

MISSION BRIEF

Intelligence for the Final Campaign

Dave Fiedler

A rectangular stamp with a thick, textured black border. The words "MISSION BRIEF" are printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font, slanted upwards from left to right within the stamp.

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God calls for far more tact, more wise generalship, than has yet been given Him by His human agents. There is need of sharp, sanctified thinking, and keen work to counteract the ingenious plans of Satan.

—*Youth's Instructor*, May 24, 1894

We have need of wisdom, sharp thoughts, and a better knowledge of Satan's devices, that he will not, right before our eyes, accomplish the ruin of precious souls.

—Letter 7, 1885

We have a soldier's duty to perform, victories to gain, for we must not be ignorant of Satan's devices.

—Letter 81, 1887

THE war that began in heaven spawned all the sorrows and wars of earth. For us, it is all we've ever known, the air we breathe, the world in which we live.

For all other created beings, however, it is an aberration for which no reason exists. And yet it has become the dividing line by which all eternity and all intelligent beings are grouped and classed. It's a certifiable "big issue," so all the understanding we can gain of its background, nature, and progress holds promise of advantage. Simply put, fighting a war from the basis of ignorance is a very bad option.

These pages offer the reader a "briefing," a hasty outline of the issues confronting all humanity in general, and God's church in particular. Historical episodes illustrate the principles and methods of the two antagonists in this war, and help portray events still future. With that as introduction, let's start at the beginning... or just after.

"The beginning" of this story is something Jesus mentioned once. Speaking of Satan, He said, "He was a murderer from the beginning.... a liar and the father of it."¹

1. John 8:44

The moment there was sin, Lucifer was a liar and a murderer, for the spirit of selfishness is intrinsic to any deviation from God's "law of life." The nature of that law is a key point, so let's nail it down:

Self-renouncing love is the law of life.²

The great law of life is a law of service.³

To give is to live.⁴

Self-renunciation is the great law of self-preservation, and self-preservation is the law of self-destruction.⁵

The law of God is the foundation of His government, and is exactly what is needed to preserve life and righteousness.⁶

The idea is pretty simple. God's law is perfect, the only thing that will preserve life. Anything else ends up with unrighteousness and death. And that's where Lucifer went.

But what makes God's law so unique, and how did Lucifer ever head off in a wrong direction? We have answers to some of that, but nothing at all on the question of how sin began, or why Lucifer went that way. That's the "mystery of lawlessness," and all efforts to explain it are doomed.

We need not try to understand the motives which prompted the being next to Christ in the heavenly courts to bring envy and jealousy into the ranks of the angels.... We need not puzzle our minds for a reason why Satan acted as he did. Could a reason be found, there would be excuse for sin.⁷

2. *Desire of Ages*, 19

3. *Education*, 103

4. *Desire of Ages*, 623

5. *Signs of the Times*, July 1, 1897

6. *Signs of the Times*, February 26, 1894

7. E.G. White, "Sin and Its Result," September 24, 1901; Manuscript 97, 1901

It is impossible to explain the origin of sin so as to give a reason for its existence.... Sin is an intruder, for whose presence no reason can be given. It is mysterious, unaccountable; to excuse it is to defend it. Could excuse for it be found, or cause be shown for its existence, it would cease to be sin.⁸

That ultimate mystery acknowledged, there is still room for a great deal of careful consideration of the development of sin. Not where it came from, but what it developed into. In this arena, we are encouraged to invest time and effort:

The world's Redeemer presents the plan of the battle, with all the difficulties, and bids us count the cost. He does not wish His followers to be ignorant of Satan's devices. They must know what they will have to meet, and the preparation they must make in order to counteract his devices.⁹

It is important and essential that all of Christ's followers understand Satan's devices and with a united front meet his attacks and vanquish him.¹⁰

Those who do not realize their danger because they do not watch, will pay, with the loss of their souls, the penalty of their presumption and their willful ignorance of Satan's devices.¹¹

There is nothing we should dread so much as being ignorant of Satan's devices.¹²

There is nothing that the great deceiver fears so much as that we shall become acquainted with his devices.¹³

8. *Great Controversy*, 492

9. *Signs of the Times*, December 21, 1891

10. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, 434

11. *Review and Herald*, April 25, 1907

12. E.G. White, Letter to Edith Andrews, November 21, 1885; Letter 4, 1885

13. *Great Controversy*, 516

At the very heart of all Satan's "devices" is the temptation to take the fatal step he himself took. While we can never say *why* he did this, knowing *what* he did is central to understanding the whole great controversy. The story of his experience affords us an advantage he didn't have:

Lucifer himself did not at first see whither he was drifting; he did not understand the real nature of his feelings.¹⁴

What we do know is that at some point in time, God asked Lucifer to do "A," and he thought, "'B' is better." Perhaps it started off as a question: "Wouldn't 'B' be better?" Perhaps there was no delay and he went directly to "No! 'B' is better." Those details we don't have, nor do we need.

No matter the exact circumstances, Lucifer eventually came to believe that his approach to *whatever*, was better than God's approach. This was a huge, disastrous step, for in order to get to that position, one or the other—or possibly both—of two things had to happen first.

In order to think "My plan is better than God's," he may have convinced himself that God had made a mistake, that in just one circumstance God had slipped up. In other words, Lucifer came to doubt God's wisdom.

There is a second possibility to consider. Unfortunately, it's even worse. If Lucifer did not believe God had made an intellectual mistake, but still believed that what he had been asked to do was not best, then logic would

14. *Great Controversy*, 495

argue that God had deliberately given him a less than optimal assignment. Knowingly... with full understanding...

In other words, Lucifer came to doubt God's love.

Either way, whether he doubted God's wisdom or His love, the crux of the issue was God's care for Lucifer. What if He wasn't smart enough to provide the best? What if He didn't *want* to provide the best? With those doubts in mind, Lucifer lost faith in God's care.

What is it to be in an unsaved condition? Is it not to be living without that full confidence in God which is born of love, which leads us to take Him at His word?¹⁵

But why did losing faith in God mean Lucifer was lost? Because, now, for the first time in his life, he felt the burden of taking care of himself. If he couldn't trust God, then he'd just have to take care of himself. But at the heart of that idea is the willingness to put one's own interests ahead of others. Under enough pressure, that meant lying, stealing, and murder.

In heaven [Lucifer] lost his self-sacrificing principle and unselfish care for his associates, and little by little he introduced a new order of things.¹⁶

These twin losses—love and faith in God, and love for others¹⁷—should have filled Lucifer with terror. Instead, he imagined that his new principles were better than God's! That in taking the control of his own affairs

15. *Bible Training School*, November 1, 1911

16. E.G. White, "Satan's Snares," May 11, 1895; Manuscript 59, 1900

17. The two great commandments on which "hang all the law and the prophets."

into his own hands, he might rise to a higher level of exaltation than ever before.

I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds....

And, to cap it all off, Lucifer said that when he did all this, when he pursued selfish interest irrespective of others' good, he would actually just "be like the Most High."¹⁸

He reasoned that if it was good for God to establish the order of the universe with Himself at the top, it certainly wouldn't be objectionable for the angels to ensure their own well-being.

Satan... contended [that] in struggling to carry out his purposes and have his own way, [he] was only imitating the example of God. If God followed His own will perfectly and continually, why should not the first sons created in His image do so? By this argument Satan deceived many of the holy angels.¹⁹

Right here we can see something important about this war that began in heaven. Even though it is the ultimate source of all the wars of earth, this war is *different*. It's not a matter of bombs and bullets; it's not a contest of physical force. It's more of an argument, more like politics. In fact, it's exactly what the Bible calls it in Revelation 12:7.

When John the Revelator wrote that "war broke out in heaven," he used the Greek word πόλεμος (*pol'-em-os*),

18. Isaiah 14:13–14

19. *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, 77

the source of our English word “polemic.” Admittedly, that’s not among the most common words of every day life, but it does have a meaning: “An aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of another.”²⁰

We can see this as well in Ellen White’s treatment of Lucifer’s last day in heaven:

Then there was the council in heaven—warfare, it is called.²¹

A council? What kind of a war is that?

A polemos, a war of opinions and principles.

God’s principles were what they had always been, the only principles that would preserve life and righteousness. Lucifer’s principles were... well, *evolving*.

In his first display of disaffection, Satan was very cunning. All he claimed was that he wanted to bring in a better order of things, to make great improvements.²²

Satan could present no defined reasons as to why he wished the law of God changed or abolished. He simply declared his conviction that the angels would be better off without the law, but could not tell in what way they would be advantaged.²³

Satan was artful in presenting his side of the question. As soon as he found that one position was seen in its true character, he changed it for another.²⁴

Positions might change, but down deep, the basic principle never wavered.

20. merriam-webster.com/dictionary/polemic

21. E.G. White, “A Message to A.T. Jones and Others in Battle Creek,” March 23, 1906; Manuscript 34, 1906

22. *Review and Herald*, August 4, 1910

23. *Signs of the Times*, November 14, 1895

24. *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1886

The hidden principle of all sin is a rejection of the will of God, the refusal to acknowledge dependence upon Him.²⁵

After Satan's expulsion from heaven, he came to this earth filled with the determination to establish a kingdom entirely independent of God.²⁶

Satan erected his standard of revolt against God in heaven. He... has revealed a persevering determination to establish his empire, governed by laws, and replenished with resources, independent of God.²⁷

To make such a radical departure from all the universe had ever known, Lucifer needed some really compelling "reasons." He claimed to have them, in the form of nine primary accusations against the government of heaven:

1. Angels are holy by nature and wise enough to govern themselves, so they don't need God's law.
2. God did not treat Lucifer fairly.
3. God is selfish.
4. God is unforgiving and revengeful.
5. God's law is defective, and needs to be changed.
6. Because of the law's defects, neither angels nor human beings can possibly obey God's law.
7. God's law is arbitrary.
8. If God's law is not arbitrary, forgiveness is impossible.
9. God is lying about all the above.

25. E.G. White, "The Unfaithful Husbandmen," September 20, 1899; Manuscript 134, 1899

26. E.G. White, "Sermon," June 8 (or 15), 1901; Manuscript 78, 1901

27. *Review and Herald*, June 21, 1898

We might look at this list and scoff, but God didn't, nor did the angels. Though the Lord absolutely denied each of Lucifer's claims, the charges were serious, and—to a degree—they were *plausible*. For example, how hard is it to imagine that Someone (capital "S") who just happens to own *everything* in the universe might be a little bit selfish? Remember, Lucifer was the highest of the angels: if anyone would know God's weaknesses, wouldn't he be the one?

Almost as a sidebar to all the rest, there is, in the middle of all this drama, another aspect, one which especially concerns every human being that has ever lived:

Satan.... hates mankind because they are the workmanship of God. He opposed the creation of man.²⁸

Satan determined to defeat God's plan.... in the creation of the world and of man.²⁹

Why? What did Lucifer have against *us*? Inspiration doesn't give us a complete answer to that question. There are hints and possibilities, but no rock-solid answers. What is made clear, though, is that this was a big thing in Lucifer's mind.

The creation of our world was brought into the councils of heaven. There the covering cherub prepared his request that he should be made prince to govern the world then in prospect. This was not accorded him. Jesus Christ was to rule the earthly kingdom; under God He engaged to take the world with all its probabilities. The law of heaven should be the standard law for this

28. E.G. White, "Diary: January 1890," January 26, 1890; Manuscript 38, 1890

29. E.G. White, "Sin and its Result," September 24, 1901; Manuscript 97, 1901

new world, for human intelligences. Lucifer was jealous of Christ and this jealousy worked into rebellion and he carried with him a large number of the holy angels.³⁰

One particular aspect of Lucifer's hatred which inspiration leaves unclear is the timing: did Lucifer hate humanity because he didn't get to be our "prince," or did he ask for the position because he hated the very concept of human beings? It may not make a lot of difference to us now, but the follow-on of it all certainly does:

Satan.... considered that to be the god of this world was the next best thing to gaining possession of the throne of God in heaven.³¹

It's almost as if Lucifer said, "So... you won't let me be in charge of the earth. We'll see about that!"

And so the ball was in Heaven's court. What was God going to do about all this? As it turned out, one of the key things He did, was wait.

The Divine Response

God's side of the conflict was neither silent nor inactive, but the game-changing definitive response didn't appear till about four thousand years had rolled by. Then, "the fullness of the time was come," and the Son of God set out to confront the devil's rebellion. But how would He do that?

Unlike Satan's many shifting arguments and on-the-fly adaptations, Jesus came to the battle with the only weapon in Heaven's armory, to fulfill a single mission.

30. E.G. White, "Diary: Creation and the Sabbath," July 4, 1891; Manuscript 43b, 1891

31. *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1896

The great object that brought Christ to the earth was to reveal the Father.³²

God is love. This was the great truth that Christ came to the world to reveal.... The object of Christ's mission to the world was to reveal the Father.³³

In all His ministry, all His self-denial and self-sacrifice, Christ's object was to reveal God to the world.³⁴

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to Him the praise, and giving to Him the credit, of the whole purpose of His own mission on earth—to set men right through the revelation of God.³⁵

This may sound a bit odd. After all, didn't Jesus come to save sinners? Wasn't *that* the focus of His work? So why all this talk about revealing the Father?

Actually, it was the only thing that *could* save sinners!

Even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.³⁶

Not only does this explain Christ's mission, it also explains why the plan of redemption cannot apply to Sa-

32. *Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1895

33. *Signs of the Times*, April 11, 1895

34. E.G. White, Letter to J. Washburn, W.W. Prescott, A.G. Daniells, W.A. Colcord, January 16, 1906; Letter 58, 1906

35. *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890

36. *Desire of Ages*, 761

tan. It's not that God wouldn't love to save even Lucifer, it's just that there is nothing more even God Himself could do to win his trust. And, as we've seen, not trusting God is the very essence of what it means "to be in an unsaved condition."

This approach must have annoyed Satan immensely. It wasn't what he had been counting on... at all. It wasn't the first time he'd made such a misstep. He had once—

exultingly pointed to his sympathizers, comprising nearly one half of all the angels, and exclaimed, These are with me! Will you expel these also, and make such a void in heaven?³⁷

He must have really thought God's answer would be, "No, there are too many on your side, so I guess I need to make some sort of bargain on this one." Instead, the response was a simple (though heartbroken) "Yes."

Expelled from heaven, Satan doubled down on his position. As one would expect, he built his case on what he saw as his strongest point: the attack on the law of Heaven. Of the nine accusations he had made, four of them took direct aim at the law. Let's review those items.

5. God's law is defective, and needs to be changed.
6. Because of the law's defects, neither angels nor human beings can possibly obey God's law.
7. God's law is arbitrary.
8. If God's law is not arbitrary, forgiveness is impossible.

This is the order in which Ellen White presents Satan's charges, and it's not hard to follow the progression.

37. *Signs of the Times*, January 9, 1879

At first, he just claimed that the law needed to be changed, but couldn't say how or what good such a change would make.³⁸ Well, that's not a very good sales pitch, so he added number six. Obviously, a law that no one can keep is a bad law, so that argument had a bit more going for it.

But all heaven had been keeping the law for... well, pretty much forever, and the loyal angels were quick to point out that things had been working just fine that way. It was time for a new argument.

In his seventh accusation, Lucifer tries to show that God is just being stubborn and unreasonable. To claim that the law is "arbitrary" is to say that it rests on nothing more than God's wishes; it is what it is just because God said that's what it is. In other words, it's like a speed limit. It might be 45 today, but if the city council feels like changing it, they just say "Let's make it 55." Or 35....

Since that's all it takes to change the law, Lucifer argued, God was just being bullheaded. But God denied that the law was arbitrary. And, no, it *couldn't* be changed.³⁹

Now Lucifer thought he had God between the proverbial rock and a hard place. We see this because the eighth accusation makes no sense at all except as a comeback argument against God's denial that the law was arbitrary. The devil's case went like this:

38. See note 23.

39. Interestingly, Ellen White consistently portrays God's response to Lucifer's demand for a change in the law as "the law can't be changed," never as "No, I won't change it."

God's law is arbitrary, and He's lying about it and just being dumb and stubborn—Or—God's law *isn't* arbitrary (thus based on something other than God's "say so") and that puts it beyond His control.⁴⁰ That, of course, would mean that God could never forgive even the slightest infraction of Heaven's law. An obvious fault.

"Check!" Or so Lucifer thought. Again, we can follow the twisted development of his argument in Ellen White's account of his Plan B.

[Satan laid his] plans to wrest from God the noble Adam and his companion Eve. If he could, in any way, beguile them to disobedience, God would make some provision whereby they might be pardoned, and then himself and all the fallen angels would be in a fair way to share with them of God's mercy.⁴¹

It was Satan's design that the state of man should be the same with that of the fallen angels in rebellion against God, uncheered by a gleam of hope. He reasoned that if God pardoned sinful man whom He had created, He would also pardon and receive into favor him and his angels. But he was disappointed.⁴²

What's fascinating here is Satan's confidence that God would do something to save Adam and Eve. He was right on that much, but wrong in thinking that God's "provision" for forgiving them would mean changing the law. You can see the argument: "They sinned, same as I did, God. If they don't get punished same as I did, it proves

40. As an illustration from the natural world, we might use the law of gravity as an example. It certainly isn't based on what the city council says, and they have no jurisdiction over it.

41. *Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, 29–30

42. *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874

Your law is arbitrary. You enforce it when you want, and change it when you want. So I was right all along!”

“Checkmate!” Satan wins!

Christ's Method

Well... no. What the devil didn't understand, was that, “Even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan.... there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God.”⁴³ And that's why “Christ came to this world for no other purpose than to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power.”⁴⁴

So Jesus came to earth to share the gospel, the good news, about His Father's character. That, however, was a bit more challenging than we might first grasp, and the details of the task, the method to be used, required a critical level of precision:

God... sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God.⁴⁵

Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed.⁴⁶

You may recall Ellen White's description of such occasions as the cleansing of the temple, where she says

43. *Desire of Ages*, 761

44. E.G. White, Letter to O.A. Olsen, August 25, 1896; Letter 87, 1896

45. E.G. White, Letter to J.E. White, November 16, 1903; Letter 250, 1903

46. E.G. White, “A Personal God,” October 14, 1903; Manuscript 124, 1903

that Christ's "divinity flashed through humanity"⁴⁷ just enough to create some genuine discomfort:

There were occasions when Jesus stood forth while in human flesh as the Son of God. Divinity flashed through humanity, and was seen by the scoffing priests and rulers....

Men and devils were compelled, by the shining forth of His glory, to confess, "Truly, this is the Son of God."⁴⁸

Such times were the exception, of course. As a general rule, Christ's work was quieter, more like that which reassured John the Baptist that his own announcement of the Messiah's coming had not been in error:

The question, "Art Thou He that should come?"... was keenly bitter and disappointing to human nature. If John, the faithful forerunner, failed to discern Christ's mission, what could be expected from the self-seeking multitude?

The Saviour did not at once answer the disciples' question. As they stood wondering at His silence, the sick and afflicted were coming to Him to be healed. The blind were groping their way through the crowd; diseased ones of all classes, some urging their own way, some borne by their friends, were eagerly pressing into the presence of Jesus. The voice of the mighty Healer penetrated the deaf ear.... Jesus rebuked disease and banished fever. His voice reached the ears of the dying, and they arose in health and vigor.... While He healed their diseases, He taught the people. The poor peasants and laborers, who were shunned by the rabbis as unclean, gathered close about Him, and He spoke to them the words of eternal life.

Thus the day wore away, the disciples of John seeing and hearing all. At last Jesus called them to Him, and bade them go and tell John what they had witnessed, adding, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me." Luke

47. See *Desire of Ages*, 162; *Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 1490

48. *Signs of the Times*, May 10, 1899

7:23, R.V. The evidence of His divinity was seen in its adaptation to the needs of suffering humanity. His glory was shown in His condescension to our low estate.⁴⁹

This kind of ministry, a blending of healing and teaching, was the mainstay of Jesus' effort—and for a very good and simple reason:

Jesus could not express in words to the understanding of man the love of the Father; He could only say, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Even the most beloved verse in all Scripture was not enough to reveal the character of the Father. But fortunately, there's more to the paragraph:

But He did express the love of God in His actions.⁵⁰

Jesus taught; He preached sermons; that was good, but He needed a more powerful tool to finish the job.

No verbal description could reveal God to the world. Through a life of purity, a life of perfect trust and submission to the will of God, a life of humiliation such as even the highest seraph in heaven would have shrunk from, God Himself must be revealed to humanity.⁵¹

All of which makes perfect sense of these comments:

Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching.... He made each work of healing an occasion for implanting divine principles in the mind and soul. This was the purpose of His work. He imparted earthly blessings that He might incline the hearts of men to receive the Gospel of His grace.⁵²

49. *Desire of Ages*, 217

50. *Signs of the Times*, November 28, 1892

51. *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1895

52. *Signs of the Times*, October 30, 1907

Read the Scriptures carefully, and you will find that Christ spent the largest part of His ministry in restoring the suffering and afflicted to health. Thus He threw back upon Satan the reproach of the evil which the enemy of all good had originated.⁵³

In fact, this blended ministry was not just some random expression of God's love; it was more pointed, more specific and intentional.

Satan charged God with possessing the attributes that he himself possessed. Christ came to this world to reveal God's character as it really is. He is the perfect representation of the Father. His life of sinlessness, lived on this earth in human nature, is a complete refutation of Satan's charge against the character of God.⁵⁴

In other words, the *polemos* was raging, and God was winning. But still, it took more; it took the cross. We see this in the more complete context of a quotation we've looked at already:

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to Him the praise, and giving to Him the credit, of the whole purpose of His own mission on earth—to set men right through the revelation of God.... When the object of His mission was attained—the revelation of God to the world—the Son of God announced that His work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.⁵⁵

In the very act of dying to save what was lost, Christ reached the perfect standard of obedience as our substitute and surety.⁵⁶

“Reached” implies a new status was gained at that time. It's not that Christ became “more perfect” some-

53. E.G. White, “Words of Instruction,” July 1, 1901; Manuscript 55, 1901

54. *Bible Training School*, October 1, 1902

55. *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890

56. *Signs of the Times*, April 14, 1898

how, but that the crucifixion revealed to mankind that which they could have understood in no other way.

But the cross wasn't just for the benefit of human beings, though. Remember Lucifer's *plausible* accusations? Even the loyal angels didn't have answers to all of them; they had remained obedient—not through absolute certainty—but through faith. Now it was time for understanding to catch up, and the cross did that for them.

By shedding the blood of the Son of God, [Satan] had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.... The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.⁵⁷

Another Revealing

We fast forward now nearly two millennia, to one of modern Adventism's great landmarks. Speaking of the work that had been begun in 1888, Ellen White wrote:

The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.⁵⁸

We have, correctly, seen this comment as a reference to the work of Elders Jones and Waggoner, and the

57. *Desire of Ages*, 761

Bear in mind that there are two kinds of "sympathy." There's the emotional, "Oh, you poor thing you!" type, and the more intellectual variety based on theoretical agreement, a "you've-got-a-point-there" sort of thing, as in "I'm sympathetic to your argument." Given that Lucifer had been loved and respected by all the angels, we can assume that both varieties are included here.

58. *Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892

“message of righteousness by faith” that they introduced. And yet, it takes in more, for if Jesus couldn’t reveal the Father through words alone, surely human words must fall short as well.

Less than three months after Ellen White’s comment, Doctor John Harvey Kellogg reminded the assembled delegates of the 1893 General Conference session that actions, self-sacrifice, service, and tangible compassion were required to complete the revelation⁵⁹ of the Father.

If the loud cry has been begun by our people, it must be because we have just begun to do a little in the way of letting our light shine.⁶⁰

What was the Doctor talking about? How had the church “just begun” to let its light shine? Three different projects: the construction of a home for orphan children, the establishment of the “Visiting Nurses Program” in Chicago, and the beginning of “Christian Help Bands” in Battle Creek. Each of these developments had really just gotten going in 1892; each drew inspiration from Isaiah 58; and each had been largely masterminded by Dr. Kellogg.

So who was this Kellogg character? As a general rule, those who know anything about him at all are probably thinking of things like corn flakes, peanut butter, granola, and pantheism. That’s not all wrong, but barely scratches the surface, and to get the value of our denominational history here, we need to go a lot deeper.

59. It’s worth noting that Ellen White described the beginning of the loud cry as a “revelation” of Christ’s righteousness, not a “proclamation.”

60. J.H. Kellogg, *The Medical Missionary*, Extra No. 1, March 1893, 28

For starters, it's important to know that Dr. Kellogg's career can be broadly divided into two phases: the "good Kellogg," and the "bad Kellogg." We'll take a look at both, because his influence on both counts was significant.

The "Good Kellogg"

The Doctor's connection with the 1888 message was not entirely coincidental:

After the meeting at Minneapolis, Dr. Kellogg was a converted man, and we all knew it. We could see the converting power of God working in his heart and life.⁶¹

This isn't to say that Kellogg joined the church as a result of the 1888 General Conference session. He'd actually been raised as a Seventh-day Adventist since early childhood. What's more, in 1888 he had already been the medical director of the Battle Creek Sanitarium for twelve years. But after Minneapolis, he was converted.

It would be hard to say whether he had been entirely unconverted before then, or that perhaps he had experienced a deeper conversion after hearing Jones and Waggoner. It doesn't matter. What is important is to recognize how his conversion became such an obvious development. Everyone "knew it," and "could see the converting power of God working in his heart and life."

But how did all this show up? What was different? At the risk of some oversimplification, let's say that he started being nice to people. And that, significantly enough, just happens to be what converted people do:

61. 1903 *General Conference Bulletin*, 86

Faith works by love and purifies the soul. Faith buds and blossoms and bears a harvest of precious fruit. Where faith is, good works appear. The sick are visited, the poor are cared for, the fatherless and the widows are not neglected, the naked are clothed, the destitute are fed. Christ went about doing good, and when men are united with Him, they love the children of God, and meekness and truth guide their footsteps. The expression of the countenance reveals their experience, and men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus and learned of Him. Christ and the believer become one, and His beauty of character is revealed in those who are vitally connected with the Source of power and love.⁶²

All this sounds good... but does it really have anything to do with righteousness by faith?

Faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, the One who pardons our sins and transgressions, the One who is able to keep us from sin and lead us in His footsteps, is set forth in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Here are presented the fruits of a faith that works by love and purifies the soul from selfishness. Faith and works are here combined....

“Thy righteousness shall go before thee.” What does this mean? Christ is our righteousness.⁶³

Kellogg was on to something in 1893 when he told the church that the conditions of Isaiah 58 (“share your bread with the hungry,” “bring to your house the poor who are cast out,” “extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul,” etc.) came *before* the promises.

We have done so little in that way that it seems to me that before the loud cry will make any great noise in the world, we will have to let our light shine a great deal brighter than we have ever yet done, because the works come first. The light must shine

62. *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 398

63. *Review and Herald*, March 17, 1910

through these “good works,” before we can be called “the repairers of the breach and the restorers of paths to dwell in,” for that promise comes after all of these conditions, you see.⁶⁴

It was a radical idea back in 1893, and more than a century later—after decades of thinking of the 1888 message solely in terms of doctrine and theology—it still is. It’s the kind of idea that would be easy to discard... if it weren’t for all the support given it by Ellen White:

The union of Christlike work for the body and Christlike work for the soul is the true interpretation of the gospel.⁶⁵

There is a world to be saved. Christ came to teach us how to reach and uplift sinners. Wherever He went, He preached the gospel and healed the sick.⁶⁶

Christ linked closely together the work of healing and teaching, and in this our day they should not be separated.⁶⁷

The Holy Spirit never has, and never will in the future, divorce the medical missionary work from the gospel ministry. They can not be divorced. Bound up with Jesus Christ, the ministry of the word and the healing of the sick are one.⁶⁸

The Saviour has bound together the work of preaching the truth and healing the sick, and we are never to divorce them. Christ blended ministry and healing, and there is to be no more separation in our work than there was in His.⁶⁹

64. J.H. Kellogg, *The Medical Missionary*, Extra No. 1, March 1893, 28

65. *Review and Herald*, March 4, 1902

66. E.G. White, “Lessons From the First and Second Chapters of Colossians,” May 20, 1904; Manuscript 48, 1904

67. E.G. White, “Co-operation Between Our Schools and Sanitariums,” July 24, 1908; Manuscript 89, 1908

68. *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, 64

69. *Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, 141

In Christ's work preaching the gospel and healing the sick were bound together. Thus we are to work today. Those who obtain a knowledge of medical missionary work need to connect this work with the proclamation of the last message of mercy.⁷⁰

Christ's ministers must stand in an altogether different position. They must be evangelists, they must be medical missionaries. They must take hold of the work intelligently. But it is of no use for them to think that they can do this while they drop the work which God has said should be connected with the gospel. If they drop out the medical missionary work, they need not think that they can carry forward their work successfully, for they have only half the necessary facilities.⁷¹

Christ healed the people, and then to those whom He healed and to those who had witnessed His healing, He preached the gospel of the kingdom. This is the work outlined before those who have in trust the greatest wealth of truth ever committed to mortals. The question for us to answer is, Are we willing to leave self out of the consideration? Are our energies spent in the Master's service?⁷²

This last quotation is the crux of the issue. And it goes right back to Lucifer and his initial loss of faith in God's ability and willingness to take care of him. He decided to try taking care of himself. And that's where medical missionary work⁷³ starts to rub. Every form of medical mis-

70. Letter, E.G. White to A.T. Jones, December 16, 1898; Letter 139, 1898

71. E.G. White, "Talk by Mrs. E. G. White in College Library, April 1, 1901," April 1, 1901; Manuscript 43, 1901

72. E.G. White, "An Appeal for More Earnest Effort," November 12, 1902; Manuscript 147, 1902

73. This name came into Adventist usage in 1893; before then such activities were known as "benevolent work" or "Christian help work." Don't let "medical missionary work" make you think that it involves only health care professionals!

sionary work that we might take up involves the sacrifice of time, effort, resources, or money. Sometimes it's actually "all the above." But there's a reason for this:

God desires everyone to understand the hateful character of selfishness and to co-operate with Him in guarding His human family against its terrible, deceptive power.... The design of the gospel is, by means of remedial missionary work, to confront this evil of selfishness and destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence.⁷⁴

Notice that the "natural remedy" here is supposed to be curing *our* spiritual disease, not the other guy's.

Christ, the Majesty of heaven, laid aside His robes of royalty and came to this world, all seared and marred by the curse, to teach men how to live a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice, and how to carry out practical religion in their daily lives.... He labored constantly for one object; all His powers were employed for the salvation of men, and every act of His life tended to that end.⁷⁵

This last quotation makes it obvious that learning "how to live a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice" is a part of our salvation. That might sound like drudgery that only strong-willed saints could endure. It might sound like that to our distorted perception... but it isn't.

Jesus had been teaching and healing, telling the people that the way to be most happy is to seek to be a blessing to others, and that when men and women give themselves wholly to this work, the earth will be filled with the glory of God.⁷⁶

74. Letter, E.G. White to Brethren and Sisters of the Iowa Conference, November 6, 1901; Letter 165, 1901

75. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 373

76. E.G. White, "Christ Stilling the Tempest," November 3, 1903; Manuscript 130, 1903

All these ideas were wrapped up in Dr. Kellogg's 1893 appeal for the church to take up medical missionary work. How was it received?

Well, his sermons were edited out of the General Conference Bulletin (and hence almost completely forgotten for over a century), and some of the brethren (but not all, mind you) were, shall we say, resistant to his ideas.

The work that is to be done in these lines, Dr. Kellogg is doing, and those who are standing aside to criticize should themselves be engaged in this work, asking to help souls to find the way of life. Seek the lost sheep. This is not a fanatical and superstitious work; it is the work that Christ did when He was in our world.⁷⁷

God does not endorse the efforts put forth by different ones to make the work of Dr. Kellogg as hard as possible in order to build themselves up. God gave the light on health reform, and those who rejected it rejected God. One and another who knew better said that it all came from Dr. Kellogg, and they made war upon him. This had a bad influence on the doctor.⁷⁸

Admittedly, differences of opinion are not unheard of among Church workers, but this case was unique, largely because God had special plans for Dr. Kellogg:

There is a work that Dr. Kellogg is educated to perform as no other man in our ranks can perform it.⁷⁹

Note the "fringe benefit" of actually working as Jesus did. Not only will it make us "most happy," but it has the added benefit of actually "finishing the work."

77. Letter, E.G. White to I.H. Evans, May 20, 1898; Letter 44, 1898

78. E.G. White, "Our Duty to Leave Battle Creek," April 3, 1903; Manuscript 20, 1903

79. Letter, E.G. White to A.G. Daniells and W.W. Prescott, May 20, 1904; Letter 165, 1904

The Lord has reproved those who claim to believe present truth for failing to cooperate with Dr. Kellogg and his faithful co-workers in walking in the light of health reform. Dr. Kellogg is to stand as God's physician, and is to do an exalted work.⁸⁰

The Lord has frequently said, calling you by name, "John H. Kellogg is My physician; I have worked with him and through him to accomplish My will."⁸¹

I know that the Lord has placed you [Dr. Kellogg] in a very responsible position, standing as you do as the greatest physician in our world, a man to whom the Lord has given understanding and knowledge, that you may do justice and judgment, and reveal the true missionary spirit in the institution which is to represent truth in contrast with error.⁸²

None of this is to say that John Kellogg was perfect. Far from it, actually; but that's one of the odd things about God's way of doing things. He often chooses to work through imperfect people, as long as they will let Him. And that's where our story turns into a tragedy, for during the mid- to late-1890s, Dr. Kellogg increasingly chafed under the sometimes unChristlike treatment of his brethren. That he was treated poorly is well established by Ellen White... but then, so was Jesus.

Over time, Dr. Kellogg let his frustration and animosity toward his antagonists lead him away from Christ, and back toward John Kellogg. One of the most sobering lessons of the whole episode is that the Doctor didn't so

80. E.G. White, "Unheeded Warnings II," November 27, 1901; Manuscript 156b, 1901

81. Letter, E.G. White to J.H. Kellogg, July 28, 1901; Letter 180, 1901

82. Letter, E.G. White to J.H. Kellogg, December 10, 1899; Letter 206, 1899

much fall prey to some out-of-the-blue heresy as that he failed to correct his own natural tendencies to wrong.

The single most-repeated caution that Ellen White gave Kellogg was the warning to not overwork. In the end, the impatience and animosity that sprang from his constantly taxed physical condition would cost him dearly. Perhaps his second most basic weakness was his natural fondness for grandiosity. This, too, contributed largely to his spiritual undoing.

The “Bad Kellogg”

As the Doctor slid slowly from the hands of Christ, he was the beneficiary—like no other person—of the attention and prayers of Ellen White. Why? Because his was a special case, upon which large results would hinge. Elder W.C. White once wrote:

I do not believe there is a person living, not even her own sons, for whom Mother would do more, to help, to encourage, to correct, and to instruct, than Dr. Kellogg. Why is this? Because God has given him great ability, great opportunities, great responsibilities; and as Mother has said to me several times during the last winter; “Dr. Kellogg stands where he can do more to relieve the perplexities of the present situations, than any other living man; and, too, he stands where he can do more to bring confusion, perplexity, and backsliding, than any other man living; and I have carried the burden of his case on my soul day and night, because I know that so much is involved in the decisions he shall make and the course he shall take.”⁸³

This reality did not fade from Ellen White’s mind:

83. Letter, W.C. White to W.S. Sadler, January 20, 1903; W.C. White Letterbook 23, 520, 511

A man having the influence that you have, a man whose name has become so popular, can do us as a people great injury, if you are permitted by God. But the Lord He is God, and it will be shown that He has spoken, saying, "Thus far shall you, J.H. Kellogg, go, and no further."⁸⁴

The cause of God has been hindered in its advance by the only one who could do a work so counter to the work the Lord would have done at this stage of our history.⁸⁵

Unfortunately, the Doctor's decline put him as solidly on the devil's side as he had once been on the Lord's side:

The Lord has represented to me that Satan links up with Dr. Kellogg and imbues him with evil devisings. Our erring brother will suggest many things that have not the inspiration or the sanction of the Holy Spirit of God.⁸⁶

It is not John Kellogg that you are dealing with; it is a being who once figured in the courts of heaven as an exalted angel. The poor Doctor is not in his right mind.⁸⁷

I was instructed that the one who was operating his mind was the one who once was an exalted angel in the heavenly courts—the one who was a covering cherub.⁸⁸

It is Satan's theories that are now coming to the front from the lips of Dr. Kellogg. He is lost and has been lost for a long while in the misconceptions that he has long cherished.⁸⁹

84. Letter, E.G. White to J.H. Kellogg, November 21, 1903; Letter 320, 1905

85. Letter, E.G. White to Ministers, Physicians, and Teachers, September 3, 1904; Letter 280a, 1904

86. E.G. White, "A Message to Leading Physicians," September 4, 1903; Manuscript 159, 1903

87. Letter, E.G. White to W.C. White, August 4, 1903; Letter 172, 1903

88. Letter, E.G. White to Daniells, September 18, 1903; Letter 271a, 1903

89. Letter, E.G. White to Brother Arthur, 1904; Letter 405, 1904

When he is worked by the satanic agencies, he does not know what spirit has got hold of him and controls him. He has been disloyal to the truth for some time.⁹⁰

I saw satanic agencies working with Dr. Kellogg and imparting to him the false science that the enemy used in heaven to deceive the angels.⁹¹

Ellen White had to deal with quite a few apostates and heretics during her lifetime, but only Kellogg is described in such alarming terms. The Doctor's trademark heresy is the pantheism in the book *Living Temple*, but there were many other issues, inappropriate practices, unhelpful attitudes, and—finally—a decisive rejection of the authority of the Spirit of Prophecy.

The story is far too long and involved to tell in detail here, but a quick listing of the concerns will be some help. The main issues, in the order of their appearance, included overwork, grandiosity, criticism of those who disagreed with him, ridiculing and criticizing ministers for their (genuinely) lax observance of health principles, downplaying the importance of Biblical teachings, spending inordinate amounts of the church's finances in developing the medical work with no concern to see other branches appropriately supported,⁹² exerting a

90. Letter, E.G. White to A.G. Daniells, August 5, 1903; Letter 297, 1903

91. Letter, E.G. White to Brother and Sister [D.] Paulson, April 2, 1906; Letter 116, 1906

92. This came about because Dr. Kellogg was a great fund raiser. But the idea of being “my brother’s keeper” extends to the operations of the church. Just because he could persuade people to give money to his “department” was no excuse to ignore other needs.

truly arbitrary one-man-control over the medical work and medical workers, threatening to separate the medical work from its connection to the denomination,⁹³ attempting to gain political control of the General Conference, blatant dishonesty, the use of legal means (lawyers, contracts, and lawsuits) to gain and maintain control over sanitariums and workers, placing “science” above Scripture, mysticism, pantheism, hypnotism, and—finally—openly attacking the Spirit of Prophecy.

These developments stretched out over about a dozen years, and Ellen White was deeply involved the whole time, trying to encourage and guide the Doctor. He had opponents who were often wrong in their dealings with him, but he made mistakes of his own in handling the situation. She was constantly trying to correct both sides, strengthen both sides, and bring about the united work of teaching and healing that alone could reveal God’s character.

In the end, Kellogg and many others fell short of God’s plan. The loud cry that had begun in 1892 was “smothered,”⁹⁴ by both the church’s neglect of medical missionary work, and Kellogg’s tendency to make the

93. This was a long-standing temptation that rose and fell with the Doctor’s level of frustration. When he was getting his way, all was good; but when someone “interfered” with his plans, the idea of taking his marbles and leaving would come up again. This was a serious matter: “When the gospel ministers and the medical missionary workers are not united, there is placed on our churches the worst evil that can be placed there.” E.G. White, “Talk: The Foundation of Our Faith,” May 18, 1904; Manuscript 46, 1904

medical work all important and leave the three angels' messages to the side. The spiritual teaching that eventually began to fill the void was pantheism, the belief that God is everything and everything is God. Surprisingly, Dr. Kellogg wasn't the most noted advocate at the time:

I presume you know that [Dr. Waggoner] is really the leader in this teaching, and that he has done more than any other living man to give these [pantheistic] ideas a permanent root in this denomination. Dr. Kellogg is not the aggressor in this. He has picked up his ideas, or at any rate has picked up his courage in promulgating them, from Dr. Waggoner's aggressive attitude.⁹⁵

From the General Conference perspective, the more obvious danger was Kellogg's attempt to discredit and delegitimize the ministry and the general work of the church. It wasn't difficult to imagine him so completely destroying church members' confidence in the "organized church" that they could be drawn to a strong, visible alternative of Kellogg's creating. It's not so easy to picture that today, but in the early 1900s it was a real possibility.

But the Doctor had a problem: Ellen White wasn't supporting his efforts. She had, in fact, been shown his plans, and had been instructed how to deal with them. And, like the response of Christ's incarnation (though on a much shorter scale), one of the key elements of the response was waiting for "the fullness of the time."

94. E.G. White, "Medical Missionary Work," May 10, 1899; Manuscript 177, 1899

95. Letter, A.G. Daniells to W.C. White, December 22, 1903; Title 16599

Simple, yes? It wasn't, especially not for A.G. Daniells and his co-workers at the General Conference. Like the flip side of the Doctor's coin, Elder Daniells' "problem" was that Ellen White *wasn't* condemning Kellogg.

The General Conference president could see clearly enough that Kellogg's apostasy was leavening many church members, especially the youth who continued to go to Battle Creek in spite of Ellen White's warnings not to. For months he pleaded with her to take a more public stance against the Doctor. His letters were eloquent and heartfelt, but failed to gain the response he wanted.

I have good reason to believe [Doctor Kellogg is trying] to catch our young people. The thing is already beginning to work, and unless something decided is done to counteract the movement, we shall lose hundreds of the very flower of our young people....

The Lord has given you [Ellen White] volumes of instruction. What has come to me has informed and aroused me regarding the crisis we are in. I feel sure that if our brethren and sisters knew the facts one half as fully as they have been revealed to you, they would stand as one man against this evil thing. But as it is at present, thousands know but little about it. We say nothing, or speak with whispered breath; and all the while the enemy is at work gaining sympathy, influence, and souls.

I confess to you that this is the greatest sorrow of my life. I have no desire to make war on Dr. Kellogg. I do not care what fame he gets, nor how many worldly people go to Battle Creek; but it breaks my heart to see our young people go there, to be poisoned against the ministry that brought their parents into the truth, and against the message for which their parents have stood and sacrificed so loyally. No one need say that they are not thus influenced. I know better. When a father tells me that his son has become an infidel at

Battle Creek, and declines to recommend him to his Conference for an honorable medical position, I know there is more than imagination on my part regarding the character of the influence there.

I seriously fear that for some months we have been losing ground in this controversy. While we have been silent, they have been aggressive; their efforts have not been open and frank. They are moving under cover, and are gaining ground....

They press their warfare untiringly in all directions. Everywhere we go we run onto it. Now and then some one sends us letters or copies of letters sent out from Battle Creek, which are absolutely untrue, and altogether deceiving and undermining in their character. And from all sources we learn of our young people going there.

These things force the issue upon us. The Spirit of Prophecy has warned our young people not to go to Battle Creek. Dr. Kellogg has determined that they shall go there, and they are going. For one, I feel that this denomination ought to rise up in the name of God, and stop this thing.⁹⁶

The Elder was correct in all he said; his timing was just a bit off. Ellen White read his letter to her on the twenty-second of October. The next morning she wrote:

I have not had a night of sleep, but a night of much prayer. The cause of God is in peril as Dr. Kellogg and those who are deceived with him are prompted by the same spirit which led to rebellion in the heavenly courts and is very active now in them, working out the plans of the fallen foe. I have special instruction what I shall do, and the Lord has given me light and strength to do this very work.⁹⁷

And yet—probably to Elder Daniells' dismay—that “very work” did not yet include confronting Kellogg and his allies directly. Instead, Ellen White wrote:

96. A.G. Daniells, Letter to Ellen White, October 11, 1905; Title 18924

97. E.G. White, “Diary,” October 23, 1905; Manuscript 177, 1905

I have light from the Lord that at this time we must act with great caution; for the enemy is watching our every movement. At times I have been ready to take steps that would be called aggressive.... I would read over the letters containing warning and caution that I have had from the Lord for several in Battle Creek. At times I have felt that I must print all the warnings given me for Dr. Kellogg.... But I have not yet done this because I have been impressed to wait. If I should make a strong move in this direction, the battle would be on. Those who are opposing the light God has given would feel that they had been attacked and would claim that they were compelled to make moves that otherwise they would not have made. And it would take much of our time to meet the issue.

Let us hold on patiently for a little while, and let the elements break forth that are struggling into life. Let not too many articles be published in the *Review and Herald* that are of a character to stir up strife....

Hold it! What kind of a war is this? The enemy is killing us; our church members don't even know what's going on! And we're supposed to wait?

Welcome to the *polemos*. It's not the same as those other wars, and it turns out there was a very good reason for waiting:

Some who have been deceived by men in responsible places will repent and be converted. And in all our dealings with them, we must remember that none of those who are in the depth of Satan's snare know that they are there.⁹⁸

Since the divine strategy in this contest consists of the revelation of the Lord's character of love and self-sacrifice, no plan of attack that forgets the value of souls

98. E.G. White, Letter to Brethren Daniells and Prescott and their associates, October 30, 1905; Letter 311, 1905

will win His endorsement. Despite facing a deliberate, secretive conspiracy to carry out plans that would seriously harm the church, the first priority was saving souls. Even the souls of those “in the depth of Satan’s snare.” It was a “work and hope for the best” but “be ready for the worst” sort of situation. It was also a matter of timing:

We had to move, and yet we had to wait until those in error thought they could carry things against the ministers and churches. I was shown their course of action and had everything in readiness for such a movement and labored to defeat their deep-laid plot.⁹⁹

Right up to the last day, Ellen White was working as best she could to keep the Doctor from going down that road. But, like Lucifer before him, John Kellogg finally decided that his best option was to disregard God’s instruction and try fending for himself.

In order to do that, of course, he had to turn his back on the Lord’s instruction through the Spirit of Prophecy. Indeed, Ellen White was shown that the Kellogg faction “would take a firm position against the testimonies. This was to be the signal for decided action.”¹⁰⁰

The predicted development came in an almost entirely forgotten—and patently miraculous—series of events at Christmas time, 1905. On the night of the

99. Letter, E.G. White to Brother and Sister D.H. Kress, August 1, 1906; Letter 258, 1906

100. E.G. White, Letter to Brother and Sister D.H. Kress, October 23, 1906; Letter 328, 1906

twenty-fifth, Kellogg assembled a large number of the Sanitarium leadership and outlined “the recent controversy from his standpoint.” In a six-hour monologue, he “assured them that he believed in the Spirit of Prophecy, and believed that Sister White is a good woman and that she had been inspired of the Lord. But he went on then to establish by many infallible proofs the fact that all of the communications which were sent out, could not be relied upon as coming from the Lord.”¹⁰¹

Ellen White was not unprepared. On December twenty-first, she had been instructed to assemble appropriate documents (the primary one had been written almost two years before) and mail them to Battle Creek. A telegram had been sent to Daniells instructing him to go there and await their arrival. Not till he read them to the Battle Creek church on the evening of December twenty-sixth, did the General Conference president realize how clearly the documents described the position the Doctor had taken the night before.

A Look at the Future

The value of the past is insight for the future. The principles of Lucifer’s rebellion, Christ’s response, the good Kellogg, and the bad Kellogg are all intimately connected to both the giving of the loud cry and the predicted final apostasy of the end times. To ignore such lessons would be utterly foolish.

101. A.G. Daniells, Letter to G.A. Irwin, December 27, 1905; Title 18936

Ellen White resisted and refuted Kellogg's apostasy, and specifically singled out "the book *Living Temple*" as containing the "alpha of deadly heresies." But just as importantly, she said the omega would follow later.¹⁰² So what is this "omega"?

For starters, it's worth noting that "alpha" is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and "omega" is the last. That's why Christ calls Himself "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.... the First and the Last."¹⁰³ The strong implication is that the omega is the devil's final assault. Understanding what that will be and look like is an obvious advantage for anyone not wanting to fall in that final battle.

Fortunately, Ellen White gave us a word picture—not explicitly of the omega—but of what the alpha would have become if it had progressed unchecked:

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities

102. *Selected Messages*, Book 1, 200

103. Revelation 1:8, 11

and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement.¹⁰⁴

Should the alpha have gone on to omega-scale, “principles of truth” would have been discarded. The wording seems to imply that this is talking about more formal “doctrines.” Pantheism would surely have displaced a Biblical understanding of the relationship between Creator and creature, but the ripple effect of that would no doubt have affected many other points.

Note that Ellen White goes back to “principles”—“fundamental principles”—two sentences on. This sounds like something deeper than “doctrine,” and as we’ll see, it goes all the way back to Lucifer’s loss of faith.

A “new organization” in Battle Creek had been rumored, but never carried out,¹⁰⁵ and remains obscure in any omega scenario. Going into the cities is an obvious reference to the Doctor’s brand of shallow, minimally missionary medical work, and the lack of importance attached to the Sabbath is what one would expect under those circumstances. And, finally, the spirit of the movement is portrayed in its treatment of anything seen as an obstacle.

There are two more sentences at the end of Ellen White’s paragraph. We’ll come back to them later, after we look at another issue not specifically mentioned here.

104. Letter, E.G. White to Physicians and Ministers, October 1903; Letter 242, 1903

105. See A.G. Daniells, Letter to Ellen White, January 8, 1904; Title 18771

Your ideas (Dr. Kellogg) are so mystical that they are destructive to the real substance, and the minds of some are becoming confused in regard to the foundation of our faith.¹⁰⁶

What is mysticism? At its heart, it's exactly what Ellen White described it as:

We need not the mysticism that is in this book. Those who entertain these sophistries will soon find themselves in a position where the enemy can talk with them and lead them away from God.¹⁰⁷

Mysticism may seem far beyond the range of normal life, but many idolize the ability to directly contact their "deity" or gain some form of "higher consciousness." It's this ability to have "the enemy... talk with them" that they so prize. And the common "realization" that comes from this experience? An overpowering sense of "connectedness," of "oneness with the universe." Yes. That would be pantheism.

This is the common bond which unites mystics in all religions. This is the promising basis for a world-wide ecumenicism. This is the tie that unites the first Jesuit pope (by training and vow, a mystic), charismatic protestants, Hindus, Buddhists, Sufi Muslims, Kabbalist Jews, and animist shamans. Not to mention the mindless consumers of popular media. And, we have been told, it prepares the way for the next step in the devil's counterfeit:

These sophistries, and this mysticism, and doing away with the personality of God, and with the personality of Christ, will

106. Letter, E.G. White to J.H. Kellogg, April 5, 1903; Letter 52, 1903

107. Letter, E.G. White to Teachers in Emmanuel Missionary College, September 22, 1903; Letter 211, 1903

get the hall-room of the heart all ready for these miracles that Satan will come to work right in our midst.¹⁰⁸

But why miracles? Because Satan knows where he has to head. He can't counterfeit the Lord's work if he's not even in the same ballpark. Since the loud cry comes as the revelation of God's character, in the only way His character *can* be revealed, Satan is stuck having to counterfeit what he hates most.

Unselfishness, the principle of God's kingdom, is the principle that Satan hates; its very existence he denies.¹⁰⁹

But there's no way Satan is going to foster genuine unselfishness. What to do? There's really only one option: counterfeit the "service" part, but retain the "selfishness" part. It sounds odd, but Ellen White already gave us the clue. It's those "miracles that Satan will come to work right in our midst."

God's Word declares that Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test. Many who have had great light will fail to walk in the light, because they have not become one with Christ. His instruction is not palatable to them.¹¹⁰

Why miracles? Because they make it look like people are being helped, but how much self-sacrifice do mira-

108. E.G. White, "Sermon: Thoughts on 2 Peter 1," March 24, 1906; Manuscript 138, 1906

109. *Education*, 154

110. E.G. White, "Brethren laboring in Battle Creek," November 1903; Letter 275, 1903.

cles demand? In Satan's camp, almost none. This makes them far more "palatable" than the primary means of service Christ calls His followers to use.

Satan can present a counterfeit so closely resembling the truth that it deceives those who are willing to be deceived...

Stop! Think! What does it take to be "willing to be deceived"? How did Lucifer deceive himself? Think back to when he first lost his faith in God. Think of Christ's response in His incarnation. Think of the work committed to us today. What makes anyone "willing to be deceived"?

Satan can present a counterfeit so closely resembling the truth that it deceives those who are willing to be deceived, who desire to shun the self-denial and sacrifice demanded by the truth.¹¹¹

So miracles are perfect! Physiotherapy? Hydrotherapy? That stuff takes work. Teaching people how to garden, cook, what to eat, in order to be well? That takes work, too. Massage? Exercise? Lifestyle? Yup, more work. But miracles? Not so much.

Miracles won't be the only feature of the devil's counterfeit, of course, which brings us back to those final two sentences from Ellen White's description of the omega:

The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice; but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.¹¹²

111. *Great Controversy*, 528

112. E.G. White, Letter to Physicians and Ministers, October 1903; Letter 242, 1903

The language here is from the parable of the two houses, or, really, the two foundations, since that was the only difference. The other element of the story is the storm. Two houses, one storm. The foolish man wasn't punished with a hurricane while the righteous man got off with spring showers. The same storm hit both houses; it's just that one house had a good foundation, while the other was "built on the sand, and storm and tempest [swept] away the structure."

That storm? The one that's "relentless in its fury"? Ellen White calls it the "perils of the last days,"¹¹³ and tells us that it "is preparing to come upon all the cities—not all at once but one after another."¹¹⁴ This world's final days are not a pretty sight:

In the last scenes of this earth's history, war will rage. There will be pestilence, plague, and famine. The waters of the deep will overflow their boundaries. Property and life will be destroyed by fire and flood.¹¹⁵

In the midst of all that, Christians have their orders:

As religious aggression subverts the liberties of our nation, those who would stand for freedom of conscience will be placed in unfavorable positions. For their own sake they should, while

113. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, 315

114. E.G. White, "Diary: Corruption of the Cities and Unfaithful Shepherds," September 2, 1902; Manuscript 233, 1902

115. E.G. White, "Words of Comfort," April 29, 1897; Manuscript 41, 1897.

In some areas of the world these are not entirely future events. Those of us who have spent our lives in ease would do well to consider an intentional program of "toughening up." Seriously; people train for months just to run a marathon.

they have opportunity, become intelligent in regard to disease, its causes, prevention, and cure. And those who do this will find a field of labor anywhere. There will be suffering ones, plenty of them, who will need help, not only among those of our own faith, but largely among those who know not the truth.¹¹⁶

This is the house on the rock. This is the “fundamental principle” of self-sacrificing service that all Christianity is built on. This is what the devil has to counterfeit. And he can... up to a point. But finally his “independent resources” run out, and selfish hearts refuse to give any more.

God’s people—forbidden to buy or sell—have fewer earthly resources than anyone. And yet... and yet, like a homeless, unemployed ex-carpenter who once walked earth’s soil, they continue to serve, continue to give, when they themselves have nothing. And in their giving, the Lord’s remedial work continues, “confronting the evil of selfishness and destroying its destructive power.”

In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off.¹¹⁷

That sounds dire, but take heart:

It is safe to let go every earthly support and take the hand of Him who lifted up and saved the sinking disciple on the stormy sea.¹¹⁸

But there’s more.... The fearful experience is, in fact, the goal all true believers have been seeking:

116. *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 17, 1893

117. *Desire of Ages*, 121

118. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, 558

We can never perfect a round, full Christian experience until every earthly support is removed, and the soul centers its entire affections about God.¹¹⁹

In the end, of course, the principles of self-sacrifice and self-denial will prevail. They are the only principles that can “preserve life and righteousness.” This very real difference—not God’s arbitrary whim—is why some are saved and some are lost. It comes from faith, and it does something incredibly important:

In the character of God’s people a living testimony will be borne that will contradict the fallacy of Satan, who has declared that the law of Jehovah is arbitrary, and holds its subjects under a cruel bondage.¹²⁰

Only through faith in the Lord’s love and wisdom can we make these principles our own, for service will always tax our resources. But God is true, and so is His promise:

God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.¹²¹

And with that demonstration, the fate of self-serving is settled—settled for all the universe, for all eternity.

119. Letter, E.C. White to Fannie Bolton, February 10, 1894; Letter 6, 1894

120. *Review and Herald*, August 13, 1895

121. 2 Corinthians 9:8

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