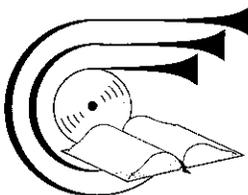
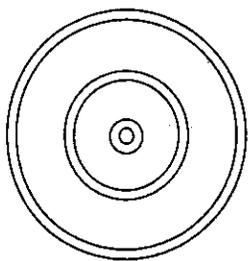


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# Lest We Forget

*"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*



## OCTOBER 22, 1844

# AFTER



**A**fter the disappointment of October 22, 1844, the Adventists were reviled and mocked by unbelievers. Some abandoned the faith; some set future dates for Christ's coming; others studied the prophecies for more light to discover any errors of interpretation.

Amidst all this uncertainty, a small group began studying the Heavenly Sanctuary, embraced the Third Angel's message, learned the importance of the seventh-day Sabbath, and adopted other basic Bible truths.

God sent special messages that consoled this group and guided them into fuller truth through a young, defenseless, ailing girl, Ellen Gould Harmon. As she traveled from place to place sharing these special messages, God inspired her to select Elder James White to accompany her and her female companions while traveling. (See A. L. White, Volume 1, *Ellen G. White, The Early Years*, p. 84.) This issue of *Lest We Forget*, Volume 5, Number 2, features their friendship, marriage, family life, trials, and sacrifices during the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

How did James feel about Ellen and her gift? How did Ellen feel about James and his leadership talents? How did James and Ellen meet their parental responsibilities while, with other advent pioneers, founding the Seventh-day Adventist Church? What trials did they suffer, what sacrifices did they make for the "truth"? How did Ellen feel about leaving her children in the care of other women?

May James and Ellen White's special experiences inspire today's remnant who lift up the torch entrusted to them by these valient pioneers. ♦

**LEST WE FORGET, VOLUME 5, 1995, FEATURES  
JAMES SPRINGER WHITE & ELLEN GOULD HARMON WHITE—  
THEIR FRIENDSHIP, MARRIAGE, FAMILY LIFE, TRIALS, AND SACRIFICES.**

# A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

*By Richard Cooper*

**J**ames S. White and Ellen Gould Harmon shared similar backgrounds: sincere Christian parents willing to stand for their beliefs; limited education due to poor childhood health, conversion to the Millerite message, and God's calling to share new truths with others who were searching. Both were reluctant to respond at first. Both were later disfellowshipped from their churches because of their belief in Christ's soon coming. Sincere, willing to learn, and concerned about their lack of education, James and Ellen formed a union that strengthened the growing body of believers and helped set a firm base for future church growth.

Before their first meeting, James had taught school, but he began preaching about the second coming in 1842. At first he thought Miller's teachings were in error, but after discussing them with his mother, who combined Bible study with down-to-earth logic, he commented, "she was ready to calmly and pleasantly meet all my objections." (*LS*, 21.)

After she began receiving visions, Ellen traveled with her sister, Sarah, and sometimes with Sister Foss. James accompanied

them on many of their trips, observing Ellen's fainting and illness. He frequently joined other believers in praying for her health. He also saw how critics and disbelievers caused problems. He believed that it was his duty to accompany her to "introduce her and her mission to the people." (*LS*, 238.) James considered himself a protector for Ellen who said of herself, "[I had]. . . a lack of confidence in myself, and a conviction that it would be impossible to make anyone understand my feelings, [that] prevented me from seeking advice and aid from my Christian friends," (*1T*, 75.) and "[was]. . . naturally so timid and retiring that it was painful for me to meet strangers." (*1T*, 62.)

James was twenty-five and Ellen eighteen when they were married by a justice of the peace on August 30, 1846. They dedicated their lives to the great challenge of strengthening and educating the believers.

They performed a traveling ministry of encouragement and teaching among the believers, working with small groups in homes and halls, and often had to meet the pressures of critics. Their common purpose was to encourage the believers and organize churches based on New

Testament principles.

As they met with believers, James would preach and Ellen would encourage and guide. He often spoke himself hoarse. She was ill, and would frequently faint. James would confront troublemakers firmly, and said to one, ". . . the Lord does not want your testimony here. The Lord does not want you here to distract and crush his people." (*LS*, 271.)

The White's first home was with Ellen's parents. Later they shared the home of the Holland family. Ellen wrote, "We entered upon our work with few friends, and broken in health. . . [James'] health had been seriously injured by close application to study at school, and in lecturing. . . Without means, with very few who sympathized with us in our views, without a paper, and without books, we entered upon our work." (*1T*, 75.)

The Whites had four sons. Henry Nichols was born August 20, 1847; James Edson, July 28, 1849; William Clarence, August 29, 1854; and John Herbert, September 20, 1860. Henry died at the age of 16, and John Herbert lived for less than three months. Both deaths were terrible blows for the family.

*continued on page seven*

# Her Husband's Crown



What did James S. White value in his wife?

*by Marlene Steinweg*

“James was intensely proud of his wife—not only of her spiritual dedication, but of her speaking and writing abilities. He promoted her, defended her, praised her. . . .” James White described Ellen as his “. . . crown of rejoicing.” Let’s take a look at some experiences that may have led him to have such a high regard for his wife.

James remembered meeting Ellen Harmon in her hometown of Portland, Maine, sometime in 1843. He was impressed with her radiant Christian experience and effective missionary endeavors. “She was then a Christian of the most devoted type. And although but sixteen, she was a laborer in the cause of Christ in public and from house to house. . . . Her experience was so rich and her testimony so powerful that ministers and leading men of different churches sought her labors as an exhorter in their several congregations.”<sup>2</sup> Did Ellen boldly go forth to answer these calls? No, but rather with much trepidation. “At that time she was very timid, and little thought that she was to be brought before the public to speak to thousands.”<sup>3</sup>

It was more than a year later, in February of 1845, that James again met Ellen in Orrington, Maine. She had traveled there with their mutual friends, William Jordan and his sister, Sarah, to share her visions with the believers. James was led to believe that “. . . her wonderful experience and work was of God, and it was his duty to accompany them.”<sup>4</sup> He offered to accompany Ellen and her companions, wherever she needed to travel to share her messages with Advent believers.

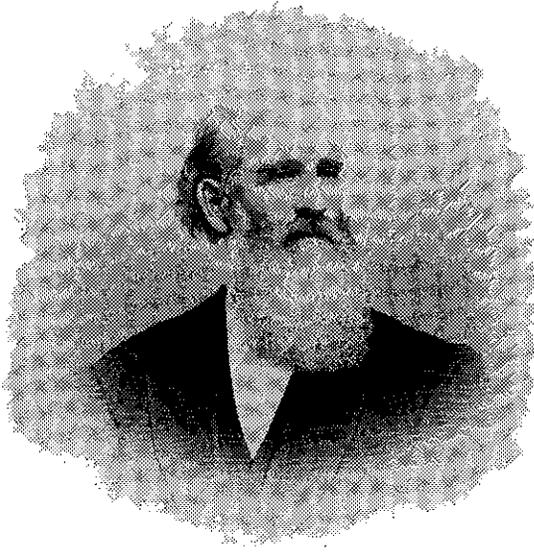
His experiences as a traveling companion were inspiring and challenging. In Atkinson, Maine, a

few days later, Ellen fell down in a vision while meeting with a group of fanatics who performed strange acts, supposedly under the Spirit’s power. It was James who cradled her head. Another time, while in New Hampshire, James was inspired to rebuke evil spirits in the believers there, who were groaning and shouting “Amen!” to disturb the meeting. Time and again God would lead by providing funds for Ellen’s travels, or directing what moves to make in order to overcome Satan’s attempts to keep her from sharing the messages she received from God.

James observed how God used Ellen to bless the believers. She “moved out in the work of public speaking timidly. If she had confidence, it was given her by the Holy Spirit. If she spoke with freedom and power, it was given her of God.”<sup>5</sup> Later, she improved so much as a speaker, that he thought she excelled all others in her power to move the people. Her voice “became [so] clear and powerful, and her articulation. . . so distinct that acres of people could hear her out-of-doors . . . as easily as if seated in a church.”<sup>6</sup>

When did James and Ellen learn to love each other? “When we first met, we had no idea of marriage at any future time. . . . [Later it became clear that] God had a great work for both of us to do. . . [and] we could greatly assist each other in that work. . . . As she should come before the public,” James explained, “she needed a lawful protector. . . . God having chosen her as a channel of light and truth to the people in a special sense, she could be of great help to me.”<sup>7</sup> James recognized that their marriage would help them mutually in the gospel ministry.

*continued on page six*



# “The Best Man that ever trod Shoe Leather.”

What led Ellen White to say this about her husband?

by *Marlene Steinweg*

**E**llen White highly esteemed her husband, James. She believed God had qualified him “. . . for a specific work, and . . . united them to carry forward this work,”<sup>1</sup> and that he was “. . . the best man that ever trod shoe leather.”<sup>2</sup> How did Ellen arrive at these conclusions?

In mid-February of 1845, the intense winter following her first vision, Ellen met the man who was to be her husband when William Jordan and his sister Sarah urged Ellen to go with them to Orrington, Maine, to share her visions. From then on, Elder James Springer White, a youthful, Advent preacher, traveled with Ellen, accompanying her and her companions from place to place to seek out Advent believers.

Did Ellen ever dream that the friendship started in Orrington would lead to marriage and a special work in the development of a powerful, new religious movement? Not likely. But, as they traveled, she could observe James’ character strengths and flaws, and saw his deep desire to know,

follow, and preach the truth. God led in their lives, and they eventually married on Sunday, August 30, 1846.

Ellen recognized many of James’ character strengths. For example, she told of his “head to plan and . . . life of experience to balance the inexperienced;”<sup>3</sup> of his “firmness and decision . . . ;”<sup>4</sup> his ability to “. . . stand in defense of the truth without yielding. . . principle. . . ;”<sup>5</sup> and his “unbending integrity and noble courage to vindicate the right and condemn the wrong.”<sup>6</sup>

He was “bold and fearless in acting. . . ;”<sup>7</sup> could “. . . speak more earnestly;”<sup>8</sup> and “stand more firmly,”<sup>9</sup> than other men in similar circumstances. “God has given him,” she declared, “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>10</sup>

What character flaws did Ellen notice in her husband? Perhaps his temper? She wrote how his peace was destroyed and he was annoyed when others failed “to carry out things

just as. . . he would carry them out.”<sup>11</sup> He “felt he must see to this and that, fearing it. . . [would] be done wrong.”<sup>12</sup>

One problem James had was that he would overtax himself physically. This would be a natural result of not letting others do the work. “Even if it was done wrong a few times,” Ellen thought, “[James]. . . should not perplex his mind and take the burden of overseeing these things.”<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps James’ unforgiving spirit was a character flaw? Ellen wrote in December of 1865, that James’ “greatest wrong in the past. . . [was] an unforgiving spirit toward those brethren who injured his influence in the cause of God. . . .”<sup>14</sup> Although these brethren heartily acknowledged their wrongs and James forgave them and even continued working with them, he could not entirely forget the incidents. He would at times rehash the offenses in his mind, bringing them to life, and this brought him added stress and sadness.

James was able to learn from his mistakes, and later repented of his errors. God

## That brain, that noble masterly mind, shall not be left in ruin. Satan shall not exult over us.

“...accepted his humiliation . . .the afflicting of his soul before Him. . .the confessions of his lack of consecration to God, and his repentance for the errors and mistakes in his course which have caused him such sorrow and despondency of mind. . . .”<sup>15</sup>

When James suffered a series of strokes, Ellen, who had relied so much on him, missed that “. . .strong, manly arm [she] ever leaned upon. . . .”<sup>16</sup> She vowed to continue working for his healing, “as long as life is left him and me. . . . That brain, that noble masterly mind,” she declared, “shall not be left in ruin. . . . Satan shall not exult over us. You will yet see us standing side by side in the sacred desk, speaking the words of truth. . . .”<sup>17</sup>

In July, 1874, after James had suffered another stroke, Ellen wrote him, “I have the highest estimate of your ability, and with the power of God to work with your efforts, you can do a great and efficient work. God can mend the broken and worn machinery and make it of essential use to do His work still.”<sup>18</sup> She wrote these words when James was very discouraged admonishing him to “believe, . . .be cheerful, . . .be of good courage.”<sup>19</sup> He must have accepted this counsel by June of 1875, for Ellen wrote her friend Lucinda Hall, “My husband is very cheerful and of good courage. He is very attentive to me, seeking

in every way to make my journeyings and labor pleasant and relieve it of weariness.”<sup>20</sup>

In August, 1876, when God again healed James and he could return to work, Ellen remarked to Willie, “Your father does the work of three men at all these meetings. I never saw a man work so energetically, so constantly as your father. God does give him more than mortal energy. If there is any place that is hard, your father takes it.”<sup>21</sup> Evidently she realized they both might overdo it again, and James might become discouraged and ill. She prayed for “strength to do the work necessary to be done in these special occasions.”<sup>22</sup>

James obtained a special victory the next year, for which Ellen praised God in a letter to Edson and Emma, on August 31, 1877. “Father says he will go forward in the name and strength of our dear Saviour. He will go to the camp meetings and will bear his testimony, exalting Jesus and the power of His grace. Oh! What hath the Lord wrought! Father feels now that he must hide behind Christ. He must exalt Jesus and humble himself. He wants to work in a different manner than he has hitherto done, walking in greater humility and working in God continually.”<sup>23</sup> By the next week God had blessed his health so much, that she reported he “. . .went into the stand, sang and prayed like his own self.

This is God’s doing,” she concluded, “and His name shall have all the glory.”<sup>24</sup>

On August 6, 1881, James died from a serious case of malaria, thus ending nearly thirty-five years of marriage. Though Ellen felt “. . .deprived of. . . [his] wisdom and ability,”<sup>25</sup> he lived another thirty-four years remembering and missing her husband, James, “. . .the best man that ever trod shoe leather.”<sup>26</sup> ♦

<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Publishing Ministry*, RHPA, Hagerstown, MD, 1983, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>A. L. White, *Ellen G. White, Vol. 1, The Early Years*, RHPA, Hagerstown, MD, 1985, p. 84.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Volume 6, EGW Estate, Silver Spring, MD, 1990, p. 304.

<sup>4-10</sup>*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, PPPA, Mt. View, CA, 1915, p. 243.

<sup>11,12,13</sup>E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Volume 10, EGW Estate, Silver Spring, MD, 1990, p. 23.

<sup>14,15</sup>E. G. White, *Testimonies*, Volume 1, PPPA, Mt. View, CA, 1948, p. 613.

<sup>16,17</sup>6MR, pp. 300-301.

<sup>18,19</sup>A. L. White, *Ellen G. White, Volume 2, The Progressive Years*, p. 439, RHPA, Hagerstown, MD, 1986.

<sup>20,22,22</sup>10MR, pp. 33, 34.

<sup>23,24</sup>10MR, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup>6MR, p. 307.

<sup>26</sup>Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Volume 5, EGW Estate, Silver Spring, MD, 1972, p. 208.

# HER HUSBAND'S CROWN

continued from page three

**T**heir friendship advanced over the period of about a year, and "although their courtship lacked some of the typical elements, providence led them on to love and affection and fixed their eyes on marriage."<sup>8</sup> Ellen recalled that James' proposal was somewhat like an ultimatum. "He told me... he should have to go away and leave me to go with whomsoever I would, or we must be married. So we were married."<sup>9</sup> On August 26, 1846, James happily informed his friend, Brother Collins, "Ellen says that the way has been made plain. We are published, and we shall be married perhaps Monday."<sup>10</sup> They were actually married Sunday, August 30, 1846 and began their thirty-five years as man and wife. As James aptly commented, they had "linked life's destiny..."<sup>11</sup>

Although James and Ellen both had strong personalities, which was a potential source of friction, by God's grace they were able to resolve their differences. For example, James felt at times that Ellen was seeking to control him, and although she didn't conscientiously do this, she told him she was sorry. She wrote him, "Wherein my feelings have been permitted to arise in any instance, it was wrong." James apologized also, and felt he had wronged Ellen."<sup>12</sup>

The near-drowning incident of twenty-month old Willie reveals the full support James gave Ellen and the trust he had in her judgement. Ellen worked with Willie's cold, limp body, massaging it back and forth, bringing up the soapy, wash water he had breathed into his tiny lungs after falling into a wash tub. There seemed to be no hope, and an aghast neighbor urged that someone take the dead child from the distraught mother. "No," James replied, "No one shall take it away from her."<sup>13</sup> Twenty minutes later, signs of life indicated that her efforts had saved Willie's life, and James' confidence in Ellen was rewarded.

When James' health failed, as it so often did, Ellen tried to be there to pray and help work towards his recovery. Her belief in his leadership abilities and value in the cause of God, and her unflinching efforts to restore him to health and service, were a constant inspiration to James. If she had to travel, she would write him. Once she wrote, "It has been

From that hour to the present,  
she has been my  
CROWN OF REJOICING.

a continual cross for me to be so far away from you and friends I love. . . . May God bless you, my husband, with His grace. . . . Your Ellen."<sup>14</sup>

When James was deeply depressed, Ellen would encourage him to look up and let Christ take his burdens, and believe he would be healed. "Let the disagreeables go," she urged him. "Turn from these things which cause sadness and... dishearten you."<sup>15</sup>

In 1880, very near the end of his life and after nearly 34 years of marriage, James was preparing an edition of *Life Sketches*. In this he stated, "Marriage marks an important era in the lives of men."<sup>16</sup> He then quoted Solomon's words from Proverbs 18: 22, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord," indicating he had

been thus favored. "This expression," he added, "taken alone may be understood to convey the idea that all wives are from the Lord. But Solomon qualifies the expression by other statements. 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. . . . Proverbs 12:4. . . .'" "[Ellen] has been my crown of rejoicing," he concluded, since "we were married . . . and from that hour to the present. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graybill, Ron, "Married to the Prophet," *Insight*, October 2, 1993, pp. 8-10.

<sup>2</sup>White, James, *Life Sketches (LSJW)*, SDA Steam Press, Battle Creek, MI, 1880, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>8</sup>White, A. L., *Ellen G. White (EGW)*, Volume 1, *The Early Years*, RHPA, Hagerstown, MD, 1985, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Roy E. Graham, *Ellen G. White, Co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1985, p. 28. (originally in *Manuscript Release 310*, EGW Estate Document, 701-b-1-a),

<sup>10</sup>EGW, Volume 1, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>LSJW, p. 125.

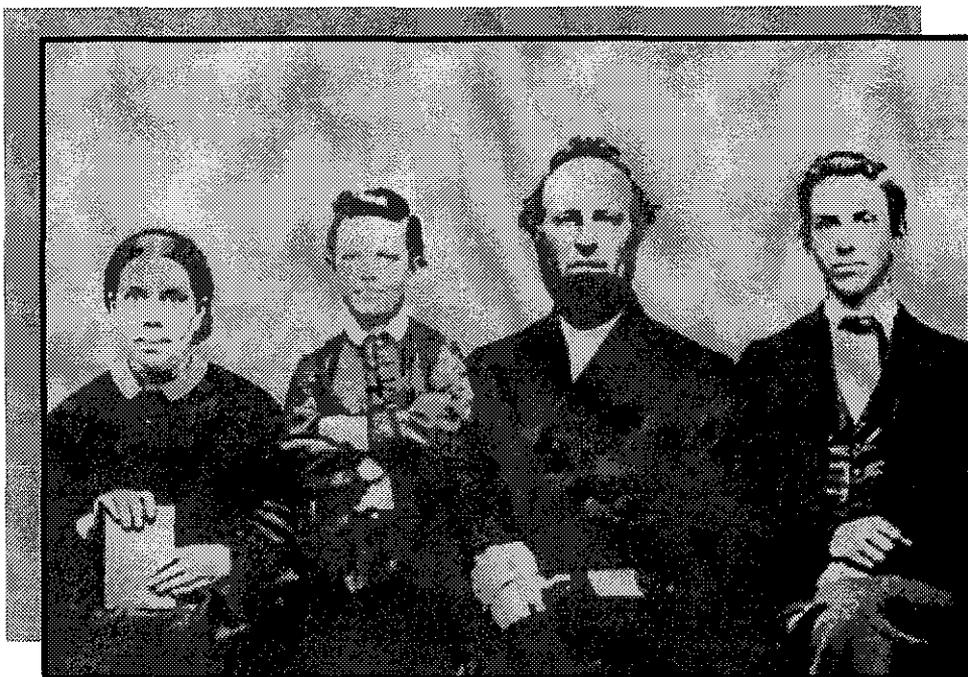
<sup>12</sup>Insight, October 2, 1993, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup>EGW, Volume 1, p. 337.

<sup>14</sup>White, Ellen G., Volume 7, *Manuscript Releases*, pp. 31-35, May, 1880, EGW Estate, Silver Spring, MD, 1990.

<sup>15</sup>EGW, Volume 2, *The Progressive Years*, 1984, p. 439.

<sup>16,17</sup>LSJW, p. 125.



THE WHITES: ELLEN, WILLIE, JAMES, AND EDSON, 1865

*continued from page two*

**Y**oung Henry traveled much with his parents during the first year of his life. He observed his mother in illness and recovery. Ellen wrote that, "When I grew better, my little Henry expressed great joy. He would climb upon the sofa, throw his little arms around my neck, and kiss me many times. He was then one year old." (*LS*, 244, 245.) Eventually he was left with the Holland family while his parents traveled because "it was for his good to have a good home and steady discipline." (*1T*, 87.) She once wrote "...the greatest sacrifice I was called to make in connection with the work was to leave my children in the care of others." (*1T*, 101.)

Edson had to spend much time in his early years away from his parents. Lacking a real home may have caused some of his erratic and rebellious behavior. Later he returned and did a powerful and effec-

tive work for Southern Blacks. Ellen wrote faithfully to her sons, encouraging them to remain steadfast and make positive choices. She wisely counseled that "the youth should not feel that they are under an eye that is watching them, ready to reprove and condemn. Approve whatever you can; smile whenever you can." (*Letter* 19, 1886.)

James began his publishing and writing leadership in 1861. He was never afraid to push himself hard, burning the midnight oil and often taking outdoor work to earn money to pay for printing of church papers. He suffered a major stroke in 1865, compounding health problems that he had from his youth. Ellen cared for him as best she could.

It appears that the toll of this experience, combined with his aggressive personality, may have made the later years of their marriage more strained. In 1867, when she was finishing writing in Oakland and he

was in Battle Creek, he objected vigorously to something she had written to him. "Your head won't fit my shoulders. Keep it where it belongs, and I will try to honor God in using my own," he declared, and added, "I shall be glad to hear from you, but don't waste your precious time and strength in lecturing me on matters of mere opinions." (Graybill, Ron, "Married to the Prophet," *Insight*, October 2, 1993, p. 9.)

She was, apparently, frustrated by this, but then wrote this gracious reply, "It grieves me that I have said or written anything to grieve you. Forgive me, and I will be cautious and not start any subject to annoy and distress you. We are living in a most solemn time, and we cannot afford to have in our old age differences to separate our feelings. [Ellen was 40; James, 46, at the time.] I may not view all things as you do, but I do not think it would be my place or duty to make you see as I see and feel as I feel. Wherein I have done this, I am sorry. I want a humble heart, a meek and quiet spirit." (*Ibid.*, p. 10.)

James died in 1881. She wrote Willie about her sense of loss soon after losing James, saying, "My life was so entwined or interwoven with my husband's that it is about impossible for me to be of any great account without him." (*Ibid.*) God's goodness, Willie's faithful support, and her own commitment to Christ, enabled her to provide guidance to God's church for 34 more years.

James and Ellen White gave enthusiasm, love, challenge, and outstanding leadership to their family and the church. They sacrificed all they had for the cause of Christ. Dare we do any less? ♦

References: *LS* is *Life Sketches*, 1880 edition by James White. *1T* is *Testimonies*, Volume 1, by Ellen G. White.

# TRIUMPH THROUGH TRIAL

by Ellen G. White

**G**od has always tried His people in the furnace of affliction. It is in the heat of the furnace that the dross is separated from the true gold of the Christian character. Jesus watches the test; He knows what is needed to purify the precious metal, that it may reflect the radiance of His love. It is by close, testing trials that God disciplines His servants. He sees that some have powers which may be used in the advancement of His work, and He puts these persons upon trial; in His providence He brings them into positions that test their character and reveal defects and weaknesses that have been hidden from their own knowledge. He gives them opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. He shows them their own weakness, and teaches them to lean upon Him. . . , their only help and safeguard. Thus His object is attained. They are educated, trained, and disciplined, prepared to fulfill the grand purpose for which their powers were given them. When God calls them to action, they are ready, and heavenly angels can unite

**“We shall come forth bearing the impress of the Divine.”**

with them in the work to be accomplished on the earth. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 129,130.

The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls. . . that we may know Him and Jesus

Christ whom He has sent . . . that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from

the trial purer, holier, happier. . . If patient under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 175.

Trials of life are God's workmen to . . . fit us for the society of pure, heavenly angels in glory. But as we pass through these trials. . . let the eye of faith fasten upon the things unseen, the eternal inheritance, the immortal life, the eternal weight of glory, and while we do this the fire will not consume us, but only remove the dross, and we shall come forth seven times purified, bearing the impress of the Divine. *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, pp. 706, 707. ♦

## Lest We Forget

Volume 5

Number 2

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