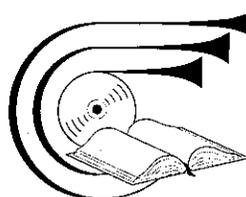


## ADVENTIST PIONEER LIBRARY



# 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*

## QUALIFIED for the Job

*By Fred Bischoff*

**J**ames S. White possessed both the assets and the liabilities of a true leader. A review of these and of his experiences provides encouragement and caution alike to those who are called to lead today and to those who are called to follow, whether it be in a family or in a church.

### Chosen by God.

"God has selected my husband and given him special qualifications, natural ability, and an experience to lead out His people in the advance work."<sup>1</sup>

### Early signs of leadership.

James White had a lifetime total of just 29 weeks of formal education. Therefore, his breadth of understanding and literary ability came more from his exposure to the practical duties of life and his personal application to study and investigation than to

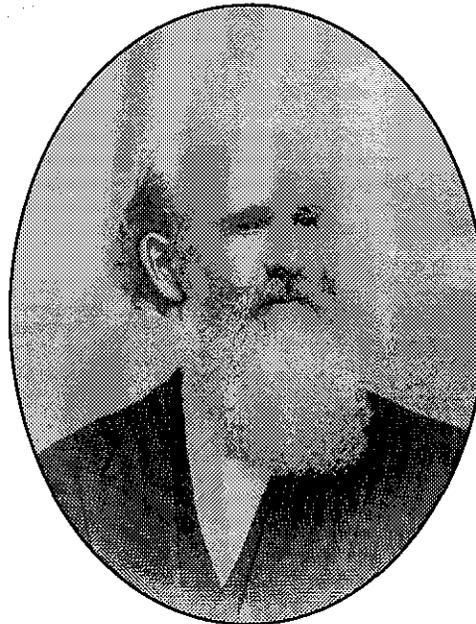


Photo: Courtesy E. G. White Estate  
Loma Linda Branch Office

formal studies. His first recorded leadership role was before age 20. "He was especially successful in school government, reducing to an orderly and studious condition schools which had been notorious for their unruly and unmanageable character."<sup>2</sup>

### The ability to lead men and women to Christ.

His next leadership experience came at age 21, after he heard William Miller and Joshua V. Himes speak in September, 1842. During the winter months of 1842-1843, "traveling with a borrowed horse and a patched-up bridle and saddle,"<sup>3</sup> James led over 1000 men and women to Christ. This work of spiritual leadership continued after the passing of the time, as he worked to encourage the advent believers and combat fanaticism.

*continued on page two*

## LEST WE FORGET, 1995 FEATURES:

**JAMES SPRINGER WHITE & ELLEN GOULD HARMON WHITE**

**This issue: James and his leadership role in the Seventh-day Adventist church.**

## Qualified for the Job

*Continued from page one*

**F**ollowing God's leading. "In the early days of our . . . work the Lord did designate Elder James White as one who, in connection with his wife, and under the Lord's special guidance, was to take a leading part in the advancement of this work."<sup>4</sup> "Through the Testimonies of His Spirit, He had imparted to him great light. He had cautioned, warned, re-proved, and encouraged. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

When God through visions given his wife instructed James at age 27 "to publish the light that was shining upon our pathway,"<sup>6</sup> he soon began printing *Present Truth*. Leaders are often called to start out small and selflessly. James White clearly manifested this level of commitment, and the work was "carried forward at a great sacrifice of strength and means."<sup>7</sup>

### Building up new endeavors.

"The earnest efforts of my husband to build up the institutions in our midst I also saw registered in the Ledger of Heaven."<sup>8</sup>

### Bringing order and stability.

At age 28 James began to call for the support of travelling ministers, and "appealed for the believers to move in gospel order."<sup>9</sup> His first carefully developed series of articles on "Gospel Order" he published in the *Review* when he was 32 while living in New York, in December, 1853.

In 1860, at age 39, he led out in the decision to incorporate the publishing association legally, choose a church name, and organize the local churches to own

church properties.<sup>10</sup> In May of 1863 the General Conference was organized with six states represented. James White was unanimously elected president but declined the position, not wanting it to appear that he had worked for church organization in order to be its head.

### An instrument for justice.

". . . [James] had elevated views of the Lord's claims upon all who profess His name,—of their duty to stand in defense of the widow and the fatherless, to be kind to the poor, to help the needy. He would jealously guard the interests of his brethren, that no unjust advantage should be taken of them."<sup>11</sup>

### Often misunderstood and not appreciated.

"I was shown that the position of my husband has been a very difficult one. A pressure of care and labor has been upon him. His brethren in the ministry have not had these burdens to bear, and they have not appreciated his labors. . . . I was shown that his relation to the people of God was similar, in some respects, to that of Moses to Israel. There were murmurers against Moses, when in adverse circumstances, and there have been murmurers against him."<sup>12</sup>

### Tempted to neglect other needs.

"[My husband] has devoted his interest almost entirely to the building up of the cause of God, regardless of his own personal interests and at the sacrifice of

social enjoyment with his family. In his devotion to the cause he has frequently endangered his health and life. He has been so much pressed with the burden of this work that he has not had suitable time for study, meditation, and prayer. God has not required him to be in this position, even for the interest and progress of the publishing work at Battle Creek. There are other branches of the work, other interests of the cause, that have been neglected through his devotion to this one."<sup>13</sup> (emphasis supplied.)

### Disease and discouragement from overwork.

"[James]. . . has done, single-handed, the work of three men."<sup>14</sup>

"Here is where the mistake has been made by his brethren in urging him, and by himself in consenting, to stand under the burdens and responsibilities that he had borne alone for years."<sup>15</sup>

"Nature has been outraged time and again. While his brethren have found fault with him for doing so much, they have not come up to take their share of the responsibility, but have been too willing to make him responsible for everything."<sup>16</sup>

### God-given gifts of fidelity, energy, and insight.

Ellen White saw on the judgment ledger in heaven "under the head of 'Fidelity,' was the name of my husband."<sup>17</sup>

James had "ready judgment and clear discernment, which have been gained through training and exercise,"<sup>18</sup> she said. "God has given him the power to form and execute plans with the needed firmness, because he did not refuse to exercise these qualities of the mind, and to venture in order to advance the work of God."<sup>19</sup>

*continued on page seven*

# STREAMS OF LIGHT

## The Publishing Work

by Richard Cooper

On May 5, 1949, a centennial issue of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* was published. F. D. Nichol included in his editorial Ellen G. White's words, "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." God's leading in the development of the publishing work is remarkable. James White, the man He chose to begin this work, did not hesitate to go forward once he received the divine mandate.

The years immediately following the Great Disappointment were a time of intense activity for the pioneers. They travelled extensively to encourage the shaken believers to shore up their faith, and they continued searching the Scriptures for greater light on the sanctuary and the real significance of October 22, 1844. The pioneers were young, energetic, enthusiastic, and mostly quite poor. They shared an unshakeable faith in a soon-coming Savior. Some method was necessary to more efficiently extend their efforts.

James and Ellen White attended a meeting in Dorchester, Massachusetts in November, 1848, where Ellen received a vision about the proclamation of the sealing message. As Ellen came out of vision, she turned to her husband and said, "I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world." (LS125.)

"We look back with a good degree of pleasure to the month of July, 1849, when we published the first number of the little paper called *Present Truth*. We sat down to prepare the matter for that little sheet, and wrote every word of it, our entire library

comprising a three-shilling pocket Bible, Cruden's Condensed Concordance, and Walker's old dictionary, minus one of its covers. Destitute of means, our hope of success was in God." (RH 6-17-1880.)

James had 1,000 copies of the first edition of *Present Truth* published. He did not have enough money to pay the printer to fold them. He took them home where other believers helped fold and bundle them for mailing. Trips to the post office and printer were 16-mile, round-trip walks for James, no easy task for one who walked with a limp at the best of times. When believers learned of the need for money to support the publication, the response was swift and generous.

One can only stand in awe of the energy and determination of James White and the other pioneers. With so few workers they simply had to mix travelling and speaking with the publication deadlines.

Ellen White commented on this to Brother and Sister Collins, "We should have written you before but we have had no certain abiding place, but have travelled in rain, snow and blow with the child from place to place. I could not get the time to answer any letters and it took all of James' time to write for the paper and get out the hymn book." (IMR31.)

By November, 1850, eleven issues of *Present Truth* had been printed in Middletown, New York and Paris, Maine. Working with Joseph Bates, J. N. Loughborough, S. W. Rhodes and J. N. Andrews, James began publishing the *Review*, to affirm and clarify the key truths accepted by the believers. The magazine started as an 8-page journal published on a bi-weekly basis. Sometimes the regularity of publication was hindered because pioneer leaders had to travel and thus could not meet their deadlines. James sometimes simply delayed publication until the necessary articles arrived.

*continued on page seven*

# JAMES WHITE

## A MAN OF ACTION

by Marlene Steinweg

**L**ord, have mercy on Brother White. He is proud, and will be damned unless he gets rid of his pride. . . . Have mercy. . . .’ Elder H.’s voice droned on. . . .” James understood immediately that the elder sought “to cast fear upon those around. . . , bring them under his influence, that they might show him all that respect which his especial endowments demanded.”<sup>1</sup> Having had experience with hypocrites, he wisely challenged the man, declaring himself innocent of the charge which was made because James wore a starched, though borrowed, collar. Brother H. wept as though his heart would break, causing James to comment wryly, “to see a coarse, hard-hearted man, possessing . . . but little more tenderness than a crocodile, and nearly as destitute of moral and religious training as a hyena, shedding hypocritical tears for effect, is enough to stir the mirthfulness of the gravest saint.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, on this as on other occasions was revealed James’ youthful vigor, forceful character, and special humor that would be refined and put to use in God’s work.

His dedicated, Christian parents, four older, and four younger siblings must have marveled to see how God worked in his life. A weak, sickly child, with an eye disability that prevented formal studies until age 19, he completed basic studies after only 6 weeks, taught his first school the following term, was converted completely to the Millerite message by age 21, and became a preacher by age 22.

A poor, itinerant preacher, James embarked upon his ministry with his Bible, some Millerite literature, a prophetic chart, three personally prepared lectures, and his youthful zest and strong faith. Though he met with opposition, suffered hard times, and braved discouraging weather, he undauntedly moved forward. The 1000 souls converted on his first six-week tour, were clear evidence of this youthful preacher’s Power Source. James had a “fine presence and sturdy character. . . , was a born leader, a strong dynamic spirit. . . , unusually bold, resourceful, and farseeing.”<sup>3</sup> He “had the happy gift of carrying people along with him. . . , was enthusiastic, and possessed a grace and

## TIME LINE JAMES S. WHITE

1821

**August 4:** James Springer White was born;

1836

He was baptized into the Christian Church fellowship.

1840

He entered into academy at St. Albans, Maine and soon taught his first school.

1841

He joined the Millerites and in Troy, Maine, shared the message of Christ’s second coming .

1842

**September:** He first heard Miller preach and by **October** was preaching.

1843

He was ordained in the Christian Church.

1844

**Spring:** James first met Ellen Harmon.

**August:** He began preaching the Midnight Cry.

**October 22:** The Great Disappointment.

1845

He accepted light regarding Jesus as High Priest in Heavenly Sanctuary.

**February:** James met Ellen Harmon at Orrington, Maine, & began traveling with her.

1846

**August 30:** He married Ellen Harmon.

**November:** He and Ellen accepted the Sabbath.

1847

**August 26:** first son, Henry was born, living in Topsham, Maine. James published *A Word to the “Little Flock.”*

1848

Sabbath Conferences held:  
1. **April 20-24:** Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

2. **August 18:** Volney, New York, unity obtained.

3. **August 27, 28:** Port Gibson, New York.

4. **September 8, 9:** Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

5. **October 20-22:** Topsham, Maine.

6. **November -** Dorchester,

a dignity that kept every enterprise with which he had to do on a high spiritual level.”<sup>4</sup>

The prophetic date Miller had set passed with no appearance of Christ. When, at the famous Exeter, New Hampshire, camp meeting, James heard S. S. Snow’s clear presentation that Jesus would appear on the 10th day of the 7th Jewish month he immediately joined other inspired Advent preachers proclaiming, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, on October 22, 1844. Go ye out to meet Him!” (See *LWF*, 3:2, about Samuel S. Snow.)

When Jesus failed to return on October 22, 1844, God sustained his belief in the prophetic interpretation. He then searched for understanding regarding the prophecy. Early in 1845, he accepted the message written by O. R. L. Crosier and printed in the *Day Dawn*, which revealed the truth about the heavenly sanctuary. (See *LWF*, 4:3, about O. R. L. Crosier.)

In February, 1845, James heard Ellen Harmon tell her visions and was convinced God had given her messages to instruct and comfort the advent band. When he offered to accompany her in her travels to

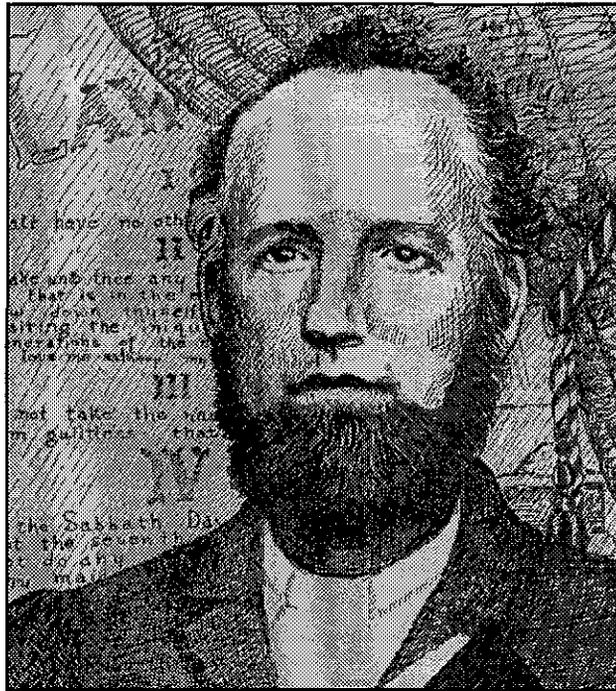


Illustration by Pauline Whitson, 1941, from *Pioneer Days of the Advent Movement*, W.A. Spicer.

encourage the believers, she accepted his offer. After traveling and working by her side for eighteen months, James, 25, and Ellen, 18, were married August 30, 1846. Mere youths, James and Ellen dedicated their lives to learning and preaching Present Truth as God would reveal it, and with other pioneers, they eventually founded the Seventh-day Adventist church.

James White was instrumental in the development and understanding of the following basic S.D.A. Bible doctrines: 1. the prophetic reaffirmation of Jesus’ imminent second advent; 2. conditional immortality; 3. definition of the three angels’ messages, especially the third as includ-

ing Sabbath-keeping as a test, Sunday-keeping as a mark of the beast, and the importance of God’s people to keep all the commandments; 4. the pre-millennial second advent flanked by two resurrections—of the just dead at Jesus’ advent and of the unjust dead after one thousand years; 5. the Sanctuary doctrine, including the definition of the scape goat as Satan; 6. baptism by immersion only; and 7. restoration of the prophetic gift.<sup>5</sup>

*continued on page six*

Massachusetts, the ‘sealing’ was understood.  
**November 18:** Ellen received the vision for James to begin publishing. From this time, James wrote, published, and preached.  
**May:** Henry was left in care of the Howlands.  
**June:** Living at this time at Rocky Hill, Connecticut.  
**July:** First issue of *Present Truth* came off the press.  
**July 28:** Second son, James Edson, was born.  
**November:** At a conference

at Oswego, New York.  
**1850 May:** Edson was left with Sister Bonfoey. James suffered from poor health, but he continued writing and publishing.  
**1851 August:** Living at this time at Saratoga Springs, New York.  
**1852 April:** Living at this time at Rochester, New York. **Summer:** First press bought. **August:** *Youth’s Instructor* begun.  
**1854 May 23:** His life was saved wreck of train to Wisconsin.

**1855 August 29:** Third son was born, William Clarence. Moved to Battle Creek, MI, built own home.  
**1860 September 20:** Last son was born, John Herbert. **December 14:** John Herbert died.  
**1861 James** was editor and proprietor of the *Review*. **December 8:** Henry died.  
**1863 May, to May, 1867:** James became President of the General Conference.  
**1865 August 16:** James was stricken with paralysis.

*continued on page six*

# A MAN OF ACTION

continued from page five

**J**ames was well known for his use of music in evangelism. He even published various hymnals for advent worship.

Imagine you were in the congregation there in the old meeting-house at Battle Creek waiting for the preacher. "Suddenly the silence would be broken by a sweetly musical and strong, sure voice, singing a familiar hymn. . . . James White, silvery-haired, [was] coming down the aisle, beating time on his Bible, and singing, 'When I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies, I'll bid farewell to ev'ry fear, and wipe my weeping eyes.' By the time he had finished the first stanza and the chorus, the congregation had been caught and carried along in the spirit of it, and was joining in."<sup>6</sup> James delighted in using the advent hymns to bring joy and inspiration to those fervent believers.

Elder White was plagued with poor health throughout the years. He suffered from a bum ankle, indigestion, and strokes. He was overworked, overstressed, and truthfully intemperate in his great

zeal to place Present Truth before the people. His life was snuffed out prematurely, in a matter of days, when he contracted malaria in 1881.

In spite of his physical weakness and early death, God had used James to lead towards immense progress in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Of what other man could it be reported that he was a key theologian in framing the basic platform of Seventh-day Adventist belief and practice; that, though attacked for his position on the matter, he gave form and solidity to the growing movement by encouraging and leading out in church organization; that he gave his life to establish world-wide publishing, health, and education ministries and was instrumental in expanding the mission outreach of the three angels' messages to the West Coast and around the world? The urgency and intensity of his dedication speaks to the remnant today from the first article in the first journal, *Present Truth*, "What is done to spread the truth must be done quickly. The four angels are holding the angry nations in check

but a few days, until the saints are sealed; then the nations will rush like the rushing of many waters. Then it will be too late to spread before precious souls the present saving, living truths of the Holy Bible. . . . May God help the scattered remnant to receive the truth, and be established in it. May they haste to take shelter beneath the 'covering of Almighty God,' is my prayer."

*"You will see your Lord a-coming in a few more days! Hear the band of heavenly music sounding thro' the air."<sup>7</sup> ♦*

<sup>1</sup>White, J. S., *Life Sketches of Elder James White*, S.D.A. Steam Press, Battle Creek, MI, 1880, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup>Froom, L. E., *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, RHPA, 1954, p. 1057.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1058.

<sup>5</sup>Refer to *Ibid.*, p. 1032+.

<sup>6</sup>Spicer, W. A., *Pioneer Days of the Advent Message*, RHPA, 1941, p. 147.

<sup>7</sup>Early Advent hymn often sung by James White, *Millennial Harp*, 1843.

## Time Line James S. White

continued from page five

1867 **January:** James' health was restored. He built their new home in Greenville, Michigan.

1869 **May, to December, 1871:** James again was President of General Conference.

1871 He edited the *Health Reformer*.

1872 He worked for establishment of the first SDA college and made one of several extended visits to California.

1874 **June:** Oakland, California. He started *Signs of the Times*; and continued as editor till his death.

The precursor to Pacific Press was built and equipped.

**August, to October, 1880,** He again became President of the General Conference.

1875 **April:** Pacific Press officially was organized.

They moved to California.

1877 **August:** James was nearly

paralyzed, left weak.

1878 Housekeeping set up in Texas.

1880 Housekeeping again set up in Battle Creek, Michigan.

1881 James described as active, vigorous, and devoted to the publishing work.

**August 6:** James died at Battle Creek Sanitarium after becoming ill with Malaria.

**August 13:** His funeral was conducted at Oak Hill Cemetary, Battle Creek, MI.

*Time Line concluded*

## Qualified for the Job

*continued from page two*

**Leaders in God's church** today may err, but if they will stand "in defense of the truth without yielding a single principle to please the best friend. . . [and be] bold and fearless in acting and speaking"<sup>20</sup> as did James White; if they will exercise their God-given qualities of mind; and "venture in order to advance the work of God"<sup>21</sup>, He will give "the power to form and execute plans with the needed firmness. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

"Just such firmness and decision were necessary at the commencement of the work, and they have been needed all along, as it progressed step by step."<sup>23</sup> Where are the James Whites of today, that our church needs as it faces these turbulent, testing times? ♦

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol.3, Pacific Press, 1948, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>American Biographical History, *Eminent and Self-Made Men*, Western Biographic Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio, 1878, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>*SDA Encyclopedia*, "James Springer White," RHPA, 1966, pp. 1598-1604.  
<sup>4</sup>8T p. 237.

<sup>5</sup>*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, Pacific Press, 1915, p. 243.

<sup>6</sup>*Colporteur Ministry*, Pacific Press, 1958, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>LS p. 244.

<sup>8</sup>LS p. 242.

<sup>9</sup>*James White and SDA Organization*, Andrew G. Mustard, Andrews University Press, 1987, pp. 118, 119.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 146-148.

<sup>11</sup>LS p. 243.

<sup>12,13</sup> 3T p. 85.

<sup>14</sup>*Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 105.

<sup>15</sup>3T p. 500.

<sup>16</sup>3T p. 501.

<sup>17</sup>LS p. 242.

<sup>18</sup>3T p. 497.

<sup>19 to 23</sup>LS p. 243.

## Streams of Light

*continued from page three*

**The publishing work had moved to Rochester, New York** by 1852, and a hand press, type and other goods costing \$652.95 were purchased. In 1853 Uriah Smith joined the publishing team and worked as business manager, editor, and auditor at various times over the next 50 years. By 1855, James White had contributed all the money he had, and incurred a \$2,500 personal debt. Little wonder he was physically ill.

On December 4, 1855, the first publication rolled off the press at Battle Creek. Between 1857 and 1873, \$6,000 of power and cylinder presses were purchased due to increasing needs. In 1874, publishing work spread to the West Coast, using equipment purchased in New York by James White.

A meeting in the Michigan Conference voted a full organizational plan for the publishing work, largely resulting from the need to adequately care for buildings and printing equipment. Official organization had to wait until the state of Michigan made laws of its own, hence the incorporation date of May 3, 1861. James White was appointed President of the corporation as well as editor of the *Review*. His salary for such a challenging task was \$7.00 per week.

James was actively involved in the publishing work of the church till the end of his life. He gave his best energies and resources in acting on the challenge given him through Ellen's vision.

After he died, the publishing work continued to prosper. The Battle Creek presses eventually had a 50,000 sq.ft working area. Fire brought tragedy to the work, and transfer to Takoma Park. In spite of relocation challenges, the press produced and marketed steadily growing numbers of books and periodicals:

1904 - \$63,000 of books

1912 - \$203,000 of books and \$33,000 of periodicals

1923 - \$679,000 of books, \$295,000 of periodicals

(Figures reported in the 5/5/49 centennial edition of the *Review*.)

The following statement from his editorial for the first issue of the *Review* reveals James' unshakable belief in the urgency of the message that provided the driving force to inspire him and the other pioneers in the publishing work. He declared, "The *Review and Herald* is designed to be strictly confined to those important truths that belong to the present time . . . , a simple and clear exposition of those great and sanctifying truths embraced in the message of the third angel."

In the centennial edition of the *Review*, F. D. Nichol declared, "We would carry you over the road marked out by God, and trod by the pioneers. And we would encourage you, with us, to keep walking steadily forward on that path, for it leads to the gates of the New Jerusalem. Nor are those shining gates far distant. We are nearing home." ♦

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June 17, 1880 issue.

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*Manuscript Releases*, Volume 1.

*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, Pacific Press Publishing, 1915.

# WHEN GOD SPEAKS,

He means what He says. When He cautions, it becomes those noticed to take heed.

*with comments by Ellen White*

**F**ew realize the constant, wearing labor of those who are bearing the responsibilities of the work in the office. They are confined within doors day after day and week after week, while a constant strain upon the mental powers is surely undermining their constitutions and lessening their hold on life. These brethren are in danger of breaking suddenly. They are not immortal, and without a change they must wear out and be lost to the work." (*Testimonies* 515.)

When Ellen White made this statement she was including her husband, James. She emphasized the importance of taking time to rest and recreate. On June 5, 1862, in that great vision on health given at Oswego, New York, Ellen was shown that her ". . . husband should preserve his strength and health, for God had yet a great work for. . . [them] to do. . . constant and excessive labor was exhausting his fund of strength, which God would have him preserve; that if he continued to overtask his physical and mental energies as he had been doing he would be using up his future resources of strength. . . , and would break down prematurely, and the cause of God would

be deprived of his labor." (*Ibid.* 517.)

This lesson was learned the hard way by James and Ellen, because when the warning went unheeded, James had a stroke. And yet, this happened time and again. Sometimes, after prayer in his behalf, he would be healed. Other times, he was not. Finally, when malaria attacked his weakened body, and he was unable to fight its ravages, he died, having barely reached his sixtieth birthday.

Some of the brethren to whom this counsel was directed, did not heed it and, by early deaths, were prematurely lost to the cause. J. N. Andrews lived to be only 54; J. H. Waggoner, 69; and Uriah Smith, 72. Others heeded the warning and, perhaps as a result, lived longer. Among these were George Butler, 84; Stephen Haskell, 89; and J. N. Loughborough, 92.

"When God speaks, He means what He says. When He cautions, it becomes those noticed to take heed. The reason why I now speak publicly is that the same caution which was given to my husband has been given to others connected with the office. . . . Unless they change their course of action, they are just as liable to be stricken down as was my husband." *Ibid.* 518. ♦

## Lest We Forget

Volume 5

Number 3

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