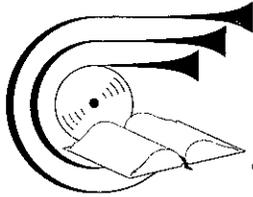


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Lest We Forget

"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." LS 196

IN 1995 *Lest We Forget* FEATURES

James & Ellen

WHITE

The Millerite movement united together a powerful group of consecrated men and women in one concerted evangelistic effort to warn the world of Christ's second coming around 1843 or 1844, according to prophecy, and to urge sinners to repent and prepare for that awesome event.

Among that group of consecrated men and women were two fervent Christian youth, James Springer White and Ellen Gould Harmon. How did these two young people join the Millerites, endure the great disappointment, meet, marry and influence the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? In the four issues of Volume 5 of *Lest We Forget* we will review how God worked in their lives.

This issue of *Lest We Forget* focuses on the period in their lives before, during, and shortly after October 22, 1844. Dr. & Mrs. Ray Foster pose questions about James and Ellen White regarding those factors which influenced their growth as

Millerite Christians and prepared them for positions of prominence in the Seventh-day Adventist Church—James, as a powerful, effective leader; Ellen as a messenger of God.

Lest We Forget, Volume 5:2 will examine James' and Ellen's courtship, marriage and family life. How could they marry when time was so urgent? What opinions did each express of the other? What painful experiences drew them closer together?

Elder James S. White and key events in his life as a leader of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be reviewed in *Lest We Forget*, Volume 5:3.

The testimony of Jesus will be featured in *Lest We Forget*, Volume 5:4: Ellen G. White's state while in vision, her visions, and the extent and effect of her writings.

We invite you to enjoy and share these interesting issues with your friends and with new church members as well. ♦

The Editorial Committee

Questions, posed by Dr. Ray Foster—
Answered from the writings of

Elder James White

Elder White, the winter you were twenty-one (1842-1843) you led about one thousand persons to Christ. Would you describe your childhood, conversion, and experience in the Millerite movement that led up to this ministry. First, what was the religious influence of your home?

James White (JW): My Father's religious experience was marked with firmness and zeal, and yet with freedom from that bigotry which prevents investigation, and shuts out love for all who seek to worship God in spirit and truth. My Mother's religious experience was marked with a meek and quiet spirit, and a consistent walk and godly consecration. *Life Sketches by James White*, pp. 10, 11.



Courtesy
LLU Heritage
Room

ELDER JAMES WHITE,
c. 1864

Dr. Ray Foster (RF): How was your health as a young child, and how did this affect your education?

JW: I was extremely feeble as a child—had what was called worm fever, resulting in fits, which turned my eyes and nearly destroyed my sight. I could not enjoy the common advantages of school. I couldn't read a single verse in the Testament without resting my eyes until I was sixteen years old. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

RF: When were you finally able to attend school?

JW: I entered the Academy at St. Albans, Maine, at the age of nineteen. I could not work a simple problem in single rule of three, nor tell a verb from an adverb or an adjective. *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

RF: When did you receive teaching credentials and accept an appointment as an elementary school teacher?

JW: At the close of that term of twelve weeks, I received from the preceptor, D. F. Allen, a certificate of my qualifications to teach the common branches. The following winter I taught school. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

RF: Please give some counsel in the light of your experience for youth today who want to obtain an education, but cannot afford it?

JW: By industry, economy, and

application to his books, even a poor boy may obtain an education. He will prize his education, and be likely to make good use of it. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

RF: What was your relationship with God when you first heard William Miller's message regarding Christ's imminent return?

JW: At fifteen, I was baptized in the Christian church. By twenty, I had buried myself in study and school-teaching. I loved this world more than I loved Christ, and was worshipping education instead of God. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

RF: Your mother then shared the Millerite message with you. As you returned to God, what did you feel you should do?

JW: I felt I should renounce my worldly plans and give myself to the work of warning the people to prepare for the day of God. I was strongly impressed to visit my scholars from house to house and pray with them. I could not imagine a heavier cross than this. My spirit rose in rebellion against God, and I said recklessly, "I will not go!" In five minutes I was packing my books and clothes for Newport Academy. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

RF: Then what did you do?

That afternoon I rode to the Academy, took my position in several classes and commenced study with

continued on page three.

continued from page two.

a will. But I did not succeed. After spending hours over my books, I tried to call to mind what I had been studying, but couldn't. My mental confusion was complete. I went directly from that school-room to the place of my last school. Sweet peace from God flowed into my mind. Heaven seemed to shine around me, and I praised God with the voice of triumph. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

RF: *How was the message of Christ's soon coming received in your old school district made up of Universalists, professors, "respectable sinners," and infidels?*

JW: No one opposed me. Some were deeply affected and prayed with me. In a few days my work was finished for that time, and I returned home with the assurance that I had done my duty. The following summer, I gave lectures there and the next winter most of the people of that town embraced religion. *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

RF: *Did you then dedicate all your time to preaching Christ's second coming?*

JW: The idea of warning the people to prepare for the day of the Lord was impressed upon my mind, but the struggle with duty was a severe one. I finally gave up all for Christ and His gospel, and found peace and freedom to preach. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24.

RF: *You realized the subject required study. How did you prepare to preach, and how did you travel?*

JW: I purchased Advent publications, read them closely, studied my Bible, and spoke a few times during the summer on the second coming of Christ, and felt encouraged. With a prophetic chart hung before me and the Bible in my hands, I spent

several weeks in close study. I had neither horse, saddle, bridle, nor money. My father offered me the use of a horse for the winter, and Elder Polley gave me a saddle and several pieces of an old bridle. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 48, 49.

RF: *How did God protect you near the Kennebec river?*

JW: A mob of at least three hundred was around the school-house there. I believed the Lord would defend me. As I preached, language and power of voice seemed to be given me for the occasion. In conclusion, I asked "Who is willing to seek Christ and with me suffer persecution, and be ready for His coming?" Nearly a hundred arose! I closed with benediction, took my chart and Bible and made my way out. Someone locked arms with me to assist and guard me. His countenance seemed impressively familiar, yet I did not know him. When I had passed the crowd, I missed him, and, from that evening, who he was, or how he left me, and where he went, have been mysteries. Who can say it was not an angel of God, sent to stand by me that evening? *Ibid.*, pp. 52-55.

RF: *What motivated you to preach, and what was the response?*

JW: I began to feel the burden of the work and love for precious souls, as I had not before. I preached at Burnham, Sidney, Richmond, Reed, Richmond Corners, Bedoinham Corners, Bedoinham, and East August. I fearlessly exposed Universalism without giving its adherents a chance to hurt me. Ministers and people wept. Sinners manifested their desire for salvation, and those who loved Christ and His appearing rejoiced in the Advent hope and faith. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-69.

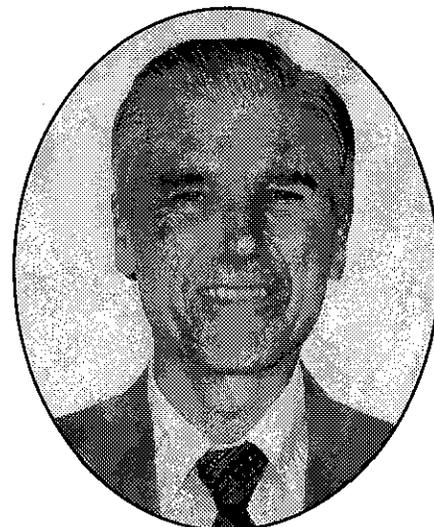
RF: *Was the message always well received?*

JW: No. At Brunswick, at Elder Lamb's meeting-house, most of the members were rich and worldly. They had not sufficient interest to even oppose me. West Gardiner was also a hard place to labor. The town was divided between two Freewill Baptist churches. The members had been occupied with the division, and were destitute of reformation. Their children, however, were much affected by my lectures, and sought the Lord. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70.

RF: *I understand you often sang Advent hymns as part of your meetings.*

JW: Yes, there was a power in Advent singing, such as was felt in no other. At Litchfield Plains, for example, the house was crowded.

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DR. RAY FOSTER

Dr. Foster has been an orthopaedic surgeon in Southern California for 15 years. Previously, for 11 years, he served as a medical missionary in Africa, where he was ordained as a minister. He has a deep interest in the foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and, with others sharing the same interest, has prepared a CD-ROM, *Words of the Pioneers*.



Courtesy
LLU Heritage
Room

Ellen G. White, 1864

Ellen G. White

Sister White, what was the greatest incident in your early years that drew you to Jesus?

Ellen White (EW): An affliction darkened my childhood that seemed to have been dealt me to turn my heart away from the world and its pleasures towards the attractions of heaven. *Life Sketches of James White (LSJW)*, p. 145.

When I was nine, a girl threw a stone that hit me on the nose. I fell senseless to the ground and lay in a stupor for three weeks. *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (LSEW)*, pp. 17, 18. My nose was broken, causing disfigurement. The idea of carrying this misfortune through life was insupportable. I began to pray the Lord to prepare me for death. I desired to become a Christian and prayed earnestly for the forgiveness of my sins after which I felt a peace of mind and gained strength very slowly. I sought the Lord earnestly in my trouble and received consolation. I believed that Jesus loved even me. *LSJW*, pp. 132, 133.

Frances Foster (FF): When you could not advance further in your studies, how did this affect you?

EW: The future stretched out before me dark and cheerless. I murmured against the providence of God in thus afflicting me. *LSJW*, pp. 134, 135.

FF: How was God preparing you for your life work?

EW: In March, 1840, Mr. William Miller preached in Portland, Maine, most solemn and powerful sermons that Christ was coming in 1843. My heart longed for someone to tell me what I should do to be saved, what steps to take to give myself entirely up to the Lord. *Ibid.* p. 136-139.

Once I dreamed of a temple to which many people were flocking. On entering the building I saw that the vast temple was supported by one immense pillar, and to this was tied a Lamb all mangled and bleeding—bruised and torn on our account. All who entered the temple must come before the Lamb and confess their sins. A sense of shame that I must humiliate myself before these people came over me. A trumpet sounded, the temple shook, and I was left alone in the silent horror of night. It seemed to me that my doom was fixed, and my despondency deepened. *Ibid.* pp. 154-156.

I later dreamed that a person of beautiful form and countenance led me to Jesus. I knew Jesus was acquainted with every circumstance of my life. He said, "Fear not," and his smile filled my soul with gladness. My guide handed me a coiled up, green cord to place

next to my heart. When I wished to see Jesus, I was to take it out and stretch it to the utmost. The cord represented faith to my mind, and the beauty and simplicity of trusting in God began to dawn upon my benighted soul. *Ibid.* pp. 156, 157.

FF: How interesting! Tell us, what man of God discerned that the Lord was preparing you for a special work?

EW: Elder Stockman, who preached the Advent message in Portland, heard my doubts and the dreams. He placed his hands upon my head, saying, "Yours is a most singular experience for one of your tender age. Jesus must be preparing you for some special work." He told me of the love of God for His erring children, that He longed to draw them to Himself. *Ibid.* pp. 157-159.

FF: Was your experience unique to you, or will God lead and bless anyone?

EW: "They shall all be taught of God." God can do so little for us because we forget that living virtue in the Holy Spirit is to combine with the human agent. With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit's power we could, become living channels of light. *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 30.

FF: How did your church treat your family?

ite

Answers, from her writings, to questions about her childhood and experience in the Millerite movement, as posed by Mrs. Frances Foster.



EW: The Methodist minister informed us that our faith and Methodism could not agree, that we had adopted a new and strange belief. He advised us to quietly withdraw from the church and avoid the publicity of a trial, but we preferred a regular trial. At the trial, the single charge made was that we had walked contrary to their rules. The next Sunday the presiding elder read off our names as discontinued from the church. *LSEW*, pp. 50-53.

FF: How did you begin to doubt eternal hell-fire punishment?

EW: In my mind the justice of God eclipsed His mercy and love. I had been taught to believe in an eternally burning hell; and I was in deep despair. Then I heard my mother and a sister discussing that the soul did not possess natural immortality and asked my mother, "Do you believe that the soul sleeps in the grave until the resurrection?" "The Bible gives us no proof that there is an eternally burning hell," she answered. "If the love of God will not induce the rebel to yield, the terrors of an eternal hell will not drive him to repentance." From that time light in regard to the sleep of the dead dawned upon my mind. *Ibid.* pp. 29, 48-50.

FF: What was your experience when the expected time approached for Jesus to appear?

EW: We approached this hour with a calm solemnity. The true believers rested in a sweet com-

munion with God. Worldly business was for the most part laid aside. We scrutinized every thought of our hearts. *LSJW*, p. 184.

FF: How did the believers react when Jesus didn't come between March, 1843, and March, 1844?

EW: The disappointment was great. The scoffers were triumphant, and won the weak and cowardly to their ranks. Others deserted the cause quietly. Yet, many still clung to the hope that Jesus would not long delay His coming. They must wait with hope and trust. *LSEW*, p. 57.

FF: When error in the date was discerned, and a new date was set for the tenth day of the seventh month, what two messages were spread abroad?

EW: The message of the second angel, flying in the midst of heaven, who cried, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city;" and, in connection with this message, the "midnight cry" was given: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." *Ibid.* 59.

FF: What effect did these messages have on the people?

EW: Many left the fallen churches. In every part of the land light was given and the cry aroused thousands—the learned, the talented, the obscure, and the humble. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

FF: What counsel has God given you regarding the "midnight cry"?

EW: The Advent people had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, the midnight cry. This shone all along the path and gave light for their feet that they might not stumble. *Early Writings*, p. 14. Before Jesus returns, another mighty angel will be commissioned to unite his voice with the third angel, and give power and force to his message. The message of the fall of Babylon is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the churches since 1844. This message will close with power and strength far exceeding the midnight cry. *LSJW*, pp. 277, 278.

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Frances Nelson Foster, R.N. is Dr. Ray Foster's wife of 34 years, mother of two and grandmother of four. She and her husband love and appreciate the Spirit of Prophecy. She shares his interest in and love for the words and works of the pioneers and does volunteer service for the Adventist Pioneer Library.

Ellen G. White

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FF: *How did the bitter disappointment on October 22, 1844, affect the believers?*

EW: We were disappointed, but not disheartened. We resolved to refrain from murmuring at the trying ordeal by which the Lord was refining us like gold in the furnace, and to wait for the Saviour to redeem His tried and faithful ones. We were firm in the belief that the preaching of definite time was of God. *LSEW*, pp. 61-63.

FF: *Please describe your first vision, received in December, 1844.*

EW: I saw a straight and narrow path high above the world where the advent people were traveling to the city at the farther end of the path. Soon some grew weary. Jesus would encourage them by raising His right arm. Others said it was not God that had led them out so far. They stumbled and lost sight of Jesus and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below.

The voice of God gave us the day and hour of Jesus' coming. The wicked would rush violently up to lay hands on us to thrust us into prison, but would fall helpless to the ground. We saw the Son of man coming in a great white cloud. The graves were opened and the dead came up clothed with immortality. We were changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air and were seven days ascending to the city.

The believers in Portland, who had full confidence that the vision was from God, all believed that God had chosen this way to comfort and strengthen His people. An unspeakable awe filled me, that I, so young and feeble, should be chosen as the instrument by which God



Ellen G. Harmon, c. 1844

would give light to His people. *LSEW*, pp. 64-68.

FF: *How was your health and self-confidence at this time?*

EW: After the passing of the time in 1844, my health rapidly failed, I could only speak in a whisper or broken tone of voice. One physician stated that my disease was dropsical consumption. He pronounced my right lung decayed and the left one considerably diseased, while the heart was seriously affected. He thought that I could live but a short time. I was but seventeen, small and frail, unused to society, and so timid it was painful for me to meet strangers. *LSJW*, p. 193, 194.

FF: *Why did God choose you, the "weakest of the weak," to be the messenger to His people?*

EW: God chooses to perform His mighty works by the most simple and humble means because of the pride and ambition of the children of men. He chooses those who will work in meekness and simplicity, acknowledging Him as their leader

and their source of strength. His power is revealed through the weakness of men. *Vol. 6, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, p. 1083.

FF: *How did you react to this call?*

EW: I prayed that this burden might be removed from me and laid upon someone else more capable of bearing it. But the words of the angel sounded continually in my ears, 'Make known to others what I have revealed to you.' I greatly feared that if I obeyed the call of duty, I might yield to sinful exaltation, bring upon myself the displeasure of God, and lose my own soul. The angel said, "If this evil that you dread threatens you, by affliction God will draw you to Himself, and preserve your humility. Deliver the message faithfully; endure unto the end, and you shall eat the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of life." I committed myself to the Lord, ready to do His bidding. *LSJW*, p. 194; *LSEW*, pp. 71, 72.

FF: *How would you describe the work God asked you to do?*

EW: I am the Lord's messenger; He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus—to open the Scriptures to others, as God has opened them to me. *1 Selected Messages*, p. 32; *8 Testimonies*, p. 236.

◆
These and other divinely-inspired answers are available on the complete published writings of Ellen G. White, available on CD-ROM, from:

The E. G. White Estate
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904

James S. White

continued from page three

To call the people to order, I sang "You will see your Lord a-coming." Many wept, and the state of feeling was most favorable for the introduction of the subject. A deep impression was made upon the entire community. *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70.

RF: *You were ordained to the gospel ministry in 1843 and worked tirelessly as a gospel preacher. When Jesus did not return between March, 1843 and March, 1844, as first believed, nor on October 22, 1844 (the tenth day of the seventh month, as recalculated), what was your reaction?*

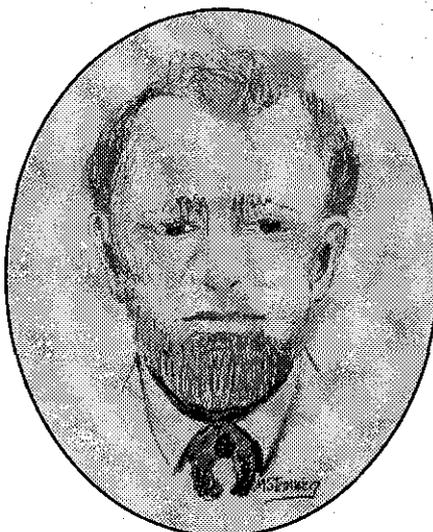
JW: My feelings were almost uncontrollable. I wept like a child. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

RF: *How did you answer the charge that the message regarding the 10th day of the 7th month was fanaticism?*

JW: I declared that it was the special work of God, not of fanaticism. It bore the marks of His special providence: seasons of humiliation, rending of heart, confession and complete consecration. It was subversive of all forms of fanaticism. The work was marked with sobriety, humility, solemnity, reverence, and tears; and it bore the fruit of the Spirit. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-97.

RF: *People said the Millerite movement was entirely the work of men, or of Satan, rather than of God. What did you think?*

JW: Those who say so insult God by making Him the author of fanaticism and confusion, and they please the devil, by attributing the work of God to his Satanic power. *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 97.



James White, c. 1844

RF: *Why did Hebrews 10:35, 39 especially comfort the brethren at this time?*

JW: Those addressed are in danger of casting away their confidence. They have done the will of God, and been brought into that state of trial where patience was necessary. The just at this time are to live by faith, not by doubting whether they had done the will of God. Those who should not endure the trial of faith, but should cast away their confidence in the work in which they did the will of God, take the direct road to perdition. *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 109.

RF: *Why apply this scripture to the believers after October, 1844?*

JW: It is wonderfully applicable to those who were sadly disappointed, tempted, and tried, in the autumn of 1844. They had proclaimed the coming of the Lord, with the assurance that they were doing the will of God. They were brought into a position exceedingly trying to faith and patience. They walked, as it were, by sight. Now, with disappointed hopes, and stricken hearts,

they lived by faith in the sure word, and the work of God in their Second Advent experience. This served as an encouragement to them to hold fast their faith. *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 110.

RF: *What counsel have you given that applies to believers today?*

JW: Watch. Be patient. Do not cast away your confidence. Follow these, as they by faith enter into the most holy where stands Jesus, clad in priestly garments, before the mercy-seat. Look into the sacred ark, and there you behold the ten commandments. Those waiting, watching, praying ones, embraced the fourth precept of that law, and with fresh courage took their onward course to the golden gates of the city of God. *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 107.

RF: *What would you say to youth today who want to experience results and meaning in life?*

JW: Decide conscientiously the extent of your individual consecration. Enter into the joy of our Lord. Your happiness will largely consist in the satisfaction that springs from the thought that you have cooperated with the Master, in the accomplishment of the grand result. *General Conference Address*, p. 146, *Words of the Pioneers*, CD-ROM, Published in the Adventist Pioneer Library. ♦

Pages from the writings of Elder James White may be searched and retrieved on this CD-ROM for answers to other questions through the:

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Rejected

“Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out. . . shall be ashamed.” Is.66:5.

During the Summer and Fall of 1844, many Millerites “were persecuted. . . cut off from the fellowship of church. . . for expressing their belief in the coming of Christ. . . . Ministers and religious leaders opposed the advent doctrine from the pulpit [and] denied their members the privilege of attending preaching upon the second advent, or even speaking of their hope in the social meetings of the church. Thus the believers found themselves in a position of great trial and perplexity. As they saw the testimony of God’s word suppressed and their right to investigate the prophecies denied, they felt that loyalty to God forbade them to submit. . . .” *The Great Controversy*, pp. 372, 376.

This persecution, combined with the message, “Come out of her, my people,” influenced many to step out in faith. “In the summer of 1844 about fifty thousand withdrew from the churches.” *Ibid.* p. 396.

Just before Christ’s second coming, persecution of believers and separation from the apostate churches will again occur. “As the Protestant churches reject the clear, Scriptural arguments in defense of God’s law, they will long to silence those whose faith they cannot overthrow by the Bible. . . .”

Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. . . . Ministers. . . will present from the pulpit the duty of yielding obedience to the civil authorities as ordained of God. In legislative halls and courts of justice, commandment keepers will be misrepresented and condemned. . . . They will be menaced, denounced. . . , proscribed. . . betrayed ‘. . . by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends.’ Luke 21:16.” *Testimonies, Vol. 9*, p. 231.

“Some. . . will be thrust into prison, some will be exiled, some will be treated as slaves. . . . Sabbathkeepers. . . [will be] brought before the courts to answer for their faith. . . . The faith of the Lord’s servants will be tried. . . . The Lord. . . commands His servants to present the last invitation of mercy to the world. They cannot remain silent, except at the peril of their souls. . . . They must perform their duty and leave the results with God. . . . Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord’s side.” *GC*, pp. 608-610, 612. ♦

Comments by Ellen G. White

Lest We Forget

Volume 5

Number 1

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