

## ADVENTIST PIONEER LIBRARY



# Lest We Forget

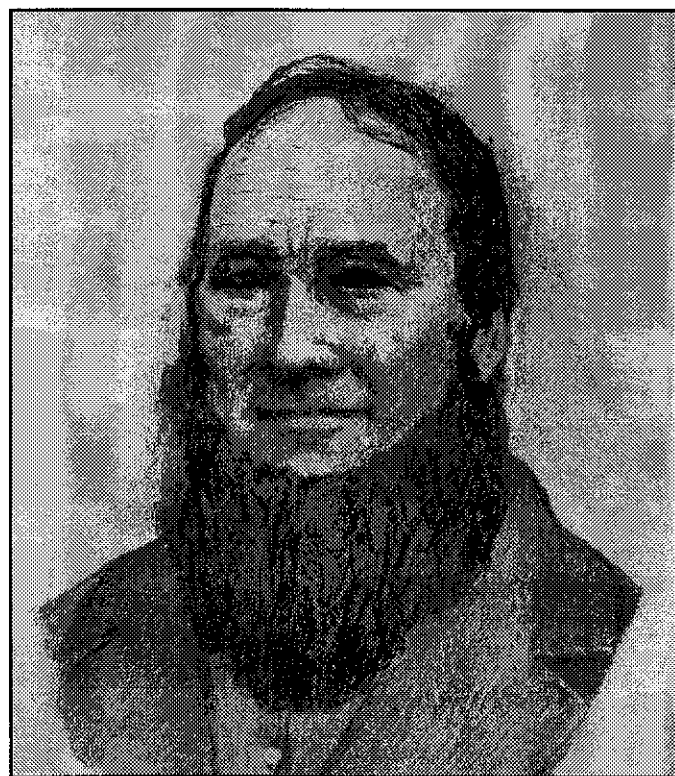
*"We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." LS 196*

# WORTHY

# OF HONOR

*by Dorcas Robinson*

**T**he name of William Farnsworth, of Washington, New Hampshire, finds a place among the pioneers of Seventh-day Adventists, but not because of a brilliant career, for he lived as a plain, humble farmer; not because of widespread popularity, for he was little known outside of a radius of a few miles of his birthplace where he spent his entire life; not because of scholastic achievements, for his education was limited to the small rural school near by, which was held only a few months each year. He is, however, worthy of honor because of his courage in standing as the first in his church to announce his conviction that the seventh day is the Sabbath, and his decision to keep it. Others of his associates followed his example, thus forming the nucleus of the first sizable group of Sabbath-keeping Adventists. . . . He lived in a place and in a time where nothing spectacular happened, and although no memoirs of his life have been written, we are able to bring to your attention a few facts of interest concerning his life. •



**WILLIAM FARNSWORTH, 1807-1888**

—Introduction to the story, "William Farnsworth," *The Church Officers' Gazette*, May, 1944, p. 6.

# INSEPARABLE:

## THE SABBATH & THE SANCTUARY

by W.A. Spicer

**I**t is more than interesting to note the providential intertwining of the streams of light by which the full advent message was made plain to the pioneer believers.

Those in one place who were being led into light in their study of one special feature of truth, seemed at the same time to get fleeting glimpses of other truths that some other group was being led to understand and accept.

This providential leading evidently prepared the searchers for the mutual exchange of light and truth when they were brought in contact with one another.

In the early views by the Spirit of prophecy of the rise of the full message. . . we see that those who should find the Sabbath truth would be directed to the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary. The close connection between these two main features was indicated from the earliest days of the advent movement. . . . [See *Early Writings*, 254-261.]

Speaking at the General Conference, in San Francisco, in 1930, our veteran preacher, E. W. Farnsworth, one of the children of that first church of ours [Washington, N.H.], told us of the experience of his father, William Farnsworth:

"The text of Scripture that attracted my father's attention first was that text in Revelation that 'there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament.' [Rev. 11:18,19]. . . and in his thought he opened the ark and there he saw the law of God, and there he saw the fourth commandment, 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.' And he said, 'I think we had better keep the Sabbath,' and he began the observance of the Sabbath quite largely on the strength of the statement in that text."—*General Conference Bulletin*, 1930. . . .

This experience. . . is of special interest to us in view of the scene shown by the Spirit of prophecy as this message rose:

"The third angel closes his message thus: 'Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' As he repeated these words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary." (*Early Writings*, p. 254.)

And there is just where our first\* Adventist pioneer in Sabbath-keeping was led to look for help in making the decision. The angel surely pointed him to the sanctuary. How closely together these experiences are seen to come as the time came for the movement to be fully developed.

Note also that as those who accepted the Sabbath light in 1844 were being prepared by the Spirit to look toward the heavenly sanctuary, so also those who led out in the study of the sanctuary truth were being prepared to look toward the Sabbath. . . . Hiram Edson. . . was the first to see the light on the sanctuary and its cleansing. . . . Soon after he received the light on the sanctuary, he himself was impressed that the seventh day was the Sabbath, but without any conviction that it was important to keep it.

Doubtless that impression helped to place him in a receptive attitude, so that the moment he heard the evidence for the Sabbath presented, he sprang to his feet, saying: "That is the light and the truth! The seventh day is the Sabbath, and I am with you to keep it!"

As the Sabbath light came to the Adventist believers in New Hampshire, in 1844, they were led to turn their thoughts toward the heavenly sanctuary.

As the light on the sanctuary and its cleansing came to believers in western New York in 1844, it turned the thoughts. . . toward the Sabbath truth.

And these pioneers in the Sabbath and the sanctuary truths accepted the Spirit of prophecy, as it was manifested before them in those early days. "Notes on Early Times in This Advent Movement," *Review and Herald*, Dec., 28, 1939, pp.11,12 •

\*First layman. It is believed that Pastors Wheeler & Treble preceded Brother Farnsworth in keeping the Sabbath.

### DIVINELY FORETOLD PROPHETIC WORK

The preaching of the seventh-day Sabbath in the prophetic setting of the third angel of Revelation 14, soon became a distinctive part of this newly developing religious movement.

There have been a singular strength and an evangelizing fervor inherent in Seventh-day Adventism from the first, because of its conviction that it is to carry forward to completion a divinely foretold prophetic work that had been started under the preaching of Miller.

F.D. Nichols, *The Midnight Cry*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Takoma Park, Maryland, 1944, p. 463.

# PECULIAR DESTINY

**N**estled among the granite hills of New Hampshire, in a wooded spot about three miles from the small town of Washington, stands the first Sabbath-keeping church among Adventists. Built by and for the Christian Society, this country church had a peculiar destiny. It would become "...the birthplace of the third angel's message movement."<sup>1</sup> and in 1862, a Seventh-day Adventist church, with a charter membership of fifteen.

"In April, 1842, William Farnsworth met with a group of neighbors who had settled west of Washington. Thirty-two heads of families signed the charter of 'The First Christian Society in Washington,' and announced their purpose of building a meetinghouse 'for their own accommodation and accommodation of other societies when not occupied by them.' They raised by subscription enough money to purchase the materials, and in a few days, with volunteer labor, they had erected and fitted up for use a building thirty by forty feet."<sup>2</sup>

Cushions were placed in the stall-like pews, and chairs and pulpit were on the rostrum. There were two wood stoves, and an organ; and charts were often placed on the wall. Even today these remain as they were in the early times of the message.

Frederick Wheeler's eldest son, George, was eight years old when the church was built.

"The Washington church,' he remembered, 'was built in six weeks. Everybody turned out to work on it. Father led the meetings most of the time when he was there. Old Mr. Stowell usually led when he was gone. William Farnsworth led the singing, and sometimes read a chapter; and there were visiting ministers.'"<sup>3</sup>

He described, "the grove-meeting congregation, [as] 'a very plain looking crowd. Most of the folk were poor. They wore plain clothes—the women wore Shaker bonnets. There were quite a few children and they were kept quiet through the meeting; then they scampered barefoot through the woods.'"<sup>4</sup>

These sincere, simple believers received here the advent message through Elder Joshua Goodwin, a visiting preacher. Then, as they studied further into their well-worn Bibles, and were led by a series of providences, a small group began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. "More solid than the granite hills were the foundations which were laid for this advent movement as the first group of Sabbath-keeping Adventists took their stand there. . . . Prophecy had foretold that they would come when the hour of God's judgment should begin in heaven. The hour had come, and here they were. . . ."<sup>5</sup>

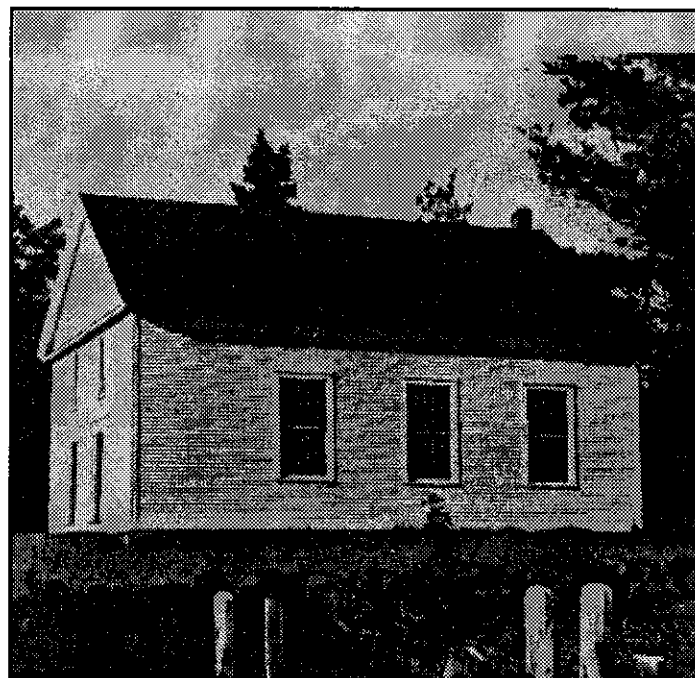
"Those seventh-day Adventist believers. . . did not know it at the time, but they were the beginnings of the hosts of commandment keepers who were seen by the prophet John carrying the advent message 'to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. . . .'"<sup>6</sup>  
—MS

(1) Robinson, A. T., "Early New England Experiences," *Review & Herald*, Dec. 29, 1938, p. 6.

(2) Robinson, D. E., "William Farnsworth," *The Church Officers' Gazette*, May, 1944, p. 7.

(3,4,6) Spicer, W. A., "The First Church," *Review & Herald*, Feb. 8, 1940, p. 10.

(5) *Ibid.* p. 9.



THE CHURCH AT WASHINGTON, N.H.

# WILLIAM FARNSWORTH

## A TRUE PIONEER—1807-1888

**W**illiam Farnsworth was a true pioneer, though not in the same sense as his great-great-great grandfather, Jonathan, who, in 1663, settled with his father, Matthias, near the new colony of Plymouth, Massachusetts; nor as his grandfather and grandmother, Simeon and Esther, who in, 1767, decided to move with fifteen other pioneer families to a more favorable farming area, a nearly virgin territory in what is now the state of New Hampshire. They pioneered against unknown dangers in a new and promising land; while he pioneered against prejudice and tradition, against isolation and ridicule as he decided to keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

The new land where Simeon and Esther Farnsworth pioneered was dotted with beautiful lakes; and wild cherry trees, mulberries, blueberries and blackberries grew in the woods. The settlers built everything they needed, beginning with one-room log cabins. In 1776, the little town that grew up in that place was named Washington after George Washington, then a general of the Army.

Five years later, Esther gave birth to their son Daniel. After he married, Daniel and his wife, Patty, raised a family of five husky boys. William, their first son, was born in 1807, and weighed little more than two and a half pounds. The story is told that his father bundled him up in their ample coffee pot to keep him warm! He was so small, everyone thought he might die; and it is a miracle that he didn't. But he did live—and eventually became a strong, two hundred and forty-pound man, more than six feet tall.

Among their close neighbors was the Mead family. Their children attended school together, played together, and later, married each other. William was

a strong young man, twenty-three years old when he married Sally Mead. They selected two hundred sixteen acres beside the Ashuelot River and built their own home which they called, "Happy Hollow." They lived there the rest of their lives. Eleven children were added to their family and were taught to reverence God and His house, and to read His Word.

One exciting night, November 14, 1833, William and Sally had the thrilling experience of witnessing the solemn rain of stars which was one of the signs that the second coming of Jesus was approaching.

In 1841, William joined a group of thirty-two neighbors, to form the Christian Society of Washington, New Hampshire. At that time they constructed a large church close to their homes. Within the walls of that little country church in Washington, New Hampshire, the lives of William and Sally and their children, and the lives of many of their friends were to be changed forever.

William was president of the Christian Society in 1842 when he invited a visiting minister, Joshua Goodwin, to preach in their church the next Sunday.

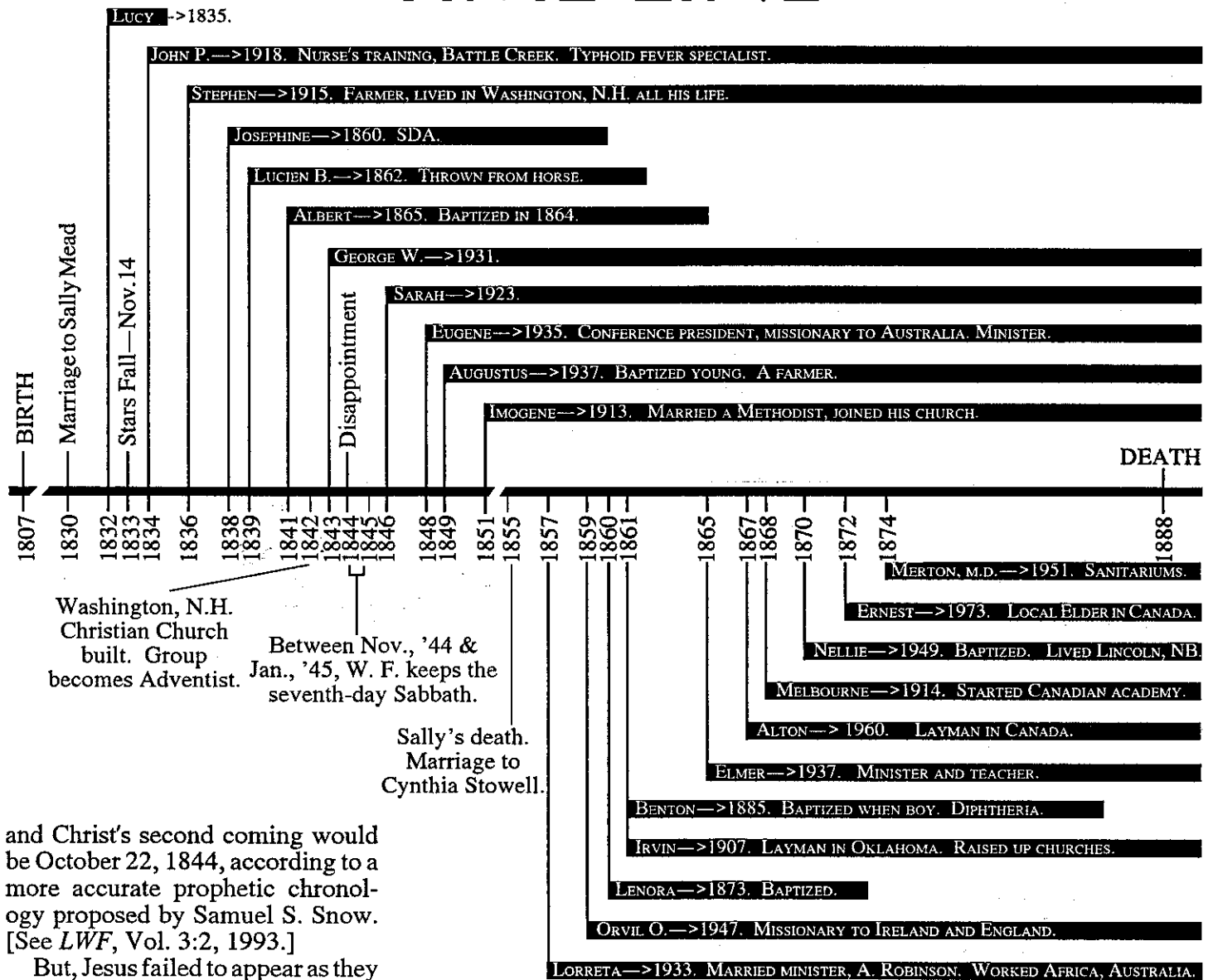
**William weighed little more than two and a half pounds. . . . He was so small, everyone thought he might die.**

Great attention was paid to his sermon when he announced, "Jesus is coming to this earth in 1843! Are you ready?" Because of their interest,

he met night after night with the people to study the prophecy of the 2300 days from Daniel, chapter 9. William and Sally along with most of the members of the Christian Society became Adventists—joyfully awaiting for the coming of Christ to cleanse the earth.

By mid-August, 1844, advent preachers were sounding the midnight cry everywhere, spreading the astounding message that prophetic end-time,

# TIME LINE



and Christ's second coming would be October 22, 1844, according to a more accurate prophetic chronology proposed by Samuel S. Snow. [See *LWF*, Vol. 3:2, 1993.]

But, Jesus failed to appear as they had believed, and the little group at the Washington Christian Church experienced the great disappointment that was felt by all the advent believers. Though some fell away in discouragement, not all were defeated. The Farnsworth family was one that continued believing the word of prophecy.

Another life-changing message entered the lives of the members at the little Christian Church in Washington. Before the disappointment, in 1843, Rachel Oakes moved to Washington to live with her daughter, Delight, who was the school

teacher. Rachel was a Seventh-day Baptist, but worshipped with the Adventist group there in the little Christian Church. (Rachel Oakes will be featured in *LWF*, Vol. 4:1, 1994.) She shared with the little group the history of how Constantine had passed a law in A.D. 321, changing the day of worship from the seventh to the first day; but that the fourth commandment had never been altered by God and was still binding on Christians.<sup>1</sup> Many of the members scorned the idea.

Meanwhile, Frederick Wheeler, a visiting Methodist and advent minister, preached a powerful sermon at the Washington Church about the second coming and the importance of keeping the commandments of God. Later, Rachel Oakes reproached him about this and challenged him to live what he preached by keeping the right Sabbath. As a result of this, and after prayer and Bible study, he began keeping the

*Continued on page six*

# WILLIAM FARNSWORTH

Continued from page five

seventh-day Sabbath. He preached his first Sabbath sermon the last weekend of March, 1844, which made him the first "Seventh-day Adventist minister."<sup>2,3</sup>

Upon reading Revelation 11:18, 19, William Farnsworth had been impressed that the Sabbath of the ten commandments was still to be kept by Christians. Sometime between the disappointment and the first Sabbath in January of 1845, he declared publicly his decision to keep the seventh day holy. He was the first advent layman to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Others in the church were influenced by William Farnsworth and also by the indomitable Rachel Oakes, to decide for the seventh-day Sabbath, and soon a group of about 16 were meeting together.

They could no longer worship in the church at Washington, for their decision to keep the Sabbath meant separation from their Sunday-keeping brethren. The next Sabbath, instead of going to the fields to work, William and Cyrus and their families joined together at their father's home to keep their first Sabbath. On Sunday, William and his eldest son, John, went to work in the fields. Though some neighbors did not agree with them and even threatened to have them arrested for working on Sunday, nothing came of the threat. Later other church members joined their group. This group is believed historically to be THE oldest body of Sabbath-keepers among Adventists.<sup>4</sup> At least sixteen years passed before this group was officially organized as a Seventh-day Adventist Church,<sup>5</sup> and the Washington Christian Church building officially became their worship place.

In early 1845, Joseph Bates visited Washington, New Hampshire, to study the Sabbath message with them there. He found that Farnsworth and the others had begun keeping the Sabbath a few weeks before he himself had. In the autumn of 1846 James and Ellen White also began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. On April 7, 1847, Ellen White had a vision regarding the fourth commandment Sabbath, which affirmed this doctrine as a basic pillar of faith.<sup>6</sup> Different persons in various places had been led by God into an under-

standing of Sabbath keeping and its important place in the third angel's message.

On June 30, 1855, 43-year-old Sally Farnsworth died after a ten-hour illness. It all happened so suddenly! William knew he needed help with the children, and was not slow in filling the great void Sally had left, with a young bride, Cynthia Stowell, 25 years old at the time. They were married several months later, on September 19, 1855.

William and Cynthia also had eleven children, making a total of twenty-two for William. From the Farnsworth home, three sons, Eugene, Orvil, and Elmer became ministers; and one daughter, Loretta, became the first woman S.D.A. Bible instructor. Of the sixteen children born after 1843, all but one lived faithful, consistent lives as Seventh-day Adventists. "The influence of William Farnsworth lives on in his children, his children's children, and . . . great grandchildren. Through the influence of his descendants, hundreds have directly and indirectly been led to see and accept the message."<sup>7,8</sup>

All this happened because, though an ordinary man and a common farmer, William Farnsworth, as a true pioneer, did not hesitate to step forward, even in the face of ridicule, to follow Christ's leading as the Holy Spirit opened new light to his understanding. • —MS

## SABBATH-KEEPING IN WASHINGTON, N.H.

- 1842, April: Christian Church built.
- 1842-1843: Advent message accepted.
- 1843: Rachel and Delight Oakes, Seventh-day Baptists, move to area.
- 1844, March: Frederick Wheeler becomes Sabbath-keeper, influenced by R. Oakes.
- 1844, April to August: T. M. Preble learns of and begins keeping the Sabbath.
- 1844, October: Advent believers at Washington could not see importance of Sabbath.
- 1844, November-1845, January: William Farnsworth steps forward for seventh-day Sabbath; a small group follows him.
- 1845-1856: Members of Christian Society of Washington are "scratched" from the records, meet in home either of C. K. Farnsworth, J. Stowell, or N. Mead.
- 1845, February: Preble publishes "Hope of Israel," about Sabbath; Joseph Bates reads this and visits the Washington company. Becomes "Sabbath Apostle."
- 1862: Christian Church officially becomes Seventh-day Adventist, with fifteen charter members.

(1) Miller, M. R.: *William and His Twenty-two*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1959.

(2) Froom, L. E., *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Vol. VI, Review & Herald Publishing, Washington, D.C., 1954, p. 951.

(3) White, A. L.: *EGW, The Early Years, 1827-1862*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, MD., 1985, pages 116, 117, 120, 121, 284.

(4) Andrews J. N.: *History of the Sabbath*, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Battle Creek, MI, 1887, p. 506.

(5) Robinson, A. T.: "Early New England Experiences," *Review & Herald*, Sept. 18, 1924, p. 10.

(6) Spicer, W. A., "Notes on Early Times in This Advent Movement," *Review & Herald*, Dec. 28, 1939, pages 11, 12.

(7) Robinson, D. E.: "William Farnsworth," *The Church Officers' Gazette*, May, 1944, p. 7.

(8) Farnsworth, E. W.: "Symposium of Pioneers, Sabbath Afternoon, May 29, 1926," *Review & Herald*, June 4, 1926, pp. 1 & 2.



# OVERSHADOWED

## SHADOWED

by Ellen G. White

As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. A parchment was placed in the angel's hand, and as he descended to the earth in power and majesty, he proclaimed a fearful warning, with the most terrible threatening ever borne to man. This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, "they will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast. Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the

was seen, and the people of God were tested, as the children of Israel were tested anciently, to see if they would keep God's law. I saw the third angel pointing upward, showing the disappointed ones the way to the holiest of the heavenly sanctuary. As they by faith enter the most holy, they find Jesus, and hope and joy spring up anew. I saw them looking back, reviewing the past, from the proclamation of the second advent of Jesus, down through their experience to the passing of the time in 1844. They see their disappointment explained, and joy and certainty again animate them. The third angel has lighted up the past, the present, and the future, and they know that God has indeed led them by His mysterious providence.

It was represented to me that the

... They are amazed as they behold the care taken of the ten commandments. They see them placed close by Jehovah, overshadowed and protected by His holiness. They see that they have been trampling upon the fourth commandment of the decalogue, and have observed a day handed down by the heathen and papists, instead of the day sanctified by Jehovah. They humble themselves before God and mourn over their past transgressions ... They joined in the work of the third angel and raise their voices to proclaim the solemn warning. ... I saw many embrace the message of the third angel and unite their voices with those who had first given the warning, and they honored God by observing His sanctified rest day.

Many who embraced the third message had not had an experience in the two former messages. Satan understood this, and his evil eye was upon them to overthrow them; but the third angel was pointing them to the most holy place, and those who had had an experience in the past messages were pointing them the way to the heavenly sanctuary. Many saw the perfect chain of truth in the angels' messages, and gladly received them in their order, and followed Jesus by faith into the heavenly sanctuary. These messages were represented to me as an anchor to the people of God. Those who understand and receive them will be kept from being swept away by the many delusions of Satan.

*Early Writings, 254-256.*

### The angel . . . proclaimed a fearful warning, with the most terrible threatening ever borne to man.

truth." The third angel closes his message thus: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." As he repeated these words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God. . . .

After Jesus opened the door of the most holy, the light of the Sabbath

remnant followed Jesus into the most holy place, and beheld the ark and the mercy seat, and were captivated with their glory. Jesus then raised the cover of the ark, and lo! the tables of stone, with the ten commandments written upon them. They trace down the lively oracles, but start back with trembling when they see the fourth commandment among the ten holy precepts, with a brighter light shining upon it than upon the other nine, and a halo of glory all around it. They find nothing there informing them that the Sabbath has been abolished, or changed to the first day of the week

**NEXT ISSUE: *Josiah Litch, the Fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the year-day principle in the interpretation of prophecy.***

# UNMASKED!

**I**t was Friday, December 20, 1867, in Washington, New Hampshire; and what made the Christmas season even more festive was that visitors, Elder James White and his wife, Ellen, and Elder J. N. Andrews, were coming to the little white church.<sup>1</sup> What the members didn't know was that Mrs. White had been impressed that she must go to Washington, New Hampshire, to deal with problems in the church. God had revealed to her the backslidings of some of the members there.<sup>2</sup> Tired and almost sick from the long, hard, freezing sleigh ride, the guests arrived shortly before sundown on Friday.

The little Seventh-day Adventist church there was in a turmoil. Several men were opposing Ellen White's visions; others were enslaved to tobacco; some of the youth were being drawn to the world. The members pulled apart, quarrelled, and some stopped attending church. Sabbath school had been discontinued.

William Farnsworth was enslaved to tobacco. Though he had learned that it was unhealthful, and had signed a temperance pledge five years earlier to stop chewing tobacco, he had been unsuccessful. Time and again he would throw his tobacco into the forest and even stop using it for weeks at a time. Over and over, he would succumb to the uncontrollable urge to chew, hiding in the woods alone with his vice. This yo-yo experience wore on his religious life and he found it harder to pray and study the Bible. He even forgot at times to gather his family together for worship.

Sabbath morning the little white church was crowded with all who wished to hear the guests speak. Elder White preached the morning sermon, and after a brief lunch, Ellen White stepped up to the podium. Recalling her vision regarding the church members there, she began to reprove them, pray with them, and rescue them. One member confessed his error in

opposing Ellen White. The meetings were so productive of good that the visitors decided to stay through Wednesday, Christmas Day.

Ellen White continued reproofing some members each day. She pointed out a man here, and gave him a testimony; and another one there, and another here. She read life after life like an open book.<sup>3</sup> William Farnsworth's son, Eugene, had noticed his father hastily covering tobacco spittle stains in the snow and had guessed his father's hypocrisy. He wondered whether Sister White knew and would speak to him. Almost immediately Mrs. White turned to William Farnsworth and said, "I see that this brother is a slave to tobacco. Even worse, he is trying to deceive his brethren that he has stopped using it."<sup>4</sup>

It hurt to be publicly unmasked like this—God had revealed William's secret sin to her. Though at first he resented being corrected, and the darkness covering his soul seemed to increase for a while, the Holy Spirit finally reached his heart, and he was able to gain the victory over tobacco.

A miracle happened that Christmas which restored vitality to the little church there, and revealed that God is personally interested in each individual. • —MS

(1) White, A. L., *Ellen G. White, The Progressive Years, 1862-1876*, Review & Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, MD, 21740, pp. 215-219.

(2) Robinson, E. E., "William Farnsworth," *Church Officer's Gazette*, May, 1944, p. 7.

(3) Farnsworth, E. W., "Symposium of Pioneers," *Review & Herald*, June 4, 1926, pp. 1, 2.

(4) Miller, Mabel Robinson, *William and His Twenty-two*, Review & Herald Publishing Association, Washington, DC, 1959.

(Note) See also experiences by Ellen G. White in 1T 653-663 and 2T 93-111.

Volume 3

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