



*"Watchman,  
what of the night?"*

*The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12*

# WHAT IS AN OFF-SHOOT?

## Name Calling Not a New Art!

There is a sentiment among the rank and file of the laity of the Church; that is, among those who have not embraced the heretical teachings of Dr. Desmond Ford, nor have bought the plagiarism charges of Elder Walter Rea, that anyone who differs with the hierarchy is an "off-shoot," and anything which does not carry the official imprimatur of the publishing committees of the Church is an "off-shoot" publication. This is not new, nor peculiar to these present times. The charge of "off-shoot" has been a favorite smear tactic used by religious leaders in their attempt to blind the eyes of sincere seekers of truth, and to keep those who might wish to investigate truth from doing so.

An "off-shoot" by definition is "a side root or branch from the main stem of the plant." The first "off-shoot" was Lucifer. Jesus told it very simply as to why he became an off-shoot - "He . . . abode not in the truth." (John 8:44) And in the same breath, Jesus charged the religious leaders of His day as being of their "father the devil." They were the true off-shoots of Christ's day, that is, if the criterion by which judgment is to be made is truth. And why? Jesus emphatically stated - "He that is of God [the main stem] heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." (John 8:47) In other words, "off-shoots!"

This charge by Christ stung these self-appointed guardians of orthodoxy. They said to Him - "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." (verse 48) Calling Christ a Samaritan was the worse epithet they could use to cause the rank and file of Israel to have nothing to do with Jesus, for the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. (John 4:9) To this they now added thou "hast a devil." In so doing they sought to toss back the charge upon Jesus that He abode not in the truth. Jesus ignored the charge of being a Samaritan, but emphatically denied the allegation that he was possessed with a devil, and stated why - "I have not a devil; but I honor my Father." (John 8:49)

Herein was the basic difference between Himself and the religious leaders of His day. These leaders and spiritual guardians of the people would not believe Jesus nor the message He brought from God. Why? Jesus revealed the answer by asking on another occasion, a question - "How can ye believe, which receive honor one from another, and seek not that honor that cometh from God only? (John 5:44) When we seek the honor and prestige that men can give, rather than seeking to uphold the truth and honor of God alone, we will compromise truth so as to gain the favor of men. At that point we become "off-shoots."

The Jewish leadership played the "off-shoot" name calling to the hilt. After the encounter with the Jews as to who was of the devil, or who had a devil, Jesus performed a miracle by giving sight to one who had been born blind. It being on the

Sabbath day, "eyebrows" were raised. The former blind man was brought before the Pharisees. One segment after hearing the testimony stated of Jesus - "This man is not of God." He is an "off-shoot." Some were not quite so sure because here was a miracle that could not be gainsaid. (John 9:1-16) However, as the issue became more intense, they closed ranks behind the one argument which seemed to keep everybody in line. To the former blind man they haughtily responded - "We be Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not whence He is." (verses 28 & 29) In simple words, they sought to picture Jesus as having so far departed from the norm which they defined a "Moses" that they could no even perceive if He ever had been associated in the same concepts they professed. And He never had. That was why He was where He was, and they were where they were. If He had sought honor of men, and had been willing to look to them for the guidance of His Mission, they would have readily accepted Him. Had not Nicodemus stated their original evaluation of Him, when he said - "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." (John 3:2)

These ancient guardians of orthodoxy find their counterparts today in those who profess to acknowledge the historic Adventist beliefs, while they adhere to the compromises represented in the books - Questions on Doctrine and Movement of Destiny. They further confess their allegiance to the Statement of Beliefs which reflects the heresy of these book and continues the compromise so as to be accepted by the World Council of Churches when they think the time is ripe to cast their lot with that Council. Those who expose this departure from the truth are labeled as "off-shoots," and this as effectively closes the minds of the "devout" as did the charge that Christ was a "Samaritan" close the minds of the Jewish people till they could concur in His crucifixion.

There is an interesting parable that Jesus told which should cause us to consider very carefully as to who really is an "off-shoot." In connection with His delineation of the signs which would mark the end times of human history, Jesus also gave some illustrations to help clarify

the issues that would be involved with those end times. One such illustration is the parable of the Ten Virgins. [I am well aware of the fact that the early pioneers in the Advent Movement applied aspects of this parable to the experience associated with the summer of 1844. (See Second Advent Review, June 9, 1851, Paris, ME, p. 1f) However, in 1896, Ellen G. White commented - "My mind was carried into the future, when the signal will be given, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.'" (R&H, Feb. 11, 1896)]

Jesus pictured the Ten Virgins as all together in one group - albeit, all asleep. Suddenly at midnight, a voice is heard from outside the sleeping virgins calling, "Behold the Bridegroom, go ye out to a meeting of Him." (Matt. 25:6 Gr.) Suddenly there is an arousal. All trim their lamps - they all perceive the nearness of the end! But five find they are short of oil - spiritual perception - and their lamps start to flicker in the final waiting period. These go to those who merchandise in the things of God - the hierarchy, the so-called guardians of the spiritual interests of the people. The other five - the wise virgins - go out to a meeting with their Lord. There is a separation! Who are the "off-shoots"? The wise or the foolish?

While the foolish turn to the venders of spiritual merchandise, the Bridegroom comes, and they that are ready go in with Him to the marriage, and the door is shut! (Matt. 25:10) Again who are the "off-shoots"?

I am sure that the venders - the hierarchy - would console the foolish with the idea that the wise left them because they would not listen to them, the venerable supporters of orthodoxy. These venders in heavenly wares urge the foolish - "Stay with the ship; those others are very foolish; they have become "off-shoots." But while the foolish consider themselves so wise by placing their trust in men, the door is shut against them, and when they knock, the Lord confesses woefully, "I know you not." Who then are the real "off-shoots" if you are really serious about heaven?

## "Look Who's Talking"

The Indianapolis Star, the leading newspaper of Indiana, published on the front page of its Section B, Sunday, July 11, 1982, an article captioned - BOOK SELLER CLAIMS CHURCH IN CONSPIRACY. Then on page 2 of the same section, there was to be found a brief commentary by the Star's City Staff as a part of a feature section - "Behind Closed Doors" - captioned, "Look Who's Talking." To appreciate the force of the comment, one must review the first article. We quote salient paragraphs.

"A legal squabble on a church member's right to compete with Seventh-day Adventist bookstores has created a web of intrigue in a hub of church activity in southwest Michigan.

"Berrien Springs, Mich., is the home of the Lake Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the denomination's regional organization. It is also the home for two church-operated academic institutions - Andrews Academy, a high school, and Andrews University. . . .

"AND IT IS home for Derrick Proctor, a Seventh-day Adventist who sells religious books and materials - including those distributed by his church - from a business called Library and Educational Services. For 2½ years, his business has suffered. Proctor contends it's because the church conspired with his suppliers to cut off his flow of materials because he undersold church book stores by huge margins. . . .

"The Michigan attorney general's office investigated Proctor's complaint and found 'sufficient reason' to believe church parties were in violation of the Michigan Trusts, Monopolies and Combinations Act. . . .

"A antitrust suit against the church and several of its branches - including the church's top organization in Indiana - is pending in US District Court at Chicago. . . .

"THE CHURCH and its lawyers have refused to answer questions about the litigation. But in written court arguments, the church maintains that its 'self-contained distri-

bution network' of religious books and materials as protected by First Amendment rights separating state affairs from those of the church. . . .

"In recent weeks, [Proctor's] business was burglarized. . . . The burglary - in which several cases of Bibles and other materials valued at more than \$1,000 were stolen - smacks of dirty tricks as much as it does religious irony. In June, six persons were arrested, including John D. Bernet. The man's father, John S. Bernet, is publishing director for the Lake Union Conference and director of the conference's Home Health Education Service. The conference and education service are defendants in Proctor's \$1.7 million lawsuit.

"AS PUBLISHING director, Bernet supervises the operations of church bookstores, also known as Adventist Book Centers. The bookstore operators deal directly with the suppliers who, Proctor says, were instructed not to sell to him. Conference officials said the young Bernet has been employed in its education service division for about eight months as a 'part-time student worker.' He recently was graduated from Andrews Academy. . . .

"JOHN S BERNET refused to answer questions about his son or his son's working status at the Lake Union Conference. In the May 6 edition of the Berrien Springs Journal-Era, he denied that he or the church were involved in the break-in."

Proctor is quoted in comment - "When the son of a Lake Union Conference publishing director and a church employee breaks into a business, there's a lot of questions we would like to have answered."

Besides the book selling problem, Proctor was denied a paid leave of absence from Andrews University where he teaches psychology. On this point the news article reports:

"HE ALLEGES the university arbitrarily - and discriminately - interpreted a faculty work policy 'that clearly say' teachers are eligible for paid leaves of one quarter after they have worked seven quarters, or two quarters leave after 14 quarters, or three quarters leave after 21 quarters. . . . 'I have worked here 23 quarters and have taken only one regular

leave. I'm eligible for a total of three quarter's leave. . . .

"PROCTOR PLANS to appeal the decision to a grievance committee composed of five university professors. . . . He says he is the only teacher that he knows of who has been denied a paid leave under that interpretation of the faculty work policy. He also notes that the Adventist Book Store at Berrien Springs - another defendant in the lawsuit - employs the wife of Richard W. Schwarz, vice president of academic affairs at Andrews University and the man who denied his leave application.

"SCHWARZ DID NOT respond to a reporter's invitation to discuss the university's ruling."

Based on this information, the staff of The Indianapolis Star commented. These comments lay bare the mercenary aspects of the hierarchy of the Church, and their total disregard for the counsel of the Messenger of the Lord which they so ardently profess to uphold - with one exception, where they believe it will protect them from exposure of the corrupt policies they are following. We reproduce the article as published:

## Look who's talking

Most religions have choice phrases from doctrine that instantly are recognizable to the faithful.

For the Seventh-day Adventist Church, one phrase is "scatter them like the leaves of autumn." They are the words of Ellen White, a 19th century church leader, who was speaking about the distribution of "truth-filled literature," as Adventists call it.

In the same book where you'll find that line, you'll find the author urging Adventists to sell the literature at the lowest possible cost.

**BUT IF WHAT** a Michigan church member says is true, the church itself is violating this teaching.

Derrick Proctor, who sells religious books and materials in competition with Adventist bookstores, had been selling a 10-volume set of books called "The Bible Story" for \$79.95 at the same time the church bookstores were charging \$269.95.

Clearly, the church was not setting a good example for the good word.

Conversely, author White's early writings would seem to give Proctor cause for soul-searching.

**IT WAS SHE WHO** promoted the Adventist policy that internal disputes be settled by a "conciliatory panel" and not secular courts. Proctor has filed a federal antitrust suit in the book sales squabble.

However, in Proctor's case there was a hitch to naming the panel. When the church offered to process his complaint through the panel, they attached a condition - they would name all the members.

Proctor refused, saying the panel would be (heaven forbid) stacked against him.

When men of the Press - without the knowledge of the truth which we profess to have - can see the hypocrisy of the hierarchy of the Church, isn't it time for the laity to awaken from slumber - trim their lamps, and "go out" to a meeting of the Bridegroom instead of continuing to support such merchandising of the truth of God?

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## THE COUNSEL

"The truth must not be muffled now. Plain statements must be made. Unvarnished truth must be spoken, in leaflets and pamphlets, and these must be scattered like the leaves of autumn." (9T:231)

"Because books were being sold at low prices, some being especially reduced for the occasion, many were purchased, . . .

"But dissatisfaction was expressed by some of our own people. One said, 'A stop must be put to this work, or our business will be spoiled.' . . . Then I heard the voice of our Counselor saying: "Forbid them not. This is a work that should be done. The end is near. Scatter them like the leaves autumn. This work is to continue without the forbiddings of anyone.'" (9T:72)

"Our tracts should be offered by the hundred at what they cost, leaving a little margin to pay for packing, or wrapping for the mail, and directing. . . . Sell where people are able and willing to purchase, and where they are not, give them the books." (1T:690)

# Religion

## The Church of Liberal Borrowings

*Plagiarism and fraud charges rock the Seventh-day Adventists*

The 3.8 million-member Seventh-day Adventist Church is normally the most doctrinally placid and prosperous of faiths. Lately, however, it has fallen into unaccustomed uproar. For starters, church members are suing Adventist officials in an Oregon court for fraud and breach of fiduciary trust, stemming from the 1981 bankruptcy of fellow Adventist Donald Davenport, a Los Angeles developer.



Wilson: Inspired?

The suit charges that without adequately checking Davenport out, Adventist clergy blithely invested church trust funds with him and urged church members to make their own investments. As his empire collapsed, Davenport supposedly used newly raised moneys to cover payments due to previous investors. In the end, church agencies dropped a cool \$21 million, and individual Adventists may be out as much as \$20 million in the debacle. On top of this, the church has been hit by a second scandal: the charge that the theological writings of its most important figure, which rank second only to the Bible, may have been plagiarized from other authors.

Of the two scandals, the second could prove the costlier, as it calls into question the integrity of the church's teachings. Prophet Ellen G. White (1827-1915) rallied the group that became known as the Adventists following the "Great Disappointment" of Oct. 22, 1844, the date when thousands of Protestants expected the Second Coming (or Advent) of Jesus Christ to occur. When it did not, White, a "messenger" of God and interpreter of the Bible, said she received a vision explaining that on Oct. 22 Christ had entered a new "sanctuary" in heaven to begin "investigative judgment" of the lives and works of believers. Then White reported a second vision that confirmed the necessity of Saturday worship (hence the name Seventh-day Adventists). Followers came to regard White's numerous visions and books as divinely inspired interpretations of the Bible, as well as a guide to proper views on everything from vegetarianism (pro) to Darwinism (con).

Now a growing number of Adventists are having their doubts about White's teachings. In the late 1970s, Desmond Ford, a prominent Australian theologian who was teaching at the church-run Pacific Union College in California, made the case that White's "sanctuary" explication of 1844 no longer stood up in the light of the Bible, and that "investigative judg-



White: Plagiarist?

ment" undercut the whole basis of Protestantism: belief in salvation by God's grace apart from good works. This prompted the founding of a dissident bimonthly, *Evangelica*, based in Napa, Calif. Before long, the church forced the resignation or expulsion, by one count, of 120 Adventist clergy and teachers. Ford was defrocked in 1980.

Ford's challenge was mild, however, compared with the bombshell dropped by Walter T. Rea of Patterson, Calif. A veteran pastor, Rea, in the course of Ph.D. research, stumbled across some long-buried writings by forgotten divines that matched huge swatches of Prophet White's books. Accusations of this general nature had arisen before

Prodded by Rea, the church has been forced to give ground. Last month, *Ministry*, its magazine for clergy, conceded that White's use of "outside sources" was "much more extensive" than Adventists have realized. Admitted *Ministry*: "Sometimes she used material nearly word for word without giving credit." Most shocking of all, "She utilized the words of prior authors in describing words she heard spoken while in vision. In a few instances, she uses the writings of a 19th century source in quoting the words of Christ or of an angelic guide."

Despite these admissions, Church President Neal Wilson holds to the position that a prophet's thoughts can be divinely inspired even though they are not original. And loyal Adventists have taken to defending White's plagiarism as acceptable practice, arguing that parts of the Bible too were compiled from pre-existing sources. The church's last General Conference, in 1980, confirmed White as a latter-day prophet whose "writings are a continuing



Muckraking Minister Walter T. Rea with his book on the literary sins of the church's prophet

*Questions about basic honesty from long-buried writings by forgotten divines.*

but had been argued away by Adventist officials. Rea was the first to document the vast scale of such borrowing (from 75 assorted books on history, doctrine and the Bible). Last April, Rea issued his full findings in a bitter book titled *The White Lie*. In it he concludes that the "plagiarism" undermines belief not only in the prophet's divine inspiration but also in her basic honesty. One Adventist, Delbert Hodder, a pediatrician and teacher at the University of Connecticut, has offered an altogether different explanation. When White was nine years old she was hit in the head by a rock and seriously injured. Hodder speculates that her visions were the result of "partial-complex seizure," a malady related to epilepsy.

and authoritative source of truth."

A full report on the church's investigation of White's sources is due next year. Meanwhile, in the second edition of his book Rea plans to charge that White's last and most important works were actually fabricated by Adventist pioneers when she was senile. Whatever the outcome, Georgetown University ethicist Roy Branson, editor of *Spectrum*, an independent journal for church liberals, says flatly that Adventists will no longer be able to appeal to White as "the final authority on a whole range of issues, including biblical and theological interpretation and life-style." If so, the Seventh-day Adventists would seem to have lost a resource more precious than the millions that went down the drain. —By Richard N. Ostling.

Reported by Jim Castelli/Washington and Dick Thompson/San Francisco

## COMMENT ON TIME ARTICLE

In recent months articles have appeared in the secular and religious news media telling of the crisis within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. None have been as deadly as the article by Richard N. Ostling in Time (August 2, 1982). This we have reproduced on the previous page. The revelations have been centered on the financial losses due to the Davenport fiasco, and the involvement of high church officials in the speculation of church funds including the tithe. As noted in Time over \$40 million will have gone down the drain - funds either placed by the Church leadership, or by individual members urged to do so by Church ministers who were themselves reaping high interest rates on personal loans for encouraging the laity to invest with Davenport.

The second area covered in these press revelations has been the literary borrowing of Ellen G. White. Into this picture has been projected the research of Walter Rea, and his bitter book, The White Lie. However, as noted in Time, his contemplated second edition, if freed from its bitterness, will be much more devastating than even the first edition could have been, had it been written in a scholarly manner free from the bitterness so self-evident even to a casual reader. But by far the most shocking exposure of the writings of Ellen G. White came from the hierarchy itself. Ministry (June, 1982), edited by J. Robert Spangler, head of the Ministerial Department of the General Conference, gave photographic documentation as also noted in Time, where, in certain of the writings attributed to "My guide" and "I saw," other sources were quoted and paraphrased. (p. 11) An explanation of this type of borrowing has been attempted by Ron Graybill of the E. G. White Estate in a recent Adventist Review (July 29, 1982, pp. 4-6).

The most serious aspect of the Time article as well as with the other media releases wherein doctrinal matters were discussed is the erroneous inference that the basic teaching of Adventism is founded in the writings of Ellen G. White. These non-Adventist writers have no way of knowing but must rely on the sources they contact

either within the hierarchy, or from the liberal wing of the Church. From the article in Time, it is evident they did make contact with one from the liberal wing - Dr. Roy Branson, editor of Spectrum, and a member of the faculty of the Jesuit Georgetown University.

The doctrine which is most seriously attacked is our sanctuary teaching regarding its cleansing in 1844. Time stated Ellen G. White "received a vision explaining that on Oct. 22, Christ entered a 'sanctuary' in heaven to begin 'investigative judgment' of the lives and works of believers." The facts are simply this - the basic understanding of the sanctuary in relationship to the heavenly ministry of Christ was formulated from the study of the Bible during the winter of 1844-1845, by three men, Hiram Edson, O. R. L. Crosier, and F. B. Hahn in Western New York. The results of this study, Crosier wrote out and published in the Day-Dawn, a small Millerite paper. The next year, Crosier with the endorsement of Edson and Hahn, published an enlarged exposition on the sanctuary in the Day-Star Extra, February 7, 1846. At no time during these studies was Ellen Harmon ever present, nor did she contribute via a vision. She had not even been out of the New England area at this time.

Many a concerned Adventist has believed the reference in Special Testimonies, B, #2, pp. 56-57, refers to the establishment of the sanctuary teaching. This is not so. It refers to later meetings which included Edson, and among others, Joseph Bates. Ellen White indicated, "my husband" was present, and James White did not become her husband until August 30, 1846. Not only this, Ellen Harmon did not meet Bates until 1846. (Life Sketches, p. 95)

While certain aspects of our faith came about as indicated in Special Testimonies, the basic sanctuary teaching came from the Bible and the Bible only. This needs to be clearly understood. It is true that Ellen G. White endorsed Crosier's work as from the Lord. (A Word to the "Little Flock", p. 12) BUT our fundamental pillar of faith was built by serious study of the Word of God. Our faith is Biblically defensible, and no matter how much goes "down the drain," it still stands.