God, and while the impression remains, all is well; but when the impression wears away, the same wrong feelings return and self arises.

The impression left in the mind of these people who were slain by the Spirit appears to have worn away with time, and a new manifestation was called for, since they depended upon impressions to control wrong feelings. The manifestations gave intellectual evidence of the presence and power of God, which should have been used to control the feelings in the right channels even after the impression wore away. From this we see that although the Sabbatarian Adventists considered loss of strength under the power of God to be strong evidence that God was with them, even the most powerful experience of God's power had a limited effect if wrong feelings were cherished. The impression of God's presence would wear away with time.¹

The power of God, illustrated by His slaying power, was also manifested in healing the sicknesses of

¹Ellen G. White to Brother John [Andrews], June 11, 1860, Letter A-8-1860, EGW-AU.

the Sabbatarian Adventists. Healing was an integral part of their life and faith. They believed in a present God who was ever ready to heal the infirmities with which they were constantly afflicted.

Healing

The Sabbatarian Adventist relationship to faith healing was illustrated in a statement by Anna White shortly after coming to live with James and Ellen White in 1853: "I am now living with a people who believe that God is able and willing to heal the sick now, and who when sick, apply nowhere else for aid."¹

Medical doctors of the mid-nineteenth century often seemed to hinder recovery from disease more than they helped. Sabbatarian Adventists many times turned directly to God for healing. Ellen White encouraged dependence upon God in this statement in 1849:

If any among us are sick, let us not dishonor God by applying to earthly physicians, but apply to the God of Israel. If we follow his directions (James 5: 14,15) the sick will be healed. God's promise cannot fail. Have faith in God, and trust wholly in him.²

The records of the Sabbatarian Adventists give many examples of their belief in the truth of this statement.

The evening following the healing of Sister Meade,

¹Anna White to Brother and Sister Tenney, March 6, 1853, quoted in Ronald L. Numbers, Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 33.

²Ellen G. White, "To Those Who Are Receiving the Seal of the Living God" (Broadside dated January 31, 1849, Topsham, Maine), EGW-AU.

related above, the believers again followed the directions given in the book of James. Ellen White told the story in a few words:

That night we got into a rowboat and went on to the pond about one mile to Brother Meade's; his sister was there with a very sick child, we anointed it with oil and prayed over it, and God heard our prayers.¹

Another example of healing was during a meeting conducted by James and Ellen White at the Butler home in Vermont. One of the participants was a Brother Baker. At a meeting a few days before, Baker had had a difficult time deciding whether or not to believe in the visions of Ellen White. As we saw in the above section on visions, he had finally come out in favor of the visions and had confessed publicly his error. Ellen White related the following story about the healing of Baker:

Brother Baker had not slept any, for two or three nights, troubled with disease of the heart. He said he must go home and be sick some days, but we got a spirit of prayer for him and the Lord heard us pray. Brother Baker was healed and he glorified God with a loud voice, he had a baptism of the Holy Ghost. We parted with him and Brother Hart rejoicing triumphant in God.²

In James White's version of the same healing, he said that after prayer for him, Brother Baker

was some blest. Brother Holt laid hands on him, then I had to go to him. I had much feeling. He was much exercised, shouted some, wept, &c, then went all around as full as he could hold, and saluted all and

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, November 12, 1851, Letter H-8-1851, EGW-AU.

²Ibid.

left for home.¹

Baker's healing no doubt helped to strengthen his newly confessed belief in the Sabbatarian Adventist movement.

In the same year, 1851, Leander Kellogg wrote from Sabine, Michigan, to the Review and Herald telling that his wife had been so sick that she had been confined to bed for ten years. They had spent a great deal of money on physicians to no avail. The Kelloggs somehow felt that if they could get to Jackson, Michigan, where there was a group of Sabbatarian Adventists, that she would be healed by God. Kellogg wrote: "In May we went to Jackson, feeling strong in God's promises, and she was healed. . . . The Lord heard the prayers of his faithful children there."²

Another healing took place during a trip to Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in 1849. James and Ellen White arrived there to find Brother and Sister Collins "much afflicted." James wrote concerning the Collins family:

Their children have had the whooping cough all winter, and Gilbert had run so low, that they had but little hopes of him. The first time we bowed in prayer his case was before us. Ellen anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord, and while we prayed and lay hands on the wasted child, the Holy Ghost fell upon us. It was a time of power. We left Dartmouth in a few days, and when we returned in just two weeks we found Gilbert up and dressed. He has been out twice, eats hearty at the table and in less than two weeks

¹James White to Brethren in Christ, Nov. 11, 1851, EGW-AU.

²Leander Kellogg, Review and Herald, August 19, 1851, 16.

gained four pounds.¹

Healings were often, as in the above case, of a gradual nature. The disease would be arrested at the time when the request was made of God. Strength and total health, however, would increase according to natural principles.

Ellen White left us many records of her being healed in answer to prayer, yet the healing in her case was usually of certain acute symptoms and did not leave her without health problems, as she indicated in 1890:

I have never been healed out and out; and that is why I do not call on any one to pray for me, because they will expect that I will be healed, and I know from the past I will not be healed; that is, that I shall not have the work done right then and there.²

There may be some relation between the extent of each healing of Ellen White and her request in an early vision that God keep her from becoming exalted because of her visions. At that time the angel said that if she were to be in danger of becoming proud, her humility would be preserved by affliction.³ It is possible that her request was answered in the fact that she was seldom, if ever, totally free from physical problems.

¹James White to Brother and Sister Hastings, Feb. 25, 1849, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White, "Talk before the General Conference Committee," Lake Gogiac, July 14, 1890 (C. Burton Clark Collection), cited by Numbers, Prophetess, 184.

³Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:64, 65.

In 1854, Ellen White had been very sick with constant pain in her heart for months. A swelling over her eye also was bothering her. This was compounded by an attack of paralysis, which made her left arm, her tongue, and her head numb. The numbness was followed by extreme coldness. Her head pained her, and the situation was very serious. She related:

We prayed for the Spirit of God to indite our petitions, the sweet Spirit of God did rest upon me. The pain in my head was rebuked and my soul was abundantly blessed, and I could not refrain from weeping and praising God. My soul was filled with love and gratitude for His unbounded goodness to unworthy me. The next day the pain in my heart continued, but I was free in the Lord. My peace was like a river. That night I again requested the prayers of those present and for the first time in my life was anointed with oil. I felt less of the Spirit than before, when prayed for, but I believed in the sure promises of God. . . . I felt no change that night but rested well and awoke with the praise of God on my lips and the pain gone from my chest.¹

Three weeks later she was still free from pain in her heart, although there remained a swelling over her eye. Although she had been healed, the healing was for the most part gradual and did not leave her wholly free from physical problems.

On one journey, Ellen White said that James's and her health failed a number of times, and it seemed as if they would not be able to get through the meetings they were leading. She said that at those times of weakness "we would go away alone with a few brethren and sisters

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Pierce, April 11, 1854, Letter P-2-1854, EGW-AU.

and pray together and God heard and answered and when we returned home we were better than when we left home."¹

One instance of healing during a journey occurred in Washington, New Hampshire. Ellen White was very weak and not able to sit up. "In the eve," she stated, "I fainted quite away. The Brethren prayed over me and I was healed and taken off in vision. I had a deep plunge in the glory."² She seems to have been healed each time just enough to recognize her dependence upon God and to be able to continue her work.

Another time, Ellen White was sick with a cold in the face and head, a toothache, and ague in the face. This lasted one week, and nothing would give relief. She wrote to a friend of hers the following description of her healing:

The family bore my case to the great Physician and I tried to have faith for myself and was immediately healed. The glory of the Lord shone about us, and we all rejoiced and triumphed in God for His unbounded goodness to us. All in the room were blest and shouted the praise of God.³

This was a remarkable healing in which Ellen White's acute symptoms were, evidently, removed.

The healing of some other Sabbatarian Adventists was instantaneous. A Sister Temple of Boston was

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, Nov. 12, 1851, Letter H-8-1851, EGW-AU.

²Ibid.

³Ellen G. White to Sister Kellogg, December 5, 1853, Letter K-9-1853, EGW-AU.

described as sick and in an exceedingly weak, distressing, and sinking state. Her body was full of pain, and she appeared to observers to be dying. She would alternately faint and then revive a little, but could not converse. Sister Temple indicated that she would like to be anointed as indicated in Jas 5:14, and she claimed the promise contained in that verse. After committing her case to the Lord in prayer, she was anointed with oil on the part of her body where the greatest pain was located. Otis Nichols wrote that while Sister Nichols was anointing Sister Temple,

Sister Temple said, "I feel that I am healed." She immediately called for her clothes, and dressed herself, got up from the bed, and walked the room, praising God, and saying, "I am a wonder to myself--I feel perfectly well and strong, and have no pain, nor soreness in my body."¹

Those present then knelt and united in thanking God for His great mercy and for the wonderful manifestation of His power in healing. Sister Temple, however, could not remain bowed in prayer. She felt impelled to walk the room and praise God. Four days later she was still perfectly well, body and soul, and continued to walk the room and sing and praise God.²

Sabbatarian Adventists understood disease to be, at times, a direct attack by Satan upon God's people. This is illustrated in the series of events that follows.

¹Otis Nichols to Brother and Sister White, quoted in Present Truth, May 1850, 80.

²Ibid.

Edson White, infant son of James and Ellen, had been very sick. His parents had prayed for him and he had gotten somewhat better. This was followed by a worsening of his condition. He appeared to his parents to be near the point of death. It seemed to Ellen White that "Satan had stepped in and was troubling Edson."¹ The Whites must have felt the need of some support in their pleading with God on behalf of Edson, because James took his horse and carriage and drove five miles to bring back S. W. Rhodes, who had left a short while before. Ellen wrote:

That night they prayed for Edson and he has come up very fast since. Satan wanted to hinder the work of the Lord, so he afflicted the child, but he was beaten back by faith in God, and his name shall have the Glory.²

Following Edson's healing, Ellen White said that Satan tempted her to believe that God had left her or else Edson would have been healed when they first prayed for him. She was "in despair" until the next Sabbath evening when "Satan's power was broken."³

Their bout with Satan, however, was not over.

Ellen White continued:

The next [Satan] got hold of was Clarissa. She was sunken and discouraged. At the same time James was taken with the Cholera Morbus. He failed very fast. . . . He had a high fever. He had the cramp take him in his hips and extend down to his feet. His stomach was much strained from vomiting.

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, August 15, 1850, Letter H-12-1850, EGW-AU.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

James asked for prayer. There were only four women in the house, and they felt very unworthy to do the work of praying. Ellen White, however, "anointed his head and stomach and bowels in the name of the Lord." Then they all "took hold of faith for him." The answer came from God in a marked fashion. Ellen White continued the story:

Sister Harris and Clarissa were set entirely free, and they praised God with a loud voice. The Spirit caused Clarissa to laugh aloud. James was healed every whit; the great distress he had had in his head was every whit removed and he looked as though he had got the holy anointing. The fever and all pain left him and he ate and was strengthened. He walked out upon his faith, harnessed his horse and he and I went to Port Byron, one mile and a half and back. He gained strength very fast.¹

Ellen White saw James's recovery as evidence that Satan's power over him was broken. She stated that when this happened, Satan returned to Edson to trouble him.

Ellen narrated that Edson

waked us crying at the top of his voice. He seemed to have the colic and we went up [to his] chamber, anointed his stomach with oil and prayed over him, rebuked Satan and he had to flee. We heard no more from him until morning. He is quite well today but rather weak. We feel quite free from his [Satan's] power today. He has made a desperate struggle to get some of us, but we have driven him back.²

It is clear that Ellen White felt as if they had been in hand-to-hand combat with Satan, using the power of God in response to prayer in order to gain the victory. In explaining why they should feel this way, as well as

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

giving the reason for Satan's attack, Ellen White cited the authority of a prior vision:

The Lord showed me some weeks ago that as James would begin to republish what the leaders had written in '44, upon the truth, Satan would try to hinder us; but we must struggle for the victory and go on. It has been just so. He knows this work will hurt his cause and save some jewels. That is why he rages so, but he is driven back.¹

The Whites believed that they must fight Satan by God's power in order to gain the victory. They felt they were not simply fighting normal, physical battles for health. They were fighting supernatural battles, and supernatural power must be fought supernaturally.

In September 1850, Clarissa Bonfoey was represented by Ellen White as "oppressed by the enemy. Her body was afflicted." Mrs. White described the healing in this way:

Our united prayers went up to God, and healing power came down. Brother Edson (who has been with us 8 days), laid hands upon her in the name of the Lord and she was made whole, and gave glory to God in a loud voice.²

Ellen White continued in the same letter, explaining her belief as to the supernatural cause of the sicknesses they had been experiencing, as well as the supernatural source of healing:

The enemy tried hard to take some of our lives here of late. One after another of us have been afflicted almost unto death. Had it not been for the balm in

¹Ibid.

²Ellen G. White to Sister Bates, September 1, 1850, Letter B-14-1850, EGW-AU.

Gilead and the Physician there we must have perished.¹

We have seen that the Sabbatarian Adventists believed in the miraculous healing of believers, although many denominations in the nineteenth century were teaching that the age of miracles had passed. D. Hewitt contradicted that position in a letter in the Review and Herald of October 9, 1856: "Whoever will follow the history of the church will find that the age of miracles passed only in proportion as true faith passed away from the church." Wherever true faith was in evidence, miracles could be expected. Hewitt continued by saying that prayer for the sick should be made only after finding out the "mind of the Lord in such cases." If they were to pray for someone without clear evidence that it was God's will that the sick one be healed, they would be disappointed.²

The book of James, chapter five, was the model for the Sabbatarian Adventists in the matter of the healing of the sick. They believed that "the sick among you" referred only to believers in the third angel's message, or Sabbatarian Adventists. Ellen White made clear that the authority for this determination was a vision of God:

God has shown me those who keep God's commandments are to have nothing to do in praying for the sick of those who are daily trampling them underfoot, unless it is in some special case where souls are convicted of the

¹Ibid.

²D. Hewitt, Review and Herald, October 9, 1856, 182, 183.

truth and are decided to move out upon it. The partition wall between commandment keepers and those who trample them underfoot should be kept up.¹

In the same letter, Ellen White explained that the elders referred to in James were not just those who have been ordained, but older persons of experience and judgment in the things of God. They are persons whose lives are circumspect.

In 1850, the brethren waited to pray for the healing of a Brother A. until he and his wife had confessed of their own volition to their wrongdoing.

Ellen White recounted:

We anointed him with oil, when he had confessed of his own accord that he had encouraged the company of the wicked too much, and mingled with them too much. She confessed the same. We had quite a powerful time, the pain was removed from Bro. A., and he praised God aloud.²

Evidence of at least a decision to live a holy life was required before initiating prayer for the sick.

The brethren were called to pray for healing, not only from sickness, but from addiction as well. In 1851, a Brother Barnes, who was having trouble leaving off the use of tobacco, was counselled that he should be as humble as Brother Rhodes had been in the same situation. Rhodes had called for the brethren to pray for him to be free from the desire for tobacco. The result was that he was

¹Ellen G. White to Brother Pierce, December 3, 1857, Letter P-4-1857, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Brother Rhodes, Letter R-6-1850, EGW-AU.

cured and lost the desire for tobacco. Ellen White counselled Barnes: "Go to God, dear brother, wrestle with him and you can overcome, pray in faith nothing doubting."¹

We have seen that the Sabbatarian Adventists believed in miracles and expected God to answer their prayers for healing. Prayer for healing, however, was to be offered only after receiving assurance from the Holy Spirit that it was God's will that the person be healed.

We have also seen that healing was often accompanied by other manifestations of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit--such as shouting, singing and laughing. We now turn our attention to these charismatic manifestations.

Shouting, Singing, and Laughing

Among Sabbatarian Adventists, shouting and singing were often considered to be phenomena given by the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. In one instance, mentioned above in connection with a miracle of healing, the Holy Spirit was said to cause a person to laugh aloud. Ellen White wrote that "Sister Harris and Clarissa were set entirely free, and they prayed God with a loud voice. The Spirit caused Clarissa to laugh aloud."² Laughing, in that

¹Ellen G. White to Brother Barnes, December 14, 1851, Letter B-5-1851, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, August 15, 1850, Letter H-12-1850, EGW-AU.

case, was considered to be a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. In contrast to this one instance of laughing, shouting was a common occurrence.

In 1850, twenty-eight Sabbatarian Adventists were present at a conference at Topsham, Maine, in which shouting played an important part. Concerning this meeting, Ellen White wrote:

Sunday the power of God came upon us like a mighty rushing wind. All arose upon their feet and praised God with a loud voice; it was something as it was when the foundation of the house of God was laid. The voice of weeping could not be told from the voice of shouting. It was a triumphant time; all were strengthened and refreshed. I never witnessed such a powerful time before.¹

The shouting was seen as a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit in power.

Many times there was shouting in connection with the healing of Sabbatarian Adventists, as we have repeatedly seen above. Visions, also, were often connected with shouting. In 1850, James White reported a situation in which healing led to shouting. During the shouting Ellen White was given a vision.

The babe was sick, and Ellen anointed and prayed for him. The power came down more and more, and we all shouted and praised the Lord as much as we were a mind to. In this state of feelings among us, Ellen was taken off in vision.²

First, Holy Spirit power came down; then they shouted and

¹Ellen G. White to the Church in Brother Hasting's House, November 7, 1850, Letter H-28-1850, EGW-AU.

²James White to Brother Hastings, January 10, 1850, DF, EGW-AU.

praised the Lord. The power appears to have caused the praise.

It was perceived that true shouting was not initiated on a human-emotional level. When persons shouted on their own, the shouting was not recognized as the same. Those who worked themselves into a high state of emotion to the point of shouting were considered fanatics. Many times the Whites were called upon to meet such fanaticism.

One case involved a group of people who "shouted when it was no shouting."¹ The obvious inference is that since God had not activated the shouting, it, therefore, was spurious. Another case of spurious shouting was reported by Ellen White in the following terms:

The habit Brother H. has of shouting is no evidence that he is a Christian, for his shouting is regarded by God as no shouting. Half of the time he himself knows not what he is shouting at.²

We see from this that shouting was considered by Sabbatarian Adventists to have been of value before God, or God would not be represented as regarding the shouting in this case as "no shouting." True shouting was a manifestation of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the person or group. As such, it was not initiated by humans but by God.

¹Ellen G. White, Manuscript 1, February 12, 1854, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to [no Addressee], Letter 14, 1861, EGW-AU.

Ellen White received a vision in mid-1858 that showed the value of singing and shouting in the fight against satanic powers. She wrote:

I saw we must be constantly rising and keeping the ascendancy above the powers of darkness. I saw singing to the glory of God often drove the enemy, and shouting would beat him back and give us the victory. I saw there was too little glorifying God in Israel and too little childlike simplicity. . . . I saw enchantment was all around us and if Satan could get the [saints] to slumber, he is sure of his prey.¹

It seems that they believed that the enchantment of Satan could be broken by vigorous, total involvement in declaring oneself on the side of God, that is, by shouting and singing to the glory of God. Praising God by singing and shouting helped the Christian to rise.

Sabbatarian Adventists were considered to be either rising or sinking in their Christian experience at any one time. Sinking could be defined as "growing dormant and unbelieving," while rising included increasing in faith and getting the victory over Satan and his temptations. The goal to be sought was to be constantly rising. Singing and shouting were considered effective means to gain the victory over Satan and keep "the ascendancy above the powers of darkness."²

Acceptable singing and shouting, however, were to be from persons who kept God's commandments and had the faith of Jesus. God would not accept glory from

¹Ellen G. White to Sister Arabella [Hastings], August 4, 1850, Letter H-8-1850, EGW-AU.

²Ibid.

disobedient hearts. Ellen White encouraged rising through singing and shouting to the glory of God and explained acceptable praise in the following admonition to a church that had been sinking:

I saw you should rise together, and unitedly get the victory over the powers of darkness and sing and shout to the glory of God. I saw that we are the only people upon earth from whom God is to get glory, and if we should hold our peace the very stones would cry out, for God must receive glory from some of those who dwell upon the earth. The only company who can praise and honor God, I saw, are those who are keeping the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus.¹

Failure to keep the commandments of God was evidence of less than total commitment to God and would result in a lack of acceptance of the Christian's singing and shouting on the part of God. Sabbatarian Adventists believed that the Holy Spirit would not bless a person who was disobedient to God's revealed will.

The above quotation called for a united effort to get the victory. Most of the reports of shouting were in the context of a meeting. There was considered to be strength in the action of the group, whether in shouting, singing, praying for healing, or in other religious activity.

Shouting was sometimes very loud. One account of loud shouting during a meeting was in a letter to the Review and Herald in 1850. In this letter, Sister A. S. Stevens wrote:

At the commencement of our meeting, Jesus was present,

¹Ellen G. White, Manuscript 5a, July 1850, EGW-AU.

and his glory rested upon us. . . . We had victory in the camp. "The people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off."¹

A Methodist, L. V. Masten, who was hired to print Sabbatarian Adventist publications in Rochester, New York, was struck by the quality of the Adventist shouting. After Masten began attending Sabbatarian Adventist meetings, he declared concerning them:

I saw that spirit and power of God made manifest in their meetings which I never saw in any church that I had ever attended. When an angel from heaven wafted its wings over them, to expel the darkness and revive the spirit, their shouts of glory seemed to rend my heart. O, what peace so sweet as peace with God! What blessing so rich as God's blessing.²

Shouting and singing were further authenticated by the visions of Ellen White, who noted that the angels echoed in heaven the praise offered by the saints on earth. Ellen White recounted in one vision that

if the saints fixed their eyes on the prize before them, and glorified God by praising Him, then the angels would bear the glad tidings to the City, and the angels in the city would touch their golden harps and sing with a loud voice--Alleluia! and the heavenly arches would ring with lovely songs.³

A sense that their actions in praising God were linked to heavenly realities no doubt helped to foster enthusiasm in the Sabbatarian Adventist worshipers.

Not only did angels praise God loudly, but in

¹Letter from A. S. Stevens, Review and Herald, December, 1850, 16.

²L. V. Masten, "Experience of Bro. Masten," Review and Herald, November 25, 1852, 108.

³Ellen G. White, Present Truth, August 1849, 1:23.

Ellen White's vision of the future New Earth she saw the saints working their gardens amid shouts of praise. She saw that "a glorious light shone all about their heads, and they were continually shouting and offering praises to God."¹ Since the saints would be shouting praises to God in heaven, the Sabbatarian Adventists no doubt felt encouraged in shouting praises on this earth.

James White described a meeting in 1859 that was filled with heavenly praise:

While Mrs. W. was speaking on first day the house rang from full shouts of praise from several in the congregation. This refreshing season seemed a foretaste of heaven, sweet heaven.²

James White believed that a meeting filled with shouts of praise to God, accompanied by a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit, was one of the most enjoyable places in which to be located on this earth. The ecstatic feeling, coupled with the shouting experienced in those meetings, was considered to be a foretaste of the total joy that would be experienced in heaven.

While shouting, singing, and laughing were very recognizable results of the Spirit's presence, other, quieter manifestations were also considered just as authentically Spirit-induced.

¹Ellen G. White to Brother Jacobs, December 20, 1845, Letter J-1-1845, EGW-AU.

²James White, Review and Herald, August 11, 1859, 13.

A Blessing, Feeling the Power
of God

The Sabbatarian Adventists believed that when the Holy Spirit graced their meeting with His presence, that presence would be felt by the worshipers. The feelings experienced seemed to vary with the occasion, and, therefore, were described in a variety of ways.

The wording of a simple insertion in the Review and Herald in 1852 shows some of what was believed concerning the enthusiastic type of religious service so highly prized by the Sabbatarian Adventists: "Yesterday," wrote A. H. Robinson, "I met with the Brethren at Bro. Miles', and the Lord met with us by His blessed Spirit, and we were made to rejoice in God."¹ The result of the coming of the Holy Spirit was an ecstatic feeling of "rejoicing in God." The fact that they were "made to rejoice" indicates their belief that the feeling of rejoicing was not manufactured by their actions. It was bestowed upon receptive hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Similar expressions were written by Ellen White concerning a meeting in Saratoga Springs, New York, in 1851:

Yesterday which was Sabbath we had a sweet, glorious time. The Lord met with us and the glory of God was shed upon us and [we] were made to rejoice and glorify God for His exceeding goodness unto us. I had a deep plunge in the ocean of God's love. It seemed that the angels of God were hovering all around. The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, my whole being was

¹Letter from A. H. Robinson, Review and Herald, July 8, 1852, 39.

ravished
vision.¹ with the glory of God and I was taken off in
vision.¹

The depth of feeling recorded in the second half of the preceding account no doubt applied to Ellen White, while the first part referred to the group as a whole. The presence of God was felt by those present as something sweet and glorious, making them rejoice. The goodness of God in giving them this ecstatic experience of His presence was the object of their praise. Again, this "blessing" was understood to result from the action of God upon the worshipers.

A personal experience of Ellen White gives insight into the depth of feeling when taken into the presence of God. Ellen portrays the experience as an expression of the tender kindness of God toward her.

This morning we had a good time; my soul was taken into a sacred nearness to God. I could hold sweet communion with Him, my peace was as a river and my poor heart burned with love to God. Praise His holy name. My soul doth magnify the Lord for His tender kindness unto me.²

To the Sabbatarian Adventists, most of what was termed "a blessing" consisted of God's presence felt in their midst. In two instances in 1853, Ellen White used the word "blessing" in that sense: "The Lord blessed us abundantly last Tuesday eve, our hearts were made glad and

¹Ellen G. White to Sister Harriet, August 11, 1851, Letter H-3-1851, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Hastings, May 29, 1848, Letter H-1-1848, EGW-AU.

to rejoice in God. Praise his holy name."¹ "We have some most blessed seasons around the family altar. God does manifest Himself unto us. Praise His blessed name."²

In 1856 and 1857, after the White family had experienced a period of depression coupled with sickness, they decided to pray earnestly three times a day for renewed power from the Lord. The following statement from that time explains the blessing of God as something that was felt. It is rich in feeling imagery.

The Lord has wrought for us in a signal manner. . . . We have often visited the throne of grace. We have earnestly wrestled with God for healing power. Morning, noon, and night we have felt the sweet blessing of God. It has distilled upon us like the dew. We have known here what sweet victory and salvation was since the conference. Our meetings here have increased in interest every sabbath. . . . The windows of heaven are often opened and blessings from God are poured upon us. We feel deeply our weakness, our own unworthiness. . . . [God's] love often warms my heart and calls forth from me grateful acknowledgements of the same. I will not hold my peace. The praise of God is in my heart and upon my lips. . . . Oh for the deep movings of the Spirit of God!³

The assurance of victory and salvation appears to have come out of the experience of feeling the blessing of God, distilled upon them as the dew as they wrestled with God in prayer. Strong feelings of human inadequacy mingled with a constant yearning for the deep movings of the

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Smith, August 24, 1853, Letter S-7-1853, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Dodge, August 3, 1853, Letter D-6-1853, EGW-AU.

³Ellen G. White to Brother [Dorval Lamson], n.d., Letter L-7-1857, EGW-AU.

Spirit of God.

The assurance of God's favor was often sought in the area of feelings. In 1854, Ellen White had what appeared to be a stroke. She had been feeling very sick and depressed for months prior to this. She said:

I thought I was dying, and my great anxiety was to have the evidence in my sufferings that the Lord loved me. . . . I had tried to serve God from principle without feeling, but I now thirsted for the salvation of God, I longed to realize His blessing notwithstanding my physical suffering.

The brethren and sisters came together to make my case a special subject of prayer. My desire was granted; I received the blessing of God, and had the assurance that he loved me.¹

The blessing of God that she sought and received was a feeling of the assurance of salvation, a sense of the presence and love of God.

The assurance of acceptance by God was at times expected to be witnessed by something tangible. In commenting on a recent conference in Fairhaven, where two were baptized and were "filled with the Holy Spirit,"

Ellen White asserted:

We must have daily the full assurance that we are accepted of Him. If we have, all is well. We then can come to a [sic] throne of grace with holy boldness and draw strength and glory from the sanctuary and be triumphant in God. . . . At times I feel the power of God even in my flesh and yet I am not satisfied. I want to plunge deeper and deeper in the ocean of God's love and be wholly swallowed up in Him. . . . Cry, cry for the arm of the Lord to be revealed.²

Assurance seemed to stem from a combination of

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 1:93.

²Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Loveland, November 1, 1850, Letter L-26-1850, EGW-AU.

intellectual and physical (feeling) factors. The desire to be swallowed up in the "ocean of God's love" shows that assurance could include very strong feelings. There was an infinity of closeness to God to feel and experience--a total experience involving body, soul, and spirit.

In another instance, victory over Satan seemed to be the result of God's blessing the believers with His presence. Mrs. White wrote:

We have good victory in our prayer seasons. God often meets with us, and blesses us, and we feel to triumph in the God of our Salvation. Satan has been making mighty efforts to overthrow us, but God has been holding us up, praise His dear name. We are determined to hold the Victory, and come off conquerors.¹

Not only was the presence of God felt by the worshipers, the presence of the powers of darkness was also noted. Ellen White wrote from Paris, Maine, that at a recent meeting there was a man present by the name of Brother Hewit. He did not believe in the visions, and the darkness around him could be felt, making the meeting drag. It was probably only a coincidence that Brother Hewit was said to live at Dead River. Ellen White got up in the name of Jesus to turn the meeting around by her testimony. "In about five minutes the meeting changed," she wrote.

Everyone felt it at the same instant. Every countenance was lighted up. The presence of God filled the place. Brother Hewit dropped to his knees and began to cry and pray. I was taken off in vision.

¹Ellen G. White to [No Addressee], Letter R-6-1850, EGW-AU.

. . . Bro. Hewit confessed it was of God and was humbled in the dust.¹

The presence of the powers of darkness was sensed as a depressing, unhappy element, making the meeting drag. In contrast, the presence of God brought happiness that animated the faces of those present. The reality of God's presence was so powerful that it brought conversion, confession, and humility to Brother Hewit.

The Holy Spirit's felt presence could be forced out of a meeting by the talking of a person who moved in his or her own strength. Ellen White told of a Brother Lathrop who "would get up and talk until he would talk the Spirit all away from the meeting." Brother Lathrop was told that he should give up his impressions and feelings as they were not from God.²

A meeting in Topsham, Maine, was reported in the Advent Review in 1850. The report contains some interesting comparisons to other meetings in the past where the results were not good. The meeting in Topsham, wrote James White,

was a time of great refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We never witnessed a meeting where there was more of the power of the Holy Spirit manifested. We have been in meetings, some years since, among the Methodists and other sects, and with some Adventists, in 1843 and 1844, where a false excitement seemed to exist, which resulted in distraction and leanness of soul; but our meeting at Topsham, though exciting, all

¹Ellen G. White to the Church in Bro. Hastings Home, November 7, 1850, Letter H-28-1850, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Dear Friend, October 25, 1852, Letter F-4-1852, EGW-AU.

being deeply affected with the power of truth and the Spirit of the Lord, has had a saving, uniting and blessed influence on the brethren.¹

It would seem that one method of telling the false from the true was by the results felt in the individual, spiritual life. Distraction and leanness of soul following an exciting meeting would indicate that the wrong spirit was in attendance. A continued saving, uniting, and blessed influence would be an evidence of the true presence of the Holy Spirit.

The presence of the Holy Spirit was sometimes referred to as simply "power," as in this excerpt from an 1851 letter:

In the morn we all seemed to have an agonizing cry for God to work like himself, a wonder working God. Our prayers were answered, the power of God came down; it was a good season; angels were hovering over us. I was taken off in vision and saw just the state of things there.²

The "agonizing cry" of the believers brought the "power."

Other times the "power" was "refreshing," as George W. Holt reported concerning two meetings in Western New York:

The Lord poured out his Spirit, and we had a time of refreshing.

The Spirit and Power of God was poured out in the meeting, from the commencement to its close. The Spirit of the Lord seemed to take the entire lead of the meeting.³

¹James White, "Conferences," Advent Review, November, 1850, 72.

²Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, November 12, 1851, Letter H-8-1851, EGW-AU.

³George W. Holt to Brother White, Present Truth,

The power of God was sensed as a controlling presence taking the lead of the meeting out of the hands of those present. All the participants were led together by unseen forces in dynamic worship of God.

Several letters to the editor of the Review and Herald in 1851 expressed parallel experiences in various Sabbatarian Adventist meetings. Note the following excerpts: "God was with us by his spirit in power."¹ "We had a sweet, refreshing season."² "The Lord was better to us than our fears. He condescended to grace us with His own especial presence, the very first of the meeting, and was with us quite to the close."³ And, finally: "We had a good season with the Brethren. I felt some of the love and Spirit that we had before '43."⁴

In an early vision, Ellen White saw believers praying for the Holy Spirit. "Then," she related, "Jesus would breathe on them the Holy Ghost. In the breath was light, power and much love, joy and peace." This statement leads Christians to believe that they should expect to feel the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in any or

November, 1850, 85.

¹Frederick Wheeler to Brother White, Review and Herald, March, 1851, 56.

²Esther Maria Barrows to Beloved Brother and Sr. White, Review and Herald, April 21, 1851, 72.

³F. M. Shimper to Bro. White, Review and Herald, June 9, 1851, 104.

⁴Lebbeus Drew to Bro. White, Review and Herald, May 5, 1851, 80.

all of these ways: light, power, love, joy, and peace.¹

On one occasion, J. N. Andrews described a sense of the presence of God as something solemn: "The solemn presence of God rested down upon us whilst we listened to the important truths of the Bible, relative to our present position."²

On another occasion, Ellen White described the result of receiving the Holy Spirit as happiness:

We felt an unusual spirit of prayer and as we prayed, the Holy Ghost fell upon us. We were very happy. Soon I was lost to earthly things, and was wrapped up in a vision of God's glory.³

There is a progression here beginning with feeling the "spirit of prayer." Responding to the feeling, they prayed, which brought the Holy Ghost upon them. At least one result of the falling of the Holy Ghost was great happiness. In this state of feeling, Ellen White was given a vision, which could be considered another step deeper into Holy Spirit control.

Prayer seems to have been the most important prerequisite to being blessed by Holy Spirit power. In the following quotation the feeling of the soul being watered by the dew of heaven appears to be one object of the prayer of faith. Ellen White said:

¹Ellen G. White, To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad (broadside), April 6, 1846.

²J. N. Andrews, "Conference at Melbourne, C. E.," Review and Herald, January, 1851, 38.

³Ellen G. White to Elder Bates, Letter B-1-1847, EGW-AU.

Bless God[,] the prayer of faith will bring the dew of heaven and our souls will be watered by it. Hold on to faith, let your feelings be what they will. O how my soul feels for the flock of God. I long to be out among them. I often awake myself crying to God's people to get ready, get ready that the cloak of Almighty God may be thrown around them and they be hid in the time of trouble.¹

The content of the feelings was not to be a matter of concern. Faith was the principle element, even in the midst of deep feeling that was given and controlled by God.

The purpose of an experience rich in feelings and manifestations was explained by Ellen White in a letter to Harriet and Uriah Smith:

God has given you a taste of eternal joys to lead you on, to reach out, to hope, to elevate and bring you closer to Himself. God requires you to look to these manifestations of His grace and love. These abundant blessings were for some special object. Where much is given, much will be required.²

Wonderful feelings and manifestations sought for by the brethren and sisters and given by the grace of God were not frivolous extravagances with no real value. God gave them for important reasons, many times impelling the group to plead for concrete manifestations of Holy Spirit power. In fact, the quantity and quality of true manifestations of the Holy Spirit seemed to be directly related to the depth of spirituality and commitment in the Sabbatarian Adventists at any one time and place. This

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Hastings, May 29, 1848, Letter H-1-1848, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Brother Uriah [Smith], Letter S-6-1857, EGW-AU.

idea is further developed in chapter 3.

Often the power of the Holy Spirit would cause such strong feeling that it was termed a melting time--a time when hardened hearts were melted by the love of God and confessions were made.

Melting Power and Confessions

Hiram Edson wrote in 1849 that the general meetings that he was a part of had been "rising in interest and power for sometime past; but very recently they have been exceedingly interesting and powerful." Edson continued by reporting that the meeting in Centreport was the best he had attended. "It was a melting, confessing, refreshing season."¹

Similar descriptions of Sabbatarian Adventist meetings are found repeatedly in the letters and articles of the time: "We had a heavenly, sweet, melting time in talking, praying and exhorting."² "The truth took effect, and the melting power of God came upon parents and children."³ "Thank the Lord, a review of the way God has led his people revived them, and the Lord was with us in power. His refreshing, melting spirit was poured upon us,

¹Hiram Edson, "Beloved Brethren Scattered Abroad," Present Truth, December, 1849, 34.

²Letter from Brother Rhodes, Review and Herald, August 19, 1851, 16.

³Joseph Bates to Brother White, Review and Herald, May 6, 1852, 6.

and the atmosphere seemed as sweet as heaven."¹

"Confessions were made, order was somewhat restored, and on Sabbath, June 15, we had a melting, weeping, refreshing season."²

A report of a meeting in 1849 described in more detail just what was meant by a "melting time," as well as some of the rationale for its necessity in the meetings of the believers:

We have had some powerful seasons here of late. Sabbath and Sunday God moved in mighty power and there was a breaking down before God. There had been wrongs and hard feelings between some of the little company here. God in his mercy gave me a vision of the state of things and showed me that there must be a tearing down and building up. They felt the power of the message and those that were wrong confessed their wrong and were forgiven. We had a melting time. God's people are preparing and getting ready for the seal of the living God.³

The breaking down of human pride and the acceptance of a humble spirit before God were seen as necessary before the blessing of God's presence could be realized. As the believers offered themselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, He melted their hearts, causing them to sense the necessity of confessing their wrongs to each other. They confessed their past lack of faith, their general feeling of unworthiness, and affirmed their determination to be on the right side.

¹James White, "Our Tour East," Advent Review, August, 1850, 14.

²Ibid.

³Ellen G. White to Sister Hastings, March 5-8, 1849, Letter H-2-1849, EGW-AU.

This type of meeting, controlled by the Holy Spirit, was considered to be one of the most valuable. The result was seen in unity among the believers and a sense of closeness to God that lingered in the mind. Remembering how God had blessed in past meetings gave substance to faith and sustained the Sabbatarian Adventists through leaner periods when the presence of the Holy Spirit was not so strongly felt.

The "breaking down" that we saw above was partly, at least, a reaction of the believer face to face with God. Ellen White explained what was necessary in one case: "God has shown Brother Hollis' case in vision and unless he soon becomes as a little child and breaks in pieces before God, he will be left to himself."¹

James White explained that Adventists picture "Jesus before the mercy seat, ready to plead the cause of sinners, who[,] in the spirit of penitence and confession, go to him for help."² This "spirit of penitence and confession" developed in many meetings as a result of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit worked on human hearts to soften them, giving them the gift of surrender to the will of God. George W. Holt wrote of a meeting in the spring of 1851 in which the melting power of the Holy Spirit was

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Loveland, April 1, 1851, Letter L-6-1851, EGW-AU.

²James White, Life Incidents, 308.

poured out as the worshipers saw the importance of entire consecration to God, as well as the holiness of the law of God:

The importance of a full and entire consecration to God and his cause was deeply felt. The holiness of the Law of God, I think[,] was realized by the brethren more than ever before. The Holy Spirit distilled upon us like the dew, and melted the heart into tenderness before God. It was a heart searching time.¹

J. N. Andrews reported on a meeting in which heart searching resulted in heart-felt confession of the things that were found there. He wrote,

The meeting was one of deep and solemn interest from its commencement. . . . It was a season of heart-felt confession, and deep humiliation before God; such as we trust will not soon be forgotten.²

Before the awesome presence of God, the Sabbatarian Adventists were brought to their knees in humiliation and caused to confess.

Humiliation and confession were not the only accompaniment to the melting power of God. Hiram Edson wrote of another response:

The blessing of heaven has rested upon the meeting. The sweet Spirit of the Lord has rested upon his people, and the melting power of his love has caused them to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God.³

¹George W. Holt to Brother White, Review and Herald, May 19, 1851, 88.

²J. N. Andrews to Dear Brethren and Sisters, Present Truth, December, 1849, 39.

³Hiram Edson to Brother White, Review and Herald, June 10, 1852, 22.

We have seen a range of actions and emotions induced by the Holy Spirit and accompanying what was described as the melting power of God. There was heart-searching, humiliation, and confession, as well as joy, praise, and thanksgiving. The melting power of God also generated tears and weeping.

Weeping and Agonizing

The Sabbatarian Adventists were often found to be weeping at times of deepest spiritual feeling. These tears frequently came from joyful hearts, as reported by George W. Holt:

The truth triumphed, and the saints were much blessed and strengthened in the Lord. The Holy Spirit fell upon us, and shouts of victory ascended while tears of joy flowed freely from many eyes.¹

James White described the conference held on April 20 and 21, 1850, as "a melting, weeping, refreshing season to us all."² Marshall M. Truesdell mentioned tears as he recounted his experience in 1851:

The Spirit of the Lord was with us and we had a heavenly refreshing season. The exhortations of Bro. Rhodes melted the hearts of God's children. Tears flowed freely, and we were not a little strengthened.³

Johnson, Vermont, was the scene of a weekend series of meetings in which weeping figured strongly. In

¹George W. Holt to Bro. White, Review and Herald, September 2, 1851, 24.

²James White, "The State of the Cause," Present Truth, May, 1850, 80.

³Marshall M. Truesdell to Beloved Bro. White, Review and Herald, August 5, 1851, 7.

the morning "Sister Butler confessed in the meeting that she had been wrong. Then Brother Butler talked very well; there was a confession made all around with weeping." Ellen White continued by describing the afternoon meeting: "I never witnessed such a melting, weeping time before. . . . Never did I witness such a powerful time." The narrative continued: "Monday morn we had another meeting, the power of God rested upon us, I was taken off in vision and saw many things. . . . It was a melting weeping time when I related the vision."¹

Intense interest in the salvation of the youth was the reason for tears on the part of youth and children on one occasion in 1859. After the conference at Carlton, New York, James and Ellen White took the youth aside and warned them that they must each have an individual experience. They prayed for them with tears, and parents and children wept aloud.²

An intensity of desire for God and His salvation was cultivated among Sabbatarian Adventists as a means of centering all personal concerns in the one goal of putting away sin and knowing they were saved. Ellen White wrote that

the message to the Laodicean church affects every way, in every sense and everywhere. The church here are [sic] rising. God is working for us. We feel the

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, November 12, 1851, Letter H-8-1851, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White to Dear Parents [Harmon], September 1, 1859, Letter H-3-1859, EGW-AU.

necessity of working with energy. This message to the church calls for more than common efforts on our own part. A deep interest in our own cases should we feel. We should afflict our souls on our own account, turn our eyes within and mourn and pray and beg for our salvation. We have not forgotten the time or place where Jesus walked through our midst like a mighty terrible one.¹

Seeing God at work for the believers inspired them to work on their own salvation. Greater closeness was sought through mourning and praying and begging for salvation. It was as though the whole being was needed in the struggle to give up self and live for God.

Tears were shed as the believers would "agonize" with God as they were instructed in 1849: "When temptations and trials rush in upon us, let us go to God, and agonize with him in prayer."²

The kind of prayer acceptable to God was understood to be one that was not far from tears:

The earnest, simple, broken, penitent prayer is acceptable always to God, and the lofty, wordy prayer is not so much as noticed of Him, for it is disgusting to the ear of the Lord, disgusting to His people. You lack the sweet, meek, broken spirit in your prayers and exhortations.³

Sabbatarian Adventists placed themselves before God as powerless subjects of His will. This humility was

¹Ellen G. White to Sister Harriet, January 20, 1857, Letter S-12-1857, EGW-AU. As they belonged to no organized church, the Sabbatarian Adventists often used the word "church" in the plural sense; i.e. of numbers of individual Sabbatarian Adventists who met together.

²Ellen G. White, "Dear Brethren and Sisters," Present Truth, September, 1849, 31.

³Ellen G. White to Brother T., n.d., Letter T-1-1859, EGW-AU.

nurtured and strengthened as a means of experiencing more of the power of God.

With agony of spirit, Sabbatarian Adventists looked down into the depths of their souls, where pride, their primary enemy, was rooted. The result of confessing and forsaking pride, as well as all other sins found in the heart, was a renewed experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life. This presence brought, among other things, a sense of freedom.

Freedom, Liberty

Freedom, or liberty, was a common feeling among Sabbatarian Adventists. It was fundamentally a sense of lightness and peace following an unreserved surrender to God. This surrender included the feeling of union of the person with the Holy Spirit. Also present was the feeling that the burden of sin had been taken by Jesus.

Elvira Hastings, a close personal friend of Ellen White, wrote of this experience following her conversion:

From that time to this, which is seven years, my peace has been like a river, my confidence in God has been increasing, and I have known what it was, continually, to be free in Christ Jesus. . . . Now we are sanctified by the Spirit through the belief of the truth, and the truth makes me free.¹

S. W. Rhodes reported in 1852: "The Lord signally wrought for us two Sabbaths that are past, which I spent in Pitcher [New York]. . . . I left the saints free, and

¹Elvira Hastings to My Dear Brother and Sister, Advent Review, August 1850, 16.

well united."¹

Also in 1852, Ellen White wrote: "Brother Bates is with us. He is coming to see you west. His duty is there for present. I never saw him as free as now. God is with him."² The last two sentences of this quotation appear to be in couplet form, indicating that God being with Bates and Bates being free were two aspects of the same thing. Bates was in the path of duty outlined by God. Freedom in Christ was not possible except within the bounds of duty.

Ellen White also told of an experience of depression turned by God into a feeling of freedom:

Discouragement pressed heavily upon me. . . . At our prayer season my discouragement was so great it seemed to me I could not pray. But at last, in the agony of my soul, I cried unto God, and the light of heaven shone upon me. I was made free, and to rejoice in God. I was soon taken off in vision.³

Freedom in this instance was a happy, rejoicing time when light from heaven shone into her heart. The words "I was made free" indicate Ellen's understanding that a power outside of her took control of her and changed her discouragement into rejoicing, light-filled freedom.

The freedom that we have witnessed this far was occasioned by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life

²S. W. Rhodes to Brother White, Review and Herald, June 24, 1852, 31.

²Ellen G. White to the Brethren and Sisters in Jackson, June 2, 1852, Letter B-2-1852, EGW-AU.

³Ellen G. White to Brother Everts, November 22, 1857, Letter E-5-1857, EGW-AU.

of the believer, giving tangible evidence attesting to the fact that all was well between the person and God. The sense of freedom was accompanied by peace, joy, and light.

There was also a freedom and liberty in the sense of a fluency of speech given by the Holy Spirit when speaking for Him. The following excerpt from a letter by Ellen White illustrates this second meaning:

Brother Hutchins talked quite freely. I bore my testimony with some freedom. . . . James was blessed of the Lord with liberty again. I had some freedom in exhorting at the close of the discourse. James preached again in the eve. I had freedom, and was strengthened to follow with exhortation.¹

Liberty, or freedom, was seen as a result of the blessing of the Lord. The following statement continues the idea of God being in control and giving freedom as a manifestation of His power:

God will use him [James White] as His instrument to speak with freedom, independent of man, and in His strength and spirit raise his voice, and with his example call upon the people to arouse and with energy to assist with their substance, their influence, ability, and judgment in moving forward this great work.²

When God used the human as His instrument, the result was termed speaking with freedom. The result was not attributable to man, but to God.

There occurred in 1851 an interesting incident in which God was understood to cause the opposite of freedom.

¹Ellen G. White to Jenny, September 15, 1859, Letter F-5-1859, EGW-AU.

²Ellen G. White, "Regarding James White as a Leader," Manuscript P-27-1859, n.d., EGW-AU.

There were seventy-three persons present at a meeting in Johnson, Vermont. One of those present was a Brother Walker, who spoke in a "wild spirit" until all present became disgusted with him. Ellen White narrated what happened:

The Spirit of God came upon James [White], he arose and rebuked him in the name of the Lord. His mouth was closed in a moment, he could not [say] anything more but sat down and did not say anything through the meeting. He was rebuked by God. This was a great help to the meeting.¹

We see here that God not only gave liberty of speech; He also took speech away when the need arose. Brother Walker was bringing the wrong spirit into the meeting. It appears that the reason for closing Walker's mouth was to open the way for God's servants to have liberty to speak God's message.

In order for God to grant liberty to a speaker, it was necessary for not only the speaker, but also the audience, to be in a right relation to God. In 1860, the White family was facing opposition as well as disbelief among some in the church in Ellen as a faithful relayer of God's messages:

After we came home from the west. . . [,] we have felt no union with the church generally and have spent our Sabbaths at home. . . . When we came from the east last fall I told James that I had no liberty to bear my testimony . . . in the church at Battle Creek, but he urged me to do so. I continued to bear my testimony, but to the discouragement of my own soul; and when I prayed in that meeting house I had so little freedom I told James it should be the last

¹Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister Howland, November 12, 1851, Letter H-8-1851, EGW-AU.

time. I know not the occasion of all this. I felt the same when relating or reading a vision in Uriah's and your presence. I was reluctant to do so. I had no freedom and would feel a strange dissatisfaction after doing so. . . . [There is] a conspiracy of unbelief in the visions and in James [White] among Fletcher, Harriet and Uriah Smith, J. H. Waggoner, etc. [It includes] John Andrews.

The unbelief stemmed from the situation many years before when a reproof given by James White was not accepted by several families in Paris, Maine.

Ellen White put her finger on the reason for her personal lack of freedom when she was with these families in this searching question: "How much union have you had with the Spirit of God or His word or His teachings?"¹

It appears that for a time, through a rejection of the message sent by the Holy Spirit to certain members, the Holy Spirit could not give liberty to His prophet (Ellen White) when speaking to that group. A lack of union with the Spirit of God in the spiritual community caused lack of freedom for a spiritual leader. The leaders of the Battle Creek church rejected the means through which the Holy Spirit chose to speak to them, and that means was silenced. This provides us with strong evidence that the phenomenon of liberty, or freedom of speech, was a manifestation of the Spirit of God. Ellen White did not feel comfortable speaking except when given freedom by the Spirit of God.

The manifestation of the Spirit of God was

¹Ellen G. White to Sister Harriet, June 1860, Letter S-7-1860, EGW-AU.

considered important not only in speaking, but also in writing. Ellen White spoke of those who wrote articles for the Review and Herald in these terms:

If the salvation of God is with the one that writes for the paper, the same spirit [sic] will be felt by the reader. A piece written in the Spirit of God, angels approbate and impress the same upon the reader. But a piece written when the writer is not living wholly for the glory of God, not wholly devoted to Him, angels feel the lack in sadness. They turn away and do not impress the reader with it because God and His Spirit is not in it. The words are good, but it lacks the warm influence of the Spirit of God.¹

Whether in speaking or writing, the freedom given by the Holy Spirit was absolutely essential. Without it, Sabbatarian Adventists understood that God was no longer communicating through the human medium.

Perspective

A sense of the actual presence of the Spirit of God was an integral part of the speaking, writing, and living of the Sabbatarian Adventists. They could not conceive of true Christian spirituality without accompanying manifestations of the Holy Spirit. These were not always obvious manifestations to the unenlightened observer. Liberty in speaking and writing might not be recognized unless the heart of the hearer or reader was in tune with God. To the Sabbatarian Adventist living in the freedom of the Spirit, however, the whole life was one continuous charismatic manifestation of

¹Ellen G. White to Brother Uriah and Sister Harriet, Letter S-3-1857, EGW-AU.

divine power. Joy and peace came from a sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Sabbatarian Adventists were often very enthusiastic in their worship, weeping and shouting as they were touched by the Spirit of God. They understood a fundamental difference, however, between actions generated by human initiative and those induced by the Holy Spirit. True charismatic manifestations were a kind of by-product chosen by the Spirit of God in the wake of prayer, confession, and humiliation before God. When the human agent wanted to be blessed with a certain manifestation, that wish would begin to bring in adulteration, and the manifestation could not be counted on to be of God. Those who tried to approximate true manifestations by working up an artificial excitement were called "fanatics." Fanatics short-circuited the necessary preparation of heart, the submission to God, and the putting away of sin, and received, as a result, an unholy spirit. The outward appearance of fanatical religion was often similar to the true. Because of this close parallel between the true and the false, and because of fanaticism's devastating effect on the church, fanaticism was greatly feared by Sabbatarian Adventists.

Chapter 3 explores more fully this fear of fanaticism, as well as other possible reasons for the decline in charismatic manifestations among Sabbatarian Adventists.

CHAPTER III

THE DECLINE OF ECSTATIC MANIFESTATIONS

Religious exuberance among Sabbatarian Adventists began to decline throughout the 1850s and continued declining throughout the 1860s and 1870s. Along with the decline in emotional religion, the public visions of Ellen White also declined. Between 1844 and 1860, Ellen White had experienced between one and two hundred public visions. In the 1860s, there were about a dozen public visions, and in the 1870s, only three. Thereafter, no more open visions are known to have taken place.¹ Communication from God was later received through "visions of the night" or dreams.

In this chapter various historical and sociological reasons are discussed that can be advanced for the decline of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations among Sabbatarian Adventists. Present day society is then assessed to see the value of some of the Sabbatarian Adventist practices for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the late twentieth century. Recognizing the social and religious forces that shape some of our religious practices should enable us to plan a

¹Graybill, "The Power of Prophecy," 94, 97.

better strategy for the future.

Adventist Historical Reasons
for the Decline

Various Adventist historical reasons for the decline in enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations are first examined. Perhaps the strongest reason, and one that is still operative today, is the fear of fanaticism.

Fear of Fanaticism

A strong possible reason for the decline in enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations among Sabbatarian Adventists lies in the large number of cases of fanaticism that threatened to discredit the work of God. Beginning soon after the Great Disappointment in 1844, the Sabbatarian Adventist leaders were faced with an almost constant battle against varying forms of fanaticism. In attempting to remain as far away from fanaticism as possible, there was the danger of going too far in the opposite direction and rejecting the work of God. Onlookers might consider anything out of the ordinary to be fanaticism. However, the Adventists believed that there were two possible sources for ecstatic manifestations: (1) the power of God, and (2) the power of the devil. Humanly generated enthusiasm was considered to be taken over and used by the devil. Human and/or devilish content was the earmark of fanaticism.

In December of 1850 while attending a conference at Paris, Maine, where all were praying for the Spirit of

God to fall on them, Ellen White was given a vision that instructed the Sabbatarian Adventists concerning fanaticism. White reported that while in vision she saw that the religious exercises of the church were in danger of being adulterated. It seems that physical phenomena had been given to them in former meetings by the Holy Spirit as evidence of His presence and blessing. Now, the members were attempting to make the same physical phenomena appear in subsequent meetings. The people, themselves, were attempting to govern manifestations that only God's Spirit should control, "therefore implicit confidence could not be placed in these exercises." White continued:

I saw that we should strive at all times to be free from unhealthy and unnecessary excitement. I saw that there was great danger of leaving the word of God and resting down and trusting in exercises. I saw that God had moved by His Spirit upon your company in some of their exercises and their promptings; but I saw danger ahead.¹

In November of 1908, Ellen White held a long conversation with Ralph Mackin and his wife who were involved in fanatical exercises. After recounting many experiences of meeting fanaticism of various kinds in the Sabbatarian Adventist period, Mrs. White stated the following:

I was but a mere child at the time; and yet I had to bear my testimony repeatedly against these strange workings. And ever since that time I have sought to be very, very careful lest something of this sort should come in again among our people. Any

¹Ellen G. White, MS 11, 1850, EGW-AU.

manifestation of fanaticism takes the mind away from the evidence of truth--the Word itself. . . . Be guarded. Do not let anything appear that savors of fanaticism, and that others would act out. . . . I have been very careful not to stir up anything like strangeness among our people.

. . . It is through the Word--not feeling, not excitement--that we want to influence the people to obey the truth.¹

In 1861 the same author wrote:

In every important move, every decision made or point gained by God's people, some have arisen to carry matters to extremes, and to move in an extravagant manner, which has disgusted unbelievers, distressed God's people, and brought the cause of God into disrepute.²

We see that fanaticism was causing grave concern among the Sabbatarian Adventists. Every effort was made to steer clear of anything that might be construed as fanaticism. The practical outcome of the resulting emphasis against fanaticism appears to be that the pendulum swung away from most types of ecstatic manifestations in the direction of more formal religion. This was not the intent of the campaign against fanaticism. The aim was without doubt to hold to a middle position, coupling strong rational argument with a strong sense of the working of God in their midst. However, a balanced position is often difficult to achieve for extended periods of time. Fear of fanaticism had

¹Ellen G. White, quoted in Arthur L. White, Charismatic Experiences in Early Seventh-day Adventist History (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., n. d.), 23, 24. This booklet was reprinted from the Review and Herald, August 10, 17, 24, 1972; March 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12, 19, 26, and August 2, 9, 1973.

²Ellen G. White, Testimonies, 1:212.

succeeded in "quenching the Spirit."

In 1851, because James White was coming into contact with so many people who were prejudiced against the visions of Ellen White, he decided not to print them or allude to them in the Review and Herald. He hoped by removing the impediment of the visions from the forefront of public thought to influence more people in favor of the message that was being preached.¹ Thus, during the space of about five years, the messages of the visions received a smaller hearing than they had previously. This must have had the effect over time of giving the visions, as well as all charismatic manifestations, less value in the minds of the church members.

A noticeable decline in enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations occurred during the period in which the visions were not published, 1851-1856. During this period, as well, Ellen White began having fewer and fewer visions. In 1855 she had this to say as to the reason:

I saw that the reason why visions have not been more frequent of late is they have not been appreciated by the church. The church have nearly lost their spirituality and faith, and the reproofs and warnings have had but little effect upon them.²

¹James White, Review and Herald Extra, July 21, 1851, 4.

²Ellen G. White, Testimonies, 1:119. Ellen White here uses the term "church" to refer to individual members of the Sabbatarian Adventist movement. This is affirmed in the next sentence where the referent to the "church" is in the plural (them). I follow her lead in at times referring to the Sabbatarian Adventists as the church, though before 1861 there existed no formal organization that could properly be called a church.

This state of affairs was probably related to the decision of James White not to publish the visions in the Review and Herald. The church did not appreciate the visions, partially because they were being kept from public view. The fear of appearing fanatical seems to have cooled even the genuine charismatic gifts of the Spirit of God.

Lowered State of Spirituality

Another possible reason that the visions were not appreciated and experiential religion was waning was the lowering state of spirituality and the increase in worldliness¹ among the members. In this period, the term "Laodicea" began to be applied to the Sabbatarian Adventists.² This showed that the leaders perceived that the church members were becoming less religiously fervent and more conformed to the society around them. In 1856, Ellen White saw in vision that "God's people were conformed to the world, with no distinction except in name, between many of the professed disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus and unbelievers."³ The church lost vital religion through conformity to the world. The result was seen in less and less manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹The term "worldliness" was understood to mean conformity to the fashions and mores of the world, as well as dependence upon earthly support to the detriment of dependence upon God.

²Ibid., 126.

³Ibid., 133.

While in vision at a conference in 1856, Ellen White asked the angel why so few in the church were interested in their eternal welfare, so few preparing for their last change. "Said he: 'Earth attracts them, its treasures seem of worth to them.'"¹ The attractions of the world were apparently crowding out experiential religion.

In the spring of 1857, the message of Rev 3:14-21 to the church of Laodicea was being extensively preached as representing the Sabbatarian Adventist church at that time. The intended effect of the message was to revive the church and rid them of fanatical influences. Satan, however, tried to corrupt their message and destroy its influence. Ellen White related:

I saw that the testimony to the Laodiceans applied to God's people at the present time, and the reason it has not accomplished a greater work, is because of the hardness of their hearts. . . . [This message] was designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and lead to zealous repentance, that they might be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel.²

Here we see the church as backslidden, hard-hearted, and in need of repentance. Zealous repentance would bring again the presence of Jesus. The reference to Jesus undoubtedly included the working of the Holy Spirit, who was sent by Jesus to represent Him to His church. Thus, charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit were

¹Ibid., 131.

²Ellen G. White, Spiritual Gifts, 2:223, 224.

waning because they were not appreciated by a backslidden and sinful church. God was not able to bless those who were not wholly on His side. A correct response to the message to the church at Laodicea promised to bring back the working of the Holy Spirit in the church.

Doctrinal Argument Replaced
the Living Testimony

On November 20, 1855, Ellen White had a vision that showed that doctrinal argument had been emphasized to the detriment of spiritual religion. She said:

While in prayer the Spirit of the Lord came suddenly and powerfully upon me and I was taken off in vision. I saw that the Spirit of the Lord has been dying away from the church. The servants of the Lord have trusted too much to the strength of argument, and have not had that firm reliance upon God which they should have. . . . A few that are conscientious are ready to decide from the weight of evidence, but it is impossible to move many with a mere theory of truth. There must be power to attend the truth, a living testimony to move them.¹

It appears that those who were working to win converts were becoming unbalanced in favor of argument and the theory of truth to the detriment of the experiential aspect of religion. The power of God was being relied on less, as the strength of argument was relied on more. Yet, the strongest appeal of Sabbatarian Adventism was a direct experience of the power of God. It should not be construed from this that experiential religion was opposed to rational argument. The two were to coexist, with each

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies, 1:113 (emphasis supplied).

adding strength to the other. However, in Sabbatarian Adventism, the experiential aspect was waning as doctrinal argument became primary. This shift in emphasis was defined as "the Holy Spirit dying away from the church."¹

An important reason, then, for the decline of spiritual manifestations was the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit from the members of the church as they began depending upon intellectual arguments for the truth instead of depending on the power of God. We have seen that the Methodist Church was in the process of making a similar shift toward rational argument. At the same time, the industrial, scientific revolution was gaining momentum in America and preparing society to depend more and more on human reason. America was permeated with a tremendous optimism as to the natural ability of humanity to solve its own problems. The social and religious forces were combined to influence Sabbatarian Adventists to rely less on an experience of the power of God and more on human reasoning.

Sociological Reasons for the Decline

The various possible sociological reasons for the decline of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations in Sabbatarian Adventism are now investigated. Sociological forces were operating upon the Sabbatarian Adventists just as surely as they were upon society at large. The

¹Ibid.

Sabbatarian Adventists believed in separation from the world. A religious group, however, can never be completely divorced from the society in which it lives.

Enthusiasm Socially
Unacceptable

A first social reason for the decline of enthusiasm in Sabbatarian Adventism is that emotional expression was becoming less and less socially acceptable in the mainstream Christian culture during the 1850s and 1860s. Fanaticism was highly to be feared, and any step in that direction was frowned upon by society at large.

In the shift away from emotional religion, the role of educational leaders in the principal seminaries was very important. The prominent evangelists gave time and raised money for colleges that were to train their successors. In these colleges and seminaries, claims Timothy L. Smith, "men of piety and scholarship purged American revivals of their fanaticism, grounded them on liberalized Calvinist or Arminian doctrines, and set their course in a socially responsible direction."¹ Any exercise that was not considered socially responsible or acceptable was labeled "fanaticism."

The country was growing up, and some activities were not as socially acceptable as they once had been. The social graces were to be respected. Cultured people

¹Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), 60.

were more attracted to evangelistic meetings where enthusiasm was contained at an acceptable level than to meetings where emotions were allowed free rein. Smith says of this period: "The decline of uncouth expressions of emotion made protracted meetings more palatable" than those meetings had been in the eyes of "educated clergymen and city dwellers conscious of the social graces."¹ What were considered "uncouth expressions" were, undoubtedly, the more physical and un-natural in the repertoire of charismatic phenomena. This suggests that emotion was on the decline in the religious world at that time.

A religious revival swept through American cities in the year 1858. In March and April of 1858 the Christian Register was careful to approve of the absence of emotional excitement in this revival. In June of the same year, the Low-Church Episcopalian Bishop, Charles Pettit McIlvaine, used the argument that "freedom from unwholesome excitement" was a sign that the revival was the Lord's doing. Henry Ward Beecher's paper, The Independent, spoke of carrying the reaction against emotionalism to "a dangerous extreme" in doing away with the mourner's bench.²

This same "reaction against emotionalism" with its allied fear of fanaticism could very well have figured prominently in the decline of emotional religion in

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., 70, 71, 75.

Sabbatarian Adventism. A small group struggling for acceptance would tend to compensate toward the side of respectability.

Intellectual Argument Versus
Subjective Experience

Another possible reason for the decline of enthusiasm can be seen in the industrial revolution and the elevation of science in the estimation of the people. The scientific method became the most important means of understanding and knowing. Even in the arts, the subjective became suspect.¹ Intellectual arguments became the only acceptable basis of fact.

Sabbatarian Adventism had begun with a balance between religious experience and strong doctrinal proofs. The pressure of an increasingly scientific world may have led in the direction of the facts as proved in a logical discussion. The world asked for empirical proof while disdaining the subjective experience. This same pressure in the church tended to diminish the emphasis upon experience and emotional manifestations.

Lower Emotional Fervor in a
Higher Socio-Economic Class

Another possible factor in the decline in emotional religion among the Sabbatarian Adventists is the gradual bettering of their economic situation during the

¹Willard Gaylin, Feelings: Our Vital Signs (New York: Ballantine Books, 1979), 217.

period 1844-1861. H. Richard Niebuhr sets forth what he calls a modified economic interpretation of religious history. He states that

the religion of the untutored and economically disenfranchised classes has distinct ethical and psychological characteristics, corresponding to the needs of these groups. Emotional fervor is one common mark. . . . Spontaneity and energy of religious feeling rather than conformity to an abstract creed are regarded as the tests of religious genuineness.¹

Some other characteristics of the religion of the poorer classes are informality of ritual and lay leadership. These were characteristics of the religion of the early Sabbatarian Adventists.

The first Sabbatarian Adventists were mostly from the lower socio-economic strata. Many of the leaders struggled at times in order to have enough to eat. Some of their poverty was voluntary, as they left other work in order to devote their full time to the preaching of the gospel. However, even the leaders were mostly from the working class. Living a hand-to-mouth existence fostered dependence on God and a vital religious faith. This situation lasted for the leaders until the beginnings of organization brought about a better system of support.

Max Weber affirmed that godliness is conducive to economic success.² Wealth frequently increases as a sect subjects itself to the discipline of asceticism in work

¹H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1929), 26.

²Ibid., 54, 55.

and expenditures. Sooner or later the churches of the poor become middle-class churches. This helps to explain why the economic situation of the average Sabbatarian Adventist improved throughout the period under study. As earthly support became stronger, it is probable that less need was felt for support from God, and fervor decreased.

Rising economically also causes a rise in social class. The middle class tends to be less emotional and more inhibited in religious expression than the lower classes. Unbounded enthusiasm, which had been acceptable when the church was made up mostly of the lower classes, became unacceptable to the newly arrived members of the middle class.

New Members Not as Fervent

Another factor set forth by Niebuhr, and, one possibly responsible for a decline in fervor, is the effect of the entry into the church of children and new members who did not have the same understanding as the founding fathers.

Rarely does a second generation hold the convictions it has inherited with a fervor equal to that of its fathers, who fashioned these convictions in the heat of conflict. . . . As generation succeeds generation, the isolation of the community from the world becomes more difficult.¹

Many new members were coming from the more formal churches. As more members joined Sabbatarian Adventism who had not passed through the Millerite experience or

¹Ibid., 20.

helped to hammer out the biblical doctrines for which the movement stood, it gradually took on the look of an organized church with a corresponding de-emphasis on experiential religion.

Doctrine Replaced Experience

Niebuhr states that a sect usually begins developing in the direction of becoming a church. One of the results of this development is that the foundation of religious experience is substituted by a system of doctrine. It is interesting to note that the Methodist Church, out of which many of the Sabbatarian Adventist members and leaders came, was experiencing this shift at the same time. It was in 1864 that the Methodist General Conference voted to require members to subscribe to a doctrinal test.¹ Previously, the only test had been the religious experience of the individual member.

The Sabbatarian Adventists had developed a unique body of Bible doctrine, which stood up very well in debate. This doctrine distinguished them from the other churches to a much greater degree than did their experiential worship. As a matter of course, the doctrine would tend to be emphasized in gaining new converts. The new converts would in turn hold the doctrine in a relatively high regard, to the possible detriment of the

¹Robert E. Chiles, Theological Transition in American Methodism, 1790-1935 (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1983), 57.

experience. In this way the process of moving from sect to church was accelerated in Sabbatarian Adventism. The process that might take a whole generation to unfold within a closed system developed much more quickly in a strongly evangelistic organization.

The Sabbatarian Adventists felt not only social pressure to turn from experience to doctrine, the social issues of their time were also propelling them in the direction of preoccupation with social action.

Social Issues Eclipse
Personal Piety

A final sociological reason for the decline of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations among Protestantism at large and perhaps within Sabbatarian Adventism is seen in the growing preoccupation of the church with social issues. The 1850s through the 1860s was a time of intense social concern in the United States. The churches were preoccupied with the problems of slavery, temperance, and other important issues. In an editorial written in 1854, Fletcher Harper wrote: "There can be no doubt that the tendency at the present day is to magnify the political, the social, the secular, or what may be called the worldly-humanitarian aspects" of "professedly religious movements." He continued by saying that it was becoming "almost as common to hear about the regeneration of the race as the salvation of

souls."¹ Harper yearned for a return to spiritual religion, which he viewed as being eclipsed by the current emphasis on the eradication of social evil. The impression is given that the churches, in becoming more preoccupied with social issues, had at the same time lost their spirituality. For Harper, a Methodist, spirituality was inseparable from the emotional and charismatic aspects of religion.

The Adventists also were involved in the discussion on the slavery issue, as any American would have been at that time. Temperance, however, became an even larger issue for the Adventist church as time went on. The involvement in these issues may have shut off some of the energy that had been directed toward personal piety and religious enthusiasm.

We have examined several possible reasons for the decline in charismatic manifestations within Sabbatarian Adventism. The next task is to apply some of these religious and sociological considerations to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in America in the late twentieth century.

Present Considerations

The Seventh-day Adventist Church of White America today is skeptical of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations. It is still afraid of fanaticism, still

¹Fletcher Harper, quoted in Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, 15, 16.

leans safely on the theory of truth. If it returned to its experiential roots, however, the Seventh-day Adventist Church would find itself with more internal spiritual power, and perhaps more attraction for a large segment of present-day Americans.

Hunger for Experience

Americans in the 1990s are rejecting the imposition of external authority and are, again, obsessed with personal experience. Giant amusement parks, experimentation with drugs, and preoccupation with sex are some signs of this obsession. One's own experience has become the basis of authority. This has been reflected in the area of religion as well. "Religion," writes L. Shannon Jung, "both in its practices and its theology, has become more experiential. This correlates with the personalization of religion."¹ The growing churches are those with a strong experiential element appealing to the individual. The Evangelical churches with emphasis on the "born again" experience are among the growing churches. They combine the authority of the Bible with the personal experience of salvation. The Pentecostal and Holiness churches are also growing. Their emphasis is to a great degree on experience.

The large middle segment of American society

¹L. Shannon Jung, Identity and Community: A Social Introduction to Religion (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 157.

today, the baby-boomer generation, is looking to religion for what it can get out of it. This group wants, even more than it wants friendship and a church close to home, to be able to actually experience God. For baby-boomers, experiential expression comes before doctrine, rules, and codes.¹ The children of the baby-boomers, called Generation X, are looking for authenticity and transparency concerning personal struggles and doubts.²

John E. Biersdorf describes certain rapidly growing religious groups in America as stressing both the need for intimacy and for authentic religious experience. "He hypothesizes that there is a hunger for experience in the contemporary American that explains this growth."³

The present evangelical emphasis upon the new-birth experience is a continuation of American revivalistic religion. The Sabbatarian Adventists believed in the necessity of an experience similar to that espoused by the present-day evangelicals. Although we may not agree with all of their doctrines, the Holiness churches today are heirs of an experiential tradition of which the Sabbatarian Adventists were very much a part. A

¹See "Religion in America," The CO Researcher, 25 November 1994, 1037-1041.

²See "Reaching the First Post-Christian Generation," Christianity Today, 12 September 1994, 18-24.

³Jung, 95. Jung has condensed these thoughts from John E. Biersdorf, Hunger for Experience: Vital Religious Communities in America (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 97-115.

revival of emphasis on the experiential aspects of Seventh-day Adventism would not only bring the church more in line with its own tradition and history, it would also increase its appeal in a culture hungry for experience.

Ellen White repeatedly called for a revival of primitive godliness in the church as the greatest of its needs. A revival is a calling to action of something that had been alive in past time. Ellen White in 1877 upheld the Sabbatarian Adventist period of Seventh-day Adventist history as an example of the correct orientation toward experiential religion in any age:

The old standard bearers knew what it was to wrestle with God in prayer, and to enjoy the outpouring of His Spirit. . . . How is it with the rising generation? Are they converted to God? . . . The people must be taught not to be satisfied with a form of godliness without the spirit and power.¹

The words "conversion," "spirit," and "power" in Sabbatarian Adventism carried an experiential meaning that is not clearly understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 1990s. Ellen White held that "experience is knowledge derived from experiment. Experimental religion is what is needed now."² Religion is "a personal experience of God's renewing power upon the soul."³

¹Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958-80), 1:122.

²Ellen G. White, Testimonies, 1:221.

³Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1911), 451.

Experience is not only the felt need of society in the 1990s, the experience of godliness is upheld as the greatest need of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. It can be seen that the church should profit both internally and evangelistically from an emphasis on experiential religion.

Present Fear of Fanaticism

In spite of the many counsels recommending a more experiential religion, Seventh-day Adventists have an ever-present fear of fanaticism that keeps their emphasis today more theoretical. For example, Arthur White published a series of twelve articles in the Review and Herald in 1972 and 1973, which appear to be written with an aim to counteract any tendency to fanaticism or charismatic experience in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These were reprinted by the Ellen G. White Estate under the title of Charismatic Experiences in Early Seventh-day Adventist History. Four of the articles dealt with a few cases of ecstatic experiences among the Sabbatarian Adventists.¹ In presenting the case of healings, tongues, and other ecstatic manifestations, White leaves the decided impression that he believes that God does not work that way in today's world because of the possible confusion with Satan's work and/or fanaticism. This is an evidence of the fear of fanaticism that seems

¹Arthur L. White, Charismatic Experiences in Early Seventh-day Adventist History, 3-9, 12, 13.

to be dominating the actions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church today.

White, on the other hand, included in one article statements from the pen of Ellen White concerning the appearance of fanaticism in the revival at Healdsburg College in 1885 that have meaning for contemporary Adventism. She wrote

that there were fanatical ones who pressed into that work I would not deny. But if you move in the future as you have done in this matter, you may be assured of one thing, you will condemn the work of the latter rain when it shall come. For you will see at that time far greater evidences of fanaticism.¹

Also concerning the Healdsburg revival, she wrote:

Men may pronounce against it because it does not come in their exact line. Fanaticism will also come in as it always has done when God works. The net will gather in its meshes both bad and good, but who will dare to cast the whole thing overboard, because all are not of the right kind of fish.²

It is possible that in fear of fanaticism the church has dampened the true workings of the Holy Spirit. Fanaticism will always be present when God is at work. However, it is a very serious matter to assert that the work of God is from the Devil. Our aim must be to seek the true power of God and recognize the difference between true and false manifestations.

¹Ellen G. White, Letter 76, 1886, cited in *ibid.*, 30.

²Ellen G. White, Letter 10, 1885, cited in *ibid.*, 29.

Initiated by God

Unfortunately, a simple emphasis on physical phenomena will not bring about a revival of true religion with accompanying charismatic manifestations. True religion is God's work and is brought about by repentance and submission to God. The Sabbatarian Adventists opened the way to charismatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit through total submission to God, prayer, and confession of sins. They desired only God, His power, and His will. The results were God's work and could not be predicted. They understood that the Holy Spirit could not be used by anyone. The Holy Spirit was the one who used the human agent.¹

True charismatic manifestations, then, were not initiated by men. They were a type of by-product of an individual and communal work of earnest prayer, repentance, and confession. When people entered a meeting with preconceived ideas as to what physical manifestations they wanted to experience, they had a tendency to attempt to make them happen without the necessary submission to God. In this situation the people were left to their own power. In the midst of their intense desire to see something supernatural happen, they were open to accept any power outside of themselves. Satan would then step in and supply the power, which, at times, was difficult to distinguish from the power of God. The results were

¹Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, 1:130.

sometimes spectacular, but often left the people feeling depressed and empty. These exercises, that the Sabbatarian Adventists considered to be satanic or humanly inspired, were termed "fanaticism." The true power of God, however, left them with a sense of having more strength from God, more grace to overcome every wrong word or action, and with their minds fixed upon heavenly things.¹

Conclusion

In this chapter various sociological and historical forces have been discussed that could be advanced as partial reasons for the decline of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations in the Sabbatarian Adventist Church. It is probable that a combination of these social and religious forces was at work precipitating this decline. Many of the same forces are at work in the church and society today. However, these forces do not necessarily rule out similar manifestations today. Nor is it true that cultural changes in the church and society have moved the basis of true religion from the experiential to the intellectual. But it may be necessary to fight upstream against the current of social and religious forces that tend to sweep religion into the area of formality. We have seen above, however, that modern people are again craving for experience. It is not

¹Ellen G. White, Manuscript 3, 1854, EGW-AU.

nostalgia that makes me believe that personal piety today will again allow the Holy Spirit to work as He wills.

Now that we understand the part that these social and religious forces have played in shaping the present practice of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, my suggestions are presented in the areas of personal piety and public worship that could open the way for the Holy Spirit to operate powerfully within the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. An informal worship service could be styled that would facilitate this work. This worship service might be similar to the meetings of the Sabbatarian Adventists during the period of greatest fervor. The individual, personal, religious style of the Sabbatarian Adventists could also be emulated.

PART TWO
PRACTICAL APPLICATION

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL PRAYER MEETINGS FOR THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN THE 1990S

The early Sabbatarian Adventist church was alive with charismatic manifestations that grew out of the members' intense spirituality. As they moved through the 1850s, these charismatic manifestations decreased for the reasons given in chapter 3. This decrease continued through the latter 1800s and into the twentieth century. The holy-flesh fanaticism of the early 1900s served only to reinforce the ever-present fear of fanaticism within Seventh-day Adventism. That fear, by the middle of the twentieth century, had caused nearly all Seventh-day Adventists to shy away from the miracle gifts of the Holy Spirit. Near the end of twentieth century, we still encounter a fear of fanaticism that stifles our spiritual energies and causes church members to look for the manifestation of God in His doctrines instead of in His power.

For this reason the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the late twentieth century is in need of returning to a more experiential religious worship. I see the church as emphasizing the doctrines while neglecting, to a certain

extent, the balance of personal piety and the power of the Holy Spirit. True charismatic manifestations, which grow out of a close personal piety, are limited. There seems, however, to be a growing sense of need among church members for a return to more personal piety.

In chapter 3 I discussed the fact that people in the 1990s are hungry to experience religion, not just to believe in it. That is a reason why a more informal, experiential type of meeting should attract more Americans today.

Using early Sabbatarian Adventist experiential meetings as the source of my ideas, this chapter describes several important elements in conducting experiential prayer meetings today. My goal is a revived church that meets the conditions that the Sabbatarian Adventists understood were necessary for receiving Holy Spirit power: humbly seeking God through song, testimony, prayer, and Bible study.

Necessary Elements of Experiential Meetings

Preparatory Prayer

The first element in successful experiential meetings is prayer before the meeting begins. Personal prayer is a necessary preparation for conducting a meeting that has as its aim to bring the congregation into the presence of God. Those who will be participating, and especially those who will be leading, must spend as much time in prayer as necessary to quiet their own hearts and

bring their minds into the experience of communion with God. Unless the leader comes directly from the audience chamber of God, it cannot be expected that the people will be elevated to experience God's presence.

Ellen White described the practice of Sabbatarian Adventist ministers who were preparing to lead out in services at early camp meetings in these terms:

In earlier times the ministers would often go away and pray together, and they would not cease until the Spirit of God responded to their prayers. Then they would return from the place of prayer with their faces lighted up; and when they spoke to the congregation their words were with power.¹

This statement speaks about a special time of preparation by a small group of the leaders of worship. Notice that the leaders would not be content with a perfunctory prayer. They continued pleading with God for His special presence until they experienced communion with Him. Only in this way could they lead the larger group to experience communion with God. Leaders have a difficult time leading others into an experience that they, themselves, do not have. Personal prayer and small group prayer, then, is an indispensable preparation for leading a larger group to experience God's presence.

The quality of experience with God in any particular meeting is affected, however, not only by the personal experience of the leader, but by the spirituality that each participant brings to the meeting. Much of what

¹Ellen G. White, Testimonies, 6:50.

happens in a large group is brought there by those who come. We cannot expect a group to move spiritually and experientially far ahead of the individuals who make up that group. Each person who is to participate in a meeting where closeness with God is the primary goal should, therefore, be led to understand the necessity of his or her personal preparation before the beginning of the meeting. This preparation should include a great deal of prayer.

Not only in preparation but, also, within the format of experiential meetings, prayer is one of the most important ingredients.

Earnest Prayer

The Sabbatarian Adventists came to their meetings expecting to sense the presence of God. They would come from varying perspectives, often burdened with problems and trials. They trusted that the corporate seeking of God in prayer would cause a lifting of their spirits as the Holy Spirit overshadowed the meeting. They knew that prayer opened the door to heaven's best blessing, God's presence. For this reason, they would often begin a session of prayer with the intent to continue praying until the burdens lifted and they sensed the powerful presence of God.

The earnest, serious, pleading with God for His presence today will elicit the same powerful response in our day that it did for the Sabbatarian Adventists.

People today, however, are in a hurry. They want quick answers to every request made to God. God, on the other hand, is in no hurry. He will wait patiently for those who seek Him to slow the busyness of their minds and concentrate on Him. God's presence and power are only given to those who have turned themselves over to God in submission to His will. Earnest concentration on God and His will prepares the mind for receiving His power.

Many people today feel that it is undignified to invest emotion in religious matters. The same people have no problem becoming very excited and emotional watching football or basketball. They invest great emotion in a love relationship with a husband, a wife, a child, or a parent. They feel that prayer, on the other hand, should be on an even, matter-of-fact plane. Why should we not invest at least as much emotion in a love relationship with God as we invest in a love relationship with human relatives and friends? Prayer, as communication with God, deserves our highest energies, our deepest love and emotion.

A lifeless, formal prayer makes the mind unfit for receiving God's power. This is a prayer without feeling, without an accompanying sense of who is being spoken to; a prayer meant to be heard and approved by human beings first, though directed to God. A prayer of this sort will deaden and formalize the atmosphere of a meeting. People must be taught that the real purpose of prayer is not to

compose an oration that everyone will approve of, but to talk to God like they would talk to a friend. In public prayer, as in private prayer, we should open our hearts to God, becoming vulnerable in sharing the true state of our thoughts and feelings at that particular moment. This type of openness is contagious. It can cause a sudden breaking down of barriers between people as well as a sense of coming into the presence of God for everyone present.

Honesty and candidness are extremely important. Effective prayer will share with God exactly what is being experienced in life at that moment--feelings, hurts, happinesses, and needs. God will not be embarrassed or shocked by our honesty. There is nothing we can tell Him that He does not already know. It is exactly our treating God as real that allows Him to show His reality to us.

Openly telling God our feelings breaks down our pride and creates a spirit of humility and mutual love in the meeting. On the other hand, communicating and praying on a superficial level stifles humility and bolsters pride, creating barriers between those present, as well as barriers to experiencing God's presence.

Another means of coming into God's presence is by singing songs, which express, or explain, that experience.

Songs of Experience

The majority of songs sung in an experiential prayer meeting should express the personal experience of

Christians. These songs can serve as models, showing how a living relationship with God can look and feel. In the initial phases of teaching a congregation to experience God's presence, these songs may or may not express the true experience of those present. With time, however, songs of experience will move from the role of modeling a more mature experience with God to expressing the collective experience of the group. Those present will be led through song toward a deeper experience with God.

This type of song is sometimes termed subjective. The subject of the song is a person who is experiencing the presence of God. Many songs of Charles Wesley come under this category. There are, also, many excellent newer songs such as "Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place." The chorus of the traditional Christmas song, "O Come All Ye Faithful" is excellent to begin a prayer time. This chorus calls people into God's presence with the words, "O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord."

Songs may also be a type of prayer, addressing the God who is present in a close, familiar way. Many praise songs, old and new, are in this category. An intimacy with the Eternal One may be fostered through the words of this type of song. In fact, any song that acknowledges the presence of God as a living reality can usher the worshiper into the audience chamber with God. As God's presence is acknowledged in song, He often makes Himself

known in tangible ways. These ways may be considered charismatic manifestations.

Many churches of the 1990s are singing, almost exclusively, songs of praise to God. The type of praise song that expresses praise growing out of experience can be very meaningful. The exclusive use of praise songs, however, leaves out a large number of songs of experience. These songs, which often use the pronoun "I" or "we," are some of the best for ushering people into God's presence. Songs should be ultimately evaluated on their effectiveness in helping to create an atmosphere that fosters the experience of the presence of God.

Singing can be a powerful means of communicating to the group the reality of an experience. Songs of differing types can bind the group together in a communal experience with God. When the experience is communicated in words, it is called a testimony.

Testimony

The time given to testimonies allows the people present to talk about the acts of God in their lives. The relating of things that God did for individuals who are present in a meeting often has an electrifying effect on others. People are drawn to each other and to God. Barriers come down--barriers to unity and spirituality.

Not only does the practice of singing, praying, and testifying contribute to the experiencing of the presence of God, but the study of these and other subjects

helps promote experiential religion.

Studies on Experiential Religion

In each meeting there may be an explanation of a different aspect of experiential religion to prepare the people to participate. These explanations should be given in an earnest, sincere manner in order to impress the hearers with the reality behind the words. Experiential religion is, thus, modeled while being taught. One of the first topics that should be presented is prayer.

Teaching to Pray

Prayer is understood in different ways by different people. The type of prayer that I am interested in here is heart-felt talking to God as to a friend; prayer in which the soul is bared before God. This type of prayer is both personal and valuable to the group.

The group that meets together to approach God needs an openness and honesty in its prayers. Prayers that are not expressive of inner need and inner reality tend to dampen the spirit of the group. Those who hear a surface or intellectually correct prayer become afraid to express their own heart realities. The meeting can become dry and dead.

This is why teaching is necessary. The participants must become sensitive to the type of prayer that contributes to a sense of God's presence and the type of prayer that does not contribute. God is not interested

in our ceremonial compliments. His presence is more likely to be sensed where worshipers are pouring out their souls in honesty and sincerity.

Therefore, the type of prayer that must be modeled, taught, and explained is the prayer that is an expression of what is happening in the heart of the worshiper at the moment of prayer. It flows from a heart actively searching for a sense of God's presence or already basking in that presence and wanting more. It is, in a sense, a prayer testimony.

Teaching to Testify

Testimony is the backbone of experiential meetings. It is sharing with others the work of God in one's life. In order to truly be called testimony, however, it must be the recounting of a first-hand experience. Philosophizing about a Bible text or telling someone else's story is not testimony, although it may be uplifting. If, however, that Bible text or that story had a special impact on the one speaking, and that impact is the focal point, then it can be considered testimony and would further the aim of leading the meeting in the direction of an encounter with God.

The concept of personal, experiential testimony must be taught by modeling and by the use of pointed questions. People are not accustomed to being personal and specific in public speaking. A testimony, for many church members, is a general statement of faith, which may

be followed with a request for prayer that they be faithful. For this reason, questions used to stimulate testimony should be specific and pointed. These questions can be used by the leader to limit the scope of participation to the recounting of personal experiences with God. It is personal experience that encourages experiential religion.

Some examples of questions or limiting statements that could be used to teach experiential testimonies in a group are: "Tell us what the Lord has done for you this week." "How are things between you and the Lord right now?" "Tell us about any recent victories (or defeats) you have experienced in your Christian life." "Describe your connection with God right now. What is it like?"

This type of question tends to limit the testimonies to personal experiences. These experiences teach and encourage experiential religion and set the stage for sensing the presence of the Holy Spirit in the meeting.

Teaching about the Holy Spirit

The concept of the Holy Spirit as a person should be taught in order to prepare people to experience the reality of His presence. Spending time talking about the Holy Spirit, studying about Him, and praying for Him will make the people comfortable in His presence. The very act of thinking and talking about the Holy Spirit brings us together with Him in closer union. The result of this

union is a sense of His presence that revitalizes the spiritual life. In fact, the Holy Spirit brings every other spiritual blessing with Him as He draws near to us.

The gifts of the Spirit should be dwelt upon, not as impersonal talents, but as gifts that the Holy Spirit gives as He comes near to us. The gifts are not separate from the Giver, but are given only as He is present. Gifts of the Spirit are dependent to a degree upon our inviting Him into our hearts, reaching out to Him, and communing with Him. Believers that are reaching out to the Holy Spirit with their hearts, minds, and souls will not fail to be graced with His tangible presence.

The Holy Spirit's presence makes an indelible mark on the people present. Their spiritual energies are revitalized. They are taught directly by the Spirit Himself how to proceed in order to draw ever closer to Him.

The Bible contains a great deal that should be taught concerning the Holy Spirit: He was present at creation, He works through our consciences, He inspired the writers of the Bible, He represents Jesus to us, He can do supernatural works through us, He regenerates our hearts. Each of these subjects, and more like them, contains material for several studies that are excellent means to prepare the way for the Holy Spirit to exercise His power in the congregation.

As we study the work of the Holy Spirit, it

becomes apparent that some of the work that we attribute to the Holy Spirit is done through the agency of angels.

Teaching about Angels

There is considerable mention of angels in the Bible. Several short studies on angels can be developed from this material. These studies will have as their goal to inform and to open the mind to the vast array of beings that God uses to communicate with people. Understanding that any person who wants God in his or her life is never alone or devoid of a heavenly presence will add a healthy experiential dimension to spirituality.

Talking of the presence of real, live angels in a meeting helps the participants to experience the presence of God. The supernatural is made more real in their minds as it is pointed out that unseen beings surround us and attempt to interact with us. Stating that powerful angels are walking up and down the aisles of the church, and may be sitting beside each person, heightens individual and collective awareness of a holy presence and sets the stage for close communion with God. The more real we feel that God is, the more we are able to concentrate on Him, shutting out other influences that press in upon our minds.

Feeling Versus Faith

It is crucial to understand that our goal in experiential meetings is closeness with God, not feelings

in and of themselves. Feelings are a result of closeness to the awesome God whom we worship. In His presence is found joy, peace, love, happiness, sorrow, exhilaration, calmness, and any number of similar or contrasting emotions. We go looking for God for His own sake, and good feelings are sometimes granted to add joy to our lives and to let us know in ways other than intellectually that God is real and that He is actually present.

While God is showing Himself to us in His own creative, sometimes exciting, way, not much faith is necessary to believe that He exists and that He cares deeply for us. When feeling is strong, faith comes easier.

When, on the other hand, we pray and plead with God and there is no feeling, no sense of His presence, faith "kicks in" to let us know that God is present even though there is no sensory evidence of His presence. In fact, the Bible makes it plain in places such as in Ps 34 that God is close to those who are feeling sad and depressed. Faith lets us believe God is there despite our feelings. It is common for Christians to have so-called "dry spells" when the sense of God's presence is absent and faith is stretched. At such times we can remember the times when God especially blessed us with His felt presence and hope for future joy.

How to Guard Against Fanaticism

In chapter 3 I described fanaticism as the attempt to approximate true manifestations by working up an artificial excitement through human effort. Early Adventist fanatics short-circuited the necessary preparation of heart, the submission to God, and the putting away of sin, and received, as a result, an unholy spirit. This usually involved building up an emotional fever by such things as clapping, shouting, and singing. The outward appearance of fanatical religion was often similar to the true.

Because of this close parallel between the true and the false, and because of fanaticism's devastating effect, we must be careful not to foster a search for feeling in and of itself. We are always safe in reaching out for God and His presence. Luke 11:11-13 makes it clear that God will give us the Holy Spirit in response to our request. The exact way in which He makes Himself known is His prerogative. I Cor 12:11 tells us that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to parcel out His gifts, which I believe include various manifestations of His presence. The danger of fanaticism is heightened when we are expecting God to reveal Himself in a particular way. We should, therefore, come to God in order to be close to Him rather than to receive a manifestation.

Our greatest protection from fanaticism lies in our motives in coming to God and in the way we approach

Him. When we come to God through a study of His word with a sincere desire to know Him and do only what He wants, we will find Him. He will show Himself to us in ways that we will recognize as His alone.

Perspective

Sabbatarian Adventists expected to sense God's presence in their meetings. This expectation and reality gave life and energy to their spirituality. The same expectation and reality today should give life and energy to our spirituality. Our fear of fanaticism has, along with other factors, frightened us away from this center of true religious life.

In order to recapture the life and energy of true religion, we could well follow the example of the Sabbatarian Adventists whose religion was filled with the life and energy we lack today.

CHAPTER V

ONE EXAMPLE OF PROMOTING PERSONAL RELIGION IN SOCIAL PRAYER MEETINGS

In Manaus, Brazil, while pastor of the Cachoeirinha church, I became interested in revitalizing the prayer meetings. At that time the prayer meetings were a traditional preaching service attended by an average of fifty members on Wednesday evenings. The people in the pews participated only in singing the opening and closing hymns. I felt that the people should be more involved in their meeting, and that it should express more of the real life that they lived day by day.

In order to involve the people in the whole fabric of the meeting, we began to devote the larger part of the service to singing, testifying, and praying together. There was participation, excitement, and interest. When someone wanted to sing a song, we all sang it right then. When a prayer request was voiced, volunteers were asked to pray for that concern right then, as the congregation knelt. The emphasis in prayer was on the needs of those present at that moment, not on people somewhere else. In fact, the whole service moved around the needs of the persons present.

I began each week's meeting with a short study. Some of the topics for the short, weekly teaching were: testimonies, various aspects of prayer, the Holy Spirit, the presence of God and angels, and how to witness effectively.

The first of these studies taught the people how to give specific types of testimonies. These testimonies included: praising God, a personal experience of God's power that week, a witnessing experience of that week, or expressing the sense of God's presence at that moment.

It would seem that testifying should be such a spontaneous act that teaching it would not only be unnecessary, but would be counterproductive, bringing out testimonies that fit the mold of the teaching. The opposite, however, was true. The members had been socialized to believe that a testimony in prayer meeting should only consist of a statement such as "thank the Lord for His goodness" and a request for the congregation to "pray for me that I will be faithful." These stylized formulas were not really testimonies. The people needed to be taught to look into their own experience for the content of their testimonies. It took several weeks of teaching, modeling different types of testimonies, and insisting that the specific model be followed before spontaneous testimony, having to do with real-life issues, began to be expressed.

When the people began expressing their true

feelings, fears, and struggles to each other, the result was often electrifying. God's presence could be felt strongly as the whole congregation shed tears over the struggles of a brother or sister in the faith. Nothing opened our hearts for the entrance of God's Spirit as quickly as a heartfelt confession of sin or a testimony of personal need. Everyone instantly identified with and sympathized with the one who was speaking. We felt bonded together by God's power and His love.

The same kind of personalization was needed in prayer. Prayer requests had almost invariably been concerned with relatives or friends far removed from the present meeting. I began insisting that our focus in prayer be moved from Aunt Maria's health problem in a city 1,000 kilometers away to the needs and concerns of those who had come to our meeting that evening. We prayed for each other. We prayed for the Holy Spirit to fall on us and empower us that moment. The result was that we sensed a closeness and unity in prayer that we had not felt before.

The bulk of the meeting was divided somewhat equally among testimonies, the singing of choruses, and prayer for those present. The most common cycle was a testimony of praise to God, someone asking for help with a problem, one or two prayers for the individual with the problem, and the singing of a chorus upon arising from prayer. The members expressed their real concerns and

felt the love in their fellow member's prayers for them. The members began to sense that their religion was a real part of life.

The response was such that in a few weeks the attendance went from 50 to an average of 150. The young people were especially attracted, but many older people came as well. There was a sense of expectancy and interest from beginning to end. Many times the people would testify that they sensed the presence of God in a special way in the meetings. We heard confessions and participated in victories together.

Within this prayer meeting the idea developed that we should start a new church in an adjoining area of the city. A group of about forty people were trained to assist in a series of evangelistic meetings and to study the Bible in homes. The result was that a new church was built and filled in the neighborhood called Sao Francisco.

In this instance in Brazil, as well as in several locations in the United States, I have found that teaching and modeling an experiential atmosphere in a group of people leads to their experiencing the presence of God. Reaching out to God with an honest heart leads to manifestations of His presence.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This study has shown that Sabbatarian Adventist spirituality grew out of the revivalism of the early 1800s. Sabbatarian Adventists were a part of the revivalistic, enthusiastic, charismatic religious society in which they lived. Branching out from the Millerite movement, the Sabbatarian Adventists took the middle ground between the excesses of the spiritualizers on the one hand and the intellectual, anti-charismatic stand of Miller and the Albany Conference on the other hand.

Biblical doctrine and charismatic experience were equally important to the Sabbatarian Adventist understanding of true religion. The early Sabbatarian Adventists continued to expect that God would act among them in an obvious manner. They could not conceive of true Christian spirituality without accompanying manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

One important purpose of worship for Sabbatarian Adventists was an encounter with God: an encounter that left no doubt that God was present, and that He accepted their worship and themselves as persons. They reached out

to God, asking Him to be in control of their meetings in whatever way He should choose. From the accounts of the time, we find that God chose to make His presence and power known in many different ways. Some of the more obvious ways were in visions, healings, melting power, slaying power, shouting, and weeping. More subtle were impressions, dreams, and feelings of freedom, liberty, joy, and peace.

True charismatic manifestations were understood by Sabbatarian Adventists to be a result of reaching out to God in prayer, confession, and submission to Him. One gets the sense that there was a thirst for God that could only be satiated by His own presence. The searching was not for manifestations, but, rather, for God Himself.

When manifestations, in and of themselves, became the goal, the result was often an unholy spirit. There were groups that worked up an artificial excitement by playing on human emotions. These were termed "fanatics." The Sabbatarian Adventist leaders believed that the exercises of the fanatics were aided by Satan, who gave them their power. The unenlightened observer could not always tell the difference between manifestations brought on by the Spirit of God and those induced by human excitement.

One way early Adventists determined if a manifestation was true or false was by the manner in which the worshipers approached God. The true worshiper opened

his or her heart to God and sought God in prayer and submission. The manifestations of the Holy Spirit were a result of closeness with God and could only be initiated by God.

Another way to tell the true from the false was that people who were truly in contact with God would sense the "rightness" of true manifestations of the Holy Spirit, while sensing a "strangeness" in the presence of spurious charismatic acts.

The aftereffects of charismatic manifestations could also indicate their source. At the conclusion of true manifestations, the participants felt a "fullness" and happiness that continued sometimes for days. The aftereffects of humanly generated or Satanic excitement were often an emptiness with a negative feeling.

Nine possible reasons were given for the decline of charismatic experiences. Three of these reasons were from the history of Adventism and six were based on the influence of society at that time.

The first reason is that Sabbatarian Adventists feared false manifestations, or fanaticism. This fear may have cooled their ardor and brought on a lessening of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations as they attempted to stay as far away from fanatical exercises as possible.

A second factor in the decline of manifestations was a lessening of the intense spirituality practiced by

the early Sabbatarian Adventists. When the Holy Spirit was sought with intense desire, He came close with His power. When, however, the need of the Holy Spirit was felt less, when prayer was depended upon less, then the Holy Spirit was more distant and manifestations of His power were less apparent.

A third religious factor in the decline was that the church began relying more on intellectual argument and less on the power of God. This caused the manifestations of the Holy Spirit to decrease in the church.

The first social factor in the decline was that emotional expression became less and less acceptable in society at large. This carried over into the church, especially as the church began to desire acceptance as a legitimate organization.

A second social factor was that the rise of science and the scientific method prejudiced people against subjective or emotional experiences.

A third social factor was the general bettering of the Sabbatarian Adventist economic position and the resultant shift away from emotional fervor.

A fourth factor was the social pressure exerted by new members coming from an unemotional background. These new members would tend to "look down their noses" at parts of emotional religion that they were unacquainted with.

A fifth factor was that the common evolution of a movement into a church replaces experience with doctrine.

The distinctiveness of the Sabbatarian Adventists lay more in their doctrine than in their emotional experience. Doctrine, therefore, was emphasized progressively more and more.

The final reason for the decline of enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations was that the Seventh-day Adventist Church, along with most of the other church groups of that time, began to become more involved in social issues outside the group, to the detriment of focusing inward on personal piety.

Similar forces are at work in the 1990s. An intellectual religion is more culturally acceptable. A constant fear of being too emotional and stepping over into fanaticism has tended to keep the Seventh-day Adventist Church distanced from enthusiasm and charismatic manifestations.

We have seen that people of the late twentieth century, however, are craving for experience. More emotional content would appeal to people hungry for experience. To meet this need for experience, a plan for experiential prayer meetings was proposed.

These meetings should be preceded by earnest, personal prayer. This prayer will prepare the heart for an even closer encounter with God in the coming meeting, when the presence of God will be expected in response to earnest prayer.

Other important ingredients in an experiential

meeting are songs of experience and testimonies. Each of these must reflect the feelings and experience of the group. But people often need to be taught how to participate meaningfully in an experiential meeting. That is why four topics that could be taught to participants were included, along with suggestions on how to teach them.

The first topic mentioned is prayer. The type of prayer to be taught is an expression of what is happening in the heart of the worshiper at the moment of prayer. Prayer should be approached as a true encounter with God.

The second topic is testimony. A testimony should be just as personal and honest as prayer, but directed to fellow worshipers.

Other topics that should be taught are about the Holy Spirit and about angels. Understanding the reality of the supernatural all around us through a study of these two topics can heighten the sense of the presence of God.

Chapter 5 is an example of the results of applying some of the principles delineated in this study. In the church in Cachoeirinha, Brazil, attendance and spirituality increased along with the felt presence of God.

Conclusions

The Sabbatarian Adventists exhibited many enthusiastic and charismatic manifestations. These manifestations appear to have grown naturally out of their

culture as well as out of their intense spirituality. Religious enthusiasm among Sabbatarian Adventists declined because of a number of cultural and religious forces that acted upon them. Probably the most important of these forces was their fear of fanaticism coupled with an increasing dependence on doctrinal argument instead of spiritual power. At times when they recognized their lowered state of spirituality, a concerted effort to re-establish a close connection with God brought about greater spiritual power with an attendant increase in charismatic manifestations.

Some of the same social and religious forces that caused a decline in charismatic manifestations among the Sabbatarian Adventists are operating in the late twentieth century to keep Seventh-day Adventists away from manifestations that the Holy Spirit might otherwise be pleased to give them. Seventh-day Adventists today are still operating in fear of any manifestation that might be inclined toward the fanatical, and they feel more comfortable resting upon an intellectual knowledge of truth rather than upon a foundation of a strong spirituality. It does not help that the majority in society disapprove of the public display of so personal a thing as religious emotion.

In the light of these social and religious forces, it is important to begin to educate Seventh-day Adventists as to the value of an intense, honest spirituality.

Experiential religion must be taught, modeled, and planned. People need to be led to feel comfortable with whatever the Holy Spirit should decide to do through them. They should be led to expect the powerful presence of God in their meetings.

In fact, Seventh-day Adventists should feel disappointed if God's presence is not marked in a very real way in their meetings. People need to become comfortable with intensely desiring God and allowing Him to control them as He wills. The expectation of this reality will bring energy and life to the church. Too much structure can kill spirituality. Informality, however, must be structured around God Himself and our seeking of Him.

One caution needs to be expressed with regard to openness in experiential meetings. Our faults are to be confessed to each other, and our sins to God. People who are not used to being open with each other need to be instructed that some things are appropriate to share with a group and other things should be told only to God.

The prayer of the disciples following the release of Peter and John from prison ended with two requests: they should speak God's words with boldness, and healings and "signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus" (Acts 4:29,30). They sought both correct doctrine and signs and wonders. The Sabbatarian Adventists have shown us that signs and wonders did not

end with the Apostles, that God can still pour out gifts on His church. God is waiting for people who are willing to seek Him with the intensity of soul and the abandon of the disciples.

As we come to the final days of this world, God tells us: "I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions" (Joel 2:28). This statement leaves no doubt about God's intention to show His power in charismatic manifestations in the final days of earth's history.

Ellen White also affirms that God will again use miracles, signs, and wonders to authenticate His work:

The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. . . . Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men (Rev 13:13). Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.¹

The miracle working-power of God operating at the same time as Satan's lying wonders will cause a division among the people of the world. They must make a decision for or against God. The members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will no doubt be divided on this point as well. Fanaticism will be operating at the same time that

¹Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1950), 611, 612.

God's power is being poured out. That, however, is not reason enough for God to withhold His power, or for us to discount the true manifestations. The spirits must be tested to see whether they are of God.

We must be open to allowing the Holy Spirit to act in whatever way He wills. Different people express their religious feelings in different ways. God also works differently with people of differing personalities and backgrounds. We must be careful to not reject God's work in other people because it may be out of the bounds of our particular experience. The Holy Spirit may choose to work in ways that we are not familiar with. However, we must remember that the Holy Spirit will always act in a manner that appeals to people of good sense.

The Sabbatarian Adventists have left us a legacy similar to that of the Apostles, which points the way to God's power and what its effects could be today. Godly enthusiasm and true charismatic manifestations are still part of God's plan to authenticate His message in the late twentieth century. We may expect to see again the miracle-working gifts of the Holy Spirit among His people. We should actively promote the spirituality that would make it possible for God to act once again powerfully through His people.

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VITA

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From 1975 to 1986 Mike served as a missionary in the Bahia-Sergipe and Central Amazon Missions of Brazil. He served at various times as lay activities and Sabbath school director, youth director, district pastor, and pilot. He pioneered work on the rivers Negro and Purus, hiring Bible workers and building over twenty churches.

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