

## ADVENTIST'S ADVANTAGE

By Arthur L. White

That which we shall consider this morning is bound up in a two-word phrase, "Adventist's Advantage." This phrase was not coined by your pastor. Nor was it framed by some committee or the leaders of your church. Had we created this expression it might have seemed boastful, or even presumptuous.

The term "Adventist's Advantage" was coined by the editors of *Time Magazine*, a weekly news journal read by millions, because in reports its editors were handling, they observed that Seventh-day Adventists live longer and enjoy better health than do their neighbors generally. What the editors did not know were the basic reasons why Seventh-day Adventists live the way they do—a way of life yielding the definite advantage which caught their attention.

Every Seventh-day Adventist, of course, knows that it was because there was one in our midst in the early years through whom God spoke and she called to our attention God's will for His people as it related to their manner of life. Having a prophet in our midst gave us a distinct advantage. And this has been true of God's people all down through the centuries of time. In this connection a few Bible texts are to the point.

In 2 Kings 6:8-12 is recorded the story of the attempted invasions on the part of Benhadad II of Syria upon the kingdom of Israel. In each campaign, Benhadad found the armies of Israel poised awaiting his coming. The scripture tells us that this happened, "not once nor twice." This led the king to feel that there must be a traitor in his camp. Calling his generals together one day he demanded:

"Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?"

To this challenge one of his servants replied: "None, my lord, but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." Having a prophet in their midst gave Israel a very definite advantage. We might call it "Israel's Advantage."

Another text we might look at is 1 Corinthians 1:4-8. Here the apostle Paul writes of a church "enriched" by Jesus Christ "in all utterance, and in all knowledge . . . so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Those who look forward with expectancy to the coming of the Lord are denominated "Adventists."

This "Adventist" church was to "come behind in no gift." Elsewhere he enumerates these gifts and lists foremost "apostles" and "prophets." He sees the church "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"—the Adventist Church—having in its midst the gift of prophecy. This is indeed "Adventist's Advantage!"

One more text, Revelation 12:17. The apostle John writes of the remnant church, a church keeping God's commandments, a Sabbathkeeping church. It was to have a special possession, the "testimony of Jesus Christ," defined by the angel as the "Spirit of Prophecy." Looking down to earth's last days John saw what we might call "Seventh-day Adventist's Advantage."

Nineteen centuries later the editors of *Time* coined the phrase in our 20th century setting. Having had a prophet in our midst provides us with many advantages. It might be well to look at some of these.

### ***1. The Certainty of the Knowledge of the Reward That Awaits Us.***

The Word of God is clear on this point, but that Word was penned centuries ago, and many theologians are now becoming very hazy about such a reward.

On the point of heaven and the reward of the faithful, *Time* magazine on May 19, 1967, reported:

Scholars regard such descriptions as being primarily imagery. Christianity at one time accepted them as literally true.

There was deep comfort in the dream of heaven as God's good conduct reward. Now that man has more and more conquered nature, eternity has become more and more distant. A certain satisfaction with this world has replaced the aspiration for heaven.

But Ellen G. White, one of our number, witnessed this reward and has reported to us:

I have obtained glimpses of the eternal world and of the exceeding great reward.—*Review and Herald*, Nov. 25, 1884.

Of it she writes in *Early Writings*, pp. 288-289:

I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. He laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its glittering hinges and bade the nations that had kept the truth enter in. Within the city there was everything to feast the eye. Rich glory they beheld everywhere. Then Jesus looked upon His redeemed saints; their countenances were radiant with glory; and as He fixed His loving eyes upon them, He said, with His rich, musical voice, "I behold the travail of My soul, and am satisfied. This

rich glory is yours to enjoy eternally. Your sorrows are ended. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. . . .”

I then saw Jesus leading His people to the tree of life, and again we heard His lovely voice, richer than any music that ever fell on mortal ear, saying, “The leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. . . .”

Language is altogether too feeble to attempt a description of heaven. As the scene rises before me, I am lost in amazement. Carried away with the surpassing splendor and excellent glory, I lay down the pen, and exclaim, “Oh, what love! what wondrous love!” The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love.—*Early Writings*, pp. 288, 289.

Ellen G. White—a Seventh-day Adventist of our day—*saw the reward*. She described it and reassures us of its reality and certainty. She even sang with the angels.—*Early Writings*, p. 66.

This heartens us. We can with equanimity endure pain, adversity, persecution, and can face death. Why? *Because of the certainty of the reward.*

**INDEED—ADVENTIST’S ADVANTAGE!**

**2. *The Certainty of the Knowledge of What Is Going to Take Place, and an Awareness of the Significance of the Things Now Taking Place About Us.***

Amos 3:7 reads: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.”

In 1 Thessalonians 5:5 the apostle Paul reminds us: “Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

God has provided for us windows through which we may look into the future. We find these in the great controversy visions and the “Conflict of the Ages” books.

What seems so mysterious to learned theologians is crystal clear to us. Look at the ecumenical movement as seen through the windows of the Spirit of Prophecy. In 1884 at a time when the words we are about to read seemed impossible of fulfillment Ellen White wrote:

Protestantism will yet stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; she will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power.—*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 405. (See *Great Controversy*, p. 588, 1888 and all later editions)

Significantly Catholic leaders are using the terms “Outstretched

hands" and "gulf." At the opening of Vatican Council II in 1962 the late Biblical scholar Augustian Cardinal Bea, head of the secretariat for promoting Christian Unity at the Council, in urging caution concerning certain propositions, stated that if a certain proposal was followed it would "close the door to intellectual Europe and outstretched hands of friendship in the old and new world."—*Time*, Nov. 23, 1962.

Pope John wrote of "a great gulf between us. That gulf we set ourselves to bridge."—*Pastoral Letter*, March 6, 1960.

Observers are amazed at the astounding acceleration of this movement. Note this:

At a four-day theological colloquium at Harvard University attended by 150 of the nation's leading Protestant and Catholic scholars, Harvard's President Nathan Pusey declared: "We thought it would be perhaps a hundred years before we could come to the kind of occasion we have here."—*Time*, April 5, 1963.

We are reminded of the Ellen G. White words—"The final movements will be rapid ones."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 11.

And what significance does this have to Seventh-day Adventists? Listen to these words from the messenger of the Lord:

When Protestantism shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country [the United States] shall repudiate every principle of its constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 451 (1885).

Because of the Spirit of Prophecy we sense a very close correlation between prophecy and the events transpiring about us.

We watch prophecy being fulfilled—"ADVENTIST'S ADVANTAGE."

### ***3. The Spirit of Prophecy Settles Points of Difference on Doctrine.***

Let us join the early believers at the conference held in David Arnold's barn at Volney, New York, in August 1848. Ellen White writes of it:

Our first conference was at Volney in Brother Arnold's barn. There were about thirty-five present, all that could be collected in that part of the state. There were hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views,

declaring that they were according to the Bible. All were anxious for an opportunity to advance their sentiments. . . .

Brother Arnold held that the 1000 years of Revelation XX were in the past; and that the 144,000 were those raised at Christ's resurrection. . . . These strange differences of opinion rolled a heavy weight upon me, especially as Bro. Arnold spoke of the 1000 years being in the past. I knew that he was in error. . . .

The light of heaven rested upon me. I was soon lost to earthly things. My accompanying angel presented before me some of the errors of those present, and also the truth in contrast with their errors. That these discordant views, which they claimed to be according to the Bible, were only according to their opinion of the Bible, and that their errors must be yielded, and they unite upon the third angel's message. *Our meeting ended victoriously. Truth gained the victory.*—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 97-99. (Emphasis supplied)

Seventh-day Adventists are the only Protestant church with a unified body of teachings held by all its members throughout the world. The settling of points of doctrine has most certainly been an ADVENTIST'S ADVANTAGE.

#### ***4. Questions Just Now Arising Were Answered a Hundred Years Before They Were Seriously Asked. Take the Point of Other Worlds and the Possibility of Their Being Inhabited.***

Not long ago there was discussed in a widely read magazine the question of the "issues that space travel raises for faith." What are some of these? We quote:

A modest but perplexing dilemma would result from the discovery of intelligent beings elsewhere in the universe. The question then would be: Should Christians attempt to convert their celestial neighbors?

Extra terrestrial evangelism might not be necessary, suggests Dr. Per Hassing of the Boston University School of Theology. "If God has revealed Himself to people of another planet," he says, "that revelation must be essentially in agreement with that which He revealed to us—given that assumption that the Christian faith in its essence is true."—*Time*, January 24, 1969.

These questions and speculations were answered clearly and simply in Ellen White's first book published in 1851:

The Lord has given me a view of other worlds. . . . The grass of the place was living green, and the birds there warbled a sweet song.

The inhabitants of the place were of all sizes; they were noble, majestic, and lovely. They bore the express image of Jesus, and their countenances

beamed with holy joy, expressive of the freedom and happiness of the place.

I asked one of them why they were so much more lovely than those on the earth.

The reply was, "We have lived in strict obedience to the commandments of God, and have not fallen by disobedience, like those on the earth."

Then I saw two trees, one looked much like the tree of life in the city. The fruit of both looked beautiful, but of one they could not eat. They had power to eat of both, but were forbidden to eat of one.

Then my attending angel said to me, "None in this place have tasted of the forbidden tree; but if they should eat, they would fall."

Then I was taken to a world which had seven moons. There I saw good old Enoch, who had been translated. . . .

I asked him if this was the place he was taken to from the earth. He said, "It is not; the city is my home, and I have come to visit this place." . . .

I begged of my attending angel to let me remain in that place. I could not bear the thought of coming back to this dark world again. Then the angel said, "You must go back, and if you are faithful, you, with the 144,000, shall have the privilege of visiting all the worlds and viewing the handiwork of God."—*Early Writings*, pp. 39, 40.

How quickly the profound questions posed today melt away. There is life on other planets. The inhabitants are still on probation. There is no need for worldlings to carry the message of the gospel to them, they have not sinned. What an advantage has been given to us to know this—ADVENTIST'S ADVANTAGE!

### ***5. Look at What Is Ours in the Certainty Regarding the Angels Appointed by God to Minister to Us and a Knowledge of the Work of the Evil Angels.***

An article appeared recently in the religious section of a popular magazine carrying the title of "A Who's Who in Heaven and Hell." It states that:

"Many contemporary Christian Theologians concede the mythical character of most religious references to angels."

In the same issue we watch with sad hearts the floundering of the late Episcopalian Bishop James A. Pike in the maze of spiritualism. His son had committed suicide. Bishop Pike was successful, so he believed, in making six contacts with his dead son, James.

"I feel it is James who communicates with me," the Bishop declares.

It is convincing in that the source of these communications, who I take to be him, is so familiar with so many family facts. The trend of the messages seems to be a desire to convince that there is life after death.—*Time*, Oct. 6, 1967.

We turn to *Great Controversy* to read:

Satan "has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven; and without suspicion of danger, they give ear to 'seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.'"—*Great Controversy*, p. 552.

What was a mystery to the late learned Bishop and many of his colleagues is clear to us who have read in *Great Controversy* such chapters as: "Agency of Evil Spirits," "The First Great Deception," and "Spiritualism."

Another distinctive ADVENTIST'S ADVANTAGE!

### ***6. The Spirit of Prophecy Has Proved a Great Blessing to Our Men in Medical Practice.***

Dr. J. H. Kellogg in his prime, and medical superintendent of the then world famous Battle Creek Sanitarium, in 1895 was in New York City talking to Dr. David Paulson, who was just completing his medical training. He asked the new physician:

"Do you know how it is that the Battle Creek Sanitarium is able to keep five years ahead of the medical profession?"

Dr. Paulson said he did not know. Then Dr. Kellogg explained:

"When a new thing is brought out in the medical world I know from my knowledge of the Spirit of Prophecy whether it belongs in our system or not.

"If it does, I instantly adopt it and advertise it while the rest of the doctors are slowly feeling their way, and when they finally adopt it I have five years start of them.

"On the other hand," he continued, "when the medical profession is swept off their feet by some new fad, if it does not fit *the light we have received*, I simply do not touch it. When the doctors finally discover their mistake, they wonder how it came that I did not get caught."

To the well trained medical scientist, Dr. Kellogg, the secret lay in what he said was "the light we have received"—the light of the

Spirit of Prophecy, the scientific soundness of which he repeatedly bore witness to. ADVENTIST'S ADVANTAGE?

### *7. Then There Is the Point of Guidance in the Cause of God.*

On this we could consider innumerable instances, but there is time for just one. In the year 1905 Seventh-day Adventists purchased the Loma Linda property—76 acres of land, on which was a large sanitarium building, and some smaller buildings. It was our intent to operate a sanitarium and conduct a nurse's training school. But to the astonishment of not a few Ellen White on an early visit to Loma Linda declared, "Physicians will be trained here."

On her urging, a school was soon started presenting some classes in medical evangelism, but the nature of the work to be offered was in considerable uncertainty. Some urged full medical training; others felt the counsels called for the giving to ministers some instruction on healthful living and some instruction in the giving of simple treatments. A decision had to be reached at the Pacific Union Conference Session held in January 1910. The Committee on Education of the American Medical Association which sets the standards for medical education in the United States had told our men that with our small numbers, our lack of resources and facilities and the lack of trained men, we could never hope to successfully operate a medical school. A C-grade rating they told us, was the best they thought we could attain and they hastened to say that they were closing all C-grade schools.

With the Spirit of Prophecy counsels in their hands, the brethren at the meeting in Mountain View in their perplexity addressed a letter of inquiry to Sister White as to "the way they should go." Her two-paragraph answer provided what we might term the true charter for Loma Linda University. We quote from her letter of counsel:

The light given me is, We must provide that which is essential to qualify our youth who desire to be physicians. . . . The medical school at Loma Linda is to be of the highest order. . . . And for the special preparation of those of our youth who have clear convictions of their duty to obtain a medical education that will enable them to pass the examinations required by law of all those who practice as regularly qualified physicians, we are to supply whatever may be required.—*Story of Our Health Message*, p. 386.

This was brought to the full council at an evening meeting. The entire evening was devoted to this far reaching subject. At one point,



Elder I. H. Evans, the representative from the General Conference analyzed the situation in these impressive words:

The question is, Will we follow the counsel given?

I can conjure up many reasons why at this time we are ill prepared to establish and operate a medical school. It is not hard for any man to say that we have not the money at hand. Any man need not be very wise to say, "We do not know where we shall get medical men trained and qualified to take up this work." But the question is, Will we establish this medical school, when the Lord has indicated so plainly our duty?—*Story of Our Health Message*, pp. 387, 388.

Then in words of confidence he declared:

When the statement from Sister White is read, I am sure the majority of our brethren will feel as we feel tonight—that the Lord has spoken, and we will obey.—*Ibid.*, p. 387.

When the vote was taken, every hand was raised in an affirmative action that called into being The College of Medical Evangelists, now known as Loma Linda University.

Then Ellen White's voice was heard in urgent tones: "Buy land, buy land at Loma Linda." The brethren remonstrated, "Sister White, we have land—76 acres—and we plan to sell some of it to raise money for the school." "Don't do it," she urged, "we will need more land." When they pointed out that the conference and the institution could not provide funds for more land Sister White turned to Adventist businessmen, physicians, and farmers, who might help by purchasing land and holding it for the school. Hundreds of acres were thus procured and held till the Medical School could take it over.

In 1962, just as we were taking the first steps in drawing both divisions of the medical college together at Loma Linda and before we had much to show for our plans, the inspection team from the Committee on Education of the American Medical Association visited the campus to make close investigation of the status of the work in medical training. The time seemed very inopportune. On the last day, as these visiting physicians stood with our men on the hill overlooking the campus of several hundred acres, the head of the team, the dean of a medical school of a large state university observed:

"What would I give for a campus like this for my medical school?" and then he thoughtfully observed: "Years ago, someone must have had vision."

Some of our men said in their hearts, Yes, years ago there was one in our midst to whom God did indeed give a vision. In so doing God gave us ADVENTIST'S ADVANTAGE.

### *The Time Article, "Adventist's Advantage"*

And now we come back to the article published in *Time*, October 28, 1966.

The tens of thousands of Seventh-day Adventists in Southern California suffer from most of the same diseases as their non-Adventist neighbors, including cancer. Yet on the average the Adventist men live longer. Most conspicuously, they have only one-fourth as much lung disease as other Californians, Why?

Only part of the answer, say two of the Adventists' doctors in the *A.M.A. Journal*, may be found in their tendency to follow a modified vegetarian diet and their strict adherence to a regime of exercise and good hygiene. The major explanation for the Adventists' better health, say Dr. Frank R. Lemon and Dr. Richard T. Walden, is the fact that they do not smoke.

### *The Broader Picture*

The findings reported in *Time* were arrived at in the study of 11,000 men over age 30. A broader survey involving a recent five-year study of 50,000 Seventh-day Adventists in the state of California reveals that as compared with the population of California generally, it was found that the non-Seventh-day Adventists had eight times more lung cancer. Lung cancer was unknown among the Adventist group except a few cases of individuals who smoked before they joined the church, and then abandoned the practice.

There was five times more emphysema, twelve times as much cirrhosis of the liver, twice as much heart disease. Among Seventh-day Adventists who developed cardiac troubles, the disease came ten to fifteen years later in life.

It was found that twelve per cent of deaths among men under fifty years of age in California resulted from heart disease. During the period of this survey there were no deaths of Seventh-day Adventist men under fifty from heart disease.

In California there are twice as many Seventh-day Adventists alive between eighty and eighty-five as were found among comparable numbers of non-Seventh-day Adventists in the state.

The eyes of the world are upon us. World organizations involved in nutritional research declare that in Seventh-day Adventists they

have made the nutritional find of the century. Here is a group of people living under various circumstances and in diverse environments, but with essentially the same dietary habits. What a group to watch!

We can only wonder how the survey just reported would have read if every Seventh-day Adventist had been living up to all the light God has given to us on nutrition and health. Ellen White envisioned it and wrote:

If Seventh-day Adventists practiced what they profess to believe, if they were sincere health reformers, they would indeed be a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.—*Counsels on Health*, p. 575.

### ***Keep This Phrase in Your Heart***

Keep in your heart the phrase, "Adventist's Advantage." Watch for points to add to the list. As you from day to day ponder the matter, you will find many.

### ***How "Adventist's Advantage" May Be Ours***

But, dear friends, this advantage can be ours only as we read and accept and follow the counsels and the instruction God has given to us, His people.

At one time Ellen White wrote: "More than one-half of our people know little or nothing of the contents of these books, and they are losing much by their neglect."—*Review and Herald*, December 26, 1882.

And again: "Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to His people, because they do not read the books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 391.

Elder George I Butler, for many years president of the General Conference, observed:

We firmly believe the visions of Mrs. White are a genuine manifestation of Spiritual gifts. . . . When we have heeded them, we have prospered. When we have slighted them, we have suffered great loss.—*Review and Herald*, Aug. 14, 1883 (Supplement)

In the words of Jehoshaphat we say, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chronicles 20:20.

Advance Information in Physiology and Nutrition.

See pamphlet, Science and the Spirit of Prophecy.

- a. Prenatal Influence. pp. 19-21
- b. Cancer and Causative Factors. pp.21-24.
- c. The Use of Salt. pp. 6, 7.
- d. The Yeast Germ in Bread. pp. 5,6.
- e. Drugs and Birth Defects. pp. 25-27.
- f. Fats and Sugars and Heart. pp. 9-11.
- g. A Nutrition Authority on Mrs.White. pp.29,30.
- h. The Alcoholic Rats at Loma Linda (no notes)
- i. The California Survey. pp. 30, 31.

E.G.White: "True science contributes fresh evidence of the wisdom and power of God."--CT 426.

Jesus declared: "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe." John 14:29.

A General Conference President Speaks From His Heart:

"We firmly believe the visions of Mrs. White are a genuine manifestation of spiritual gifts. ... When we have heeded them, we have prospered; when we have slighted them, we have suffered a great loss."--G. I. Butler, Review and Herald, Aug. 14, 1883.

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