

I was Canright's Secretary

By Carrie Johnson

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Carrie Shasky (Johnson) in 1913, the year she was D.M.Canright's secretary

A fascinating, faith building biography of Dudley Marvin Canright and autobiography of Carrie Johnson is presented in the book "I Was Canright's Secretary." Several have asked me what benefit they would gain by reading this book. If you want to see God's leading in lives of the past, if you want to be warned of pitfalls in your Christian experience, if you want to see how prophecy was fulfilled, then this book is for you. Due to the current use of Canright's books to discredit Seventh-day Adventists by some parties today, this well documented history is timely.

It took nine months to find the author's son, Dr. Junius B. Johnson, and to prepare the book for publication on the Internet with his permission and the permission of the original publishers, The Review and Herald Publishing Association. I am thrilled every time I read and think of the meticulous documentation presented in the book and the leading of God in the lives of Dudley Marvin Canright and Carrie Johnson.

I would appreciate your response of information regarding use of Canright's books throughout the world and also the felt need for a reprinting of this book, "I Was Canright's Secretary." If there is enough demand, we can present this information to prospective publishers. Please let me know how many copies of the book you would buy if it were republished.

In His Service, Cyril G. Hartman

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FOREWARD

Two books, long available and currently published, were written by Dudley M. Canright for the purpose of discrediting the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The first, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, came from the press in 1889, and the second, *The Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, was issued two months after his death in May, 1919. These have been and are presently used to dissuade interested inquirers from affiliating with this rapidly growing Protestant body.

Neither Mrs. Carrie Johnson, the author of this book, nor the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of which she is a member, holds any ill will or bitterness toward D. M. Canright, the subject of the volume.

Mr. Canright was a Seventh-day Adventist for twenty-eight years and an ordained minister of the church for twenty-two years, serving largely as an evangelist, but filling executive and other positions as well.

Then he was a member of the Baptist church for thirty-two years and during the first decade of this connection served as the pastor of two local churches, one for fifteen months and the other for two and a half years. From the time the 1867 diary jottings reveal in his experience periods of victory and confidence and then recurring periods of doubt bordering on atheism, to the inscription on the tombstone, ancient and modern, in the family lot in the Mountain Home Cemetery in Otsego, Michigan, Mr. Canright's life reveals a dual personality—a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." This has unfolded particularly in the search more recently made in the records, both those pertaining to his connections with Seventh-day Adventists and his experience thereafter. As husband and father, a citizen, a church member, and associate, and a pastor, he was loved, honored, and respected while in both religious affiliations. The Adventists found him to be a man of strength, but plagued with recurring periods of questioning and discouragement, at times resulting in his laying down his ministerial duties and resorting for a time to agricultural activities. As a minister in the Baptist church he gave some years of devoted service as a pastor of local churches, as well as some years given to writing and publishing books. However, for intermittent periods during what should have been the best years of his life he resorted to the door-to-door selling of religious books and to the operation of a little farm.

While there is nothing dishonorable in these occupations in earning a livelihood, the reader may inquire as to why an author and minister with Mr. Canright's talents should at the age of fifty-six find it necessary to seek such employment.

Perhaps the answer is found in the strange experience of the man who could one day speak in the most glowing terms of the doctrines, the organization, and the personnel of a great movement, which he loved and of which he was a part, and the next day be overshadowed by doubts and be ready to desert it, and possibly, even hold it up to ridicule.

It was this dual personality that made a deep impression upon the heart of Carrie Shasky (Johnson) who in her first secretarial work served Mr. Canright in correspondence and book preparation for a period of seven months and who has recounted her experience in this volume and has set forth her findings concerning Mr. Canright's over-all experience.

Had Mr. Canright not made malicious and bitter attacks on Seventh-day Adventists and Ellen G. White, and were not his productions still being published and circulated a half century subsequent to his death, this work would not have been published. As the Canright books are often cited and are looked to as authoritative works, it may be well for those who so consider them to become acquainted with Mr. Canright as a witness. This is the purpose of this volume.

In preparing this book, the author made many contacts with individuals and families in a position to furnish data correcting or verifying her memory, and supplying documentary evidences. In gathering data on Canright beyond her personal knowledge and that of his relatives, she sought and received assistance from the historical archives of the Seventh-day Adventist church at several points. For this assistance she gives grateful acknowledgment.

It is logical that some may question, "Who is this Mrs. Johnson who now tells the story of D. M. Canright, fifty years after his death?" Mrs. Carrie Johnson, who authored this work, resides at Dowagiac, Michigan, with her husband, and not far from their son, a dentist, who practices in Berrien Springs. The Johnson's are members of the Decatur-Glenwood, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church, in which both currently hold office. A resident of Michigan for a large part of her life, Mrs. Johnson has been in close touch with the development of the Seventh-day Adventist church, both as an eyewitness and as an earnest student of its history.

The reader will learn that she and her husband, now retired, served in the work of the denomination in various capacities in several States, Mrs. Johnson filling positions of secretary, schoolteacher, and literature evangelist. For the past four decades Frank Johnson, her husband, has managed business interests in Niles and Berrien Springs.

The Johnson's are known in their community as being a solid, Review-and-Herald-reading Seventh-day Adventist family, with whom many ministers of the church through the years were acquainted as they were graciously entertained at their home. Both husband and wife have filled many church offices, and Mrs. Johnson for eight years was the Dorcas Federation chairman for western Michigan. She served twelve years as the Niles WCTU president and eight years as the Berrien County president in Berrien Springs. During World War II she was cited by Michigan's governor for meritorious service as the Berrien County Neighborhood War Club chairman.

Sworn to secrecy when employed to assist D. M. Canright, Mrs. Johnson, now fifty years after his death, feels that she is no longer bound to this pledge to keep in strict confidence what she heard and saw during the period of time she served as his secretary. Her story, plus the result of her years of painstaking research, combines and forms a new and fascinating portrait of Dudley Marvin Canright.

PUBLISHERS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to Mr. Canright

ON THURSDAY morning, January 2, 1913, at nine-thirty, I in a formal way met Dudley M. Canright. He was a man of 72 years. I was 18 and an advanced student of Cornell business College, in Battle Creek, Michigan. The school was situated in the heart of the city on the second floor of the arcade. On this particular morning W. E. Cornell, owner and director of the college, and a former Adventist, approached me in the typing room. I was afraid he was going to ask me to pay my overdue tuition bill or leave school. Instead, he asked whether I would become an employee of his and, if so, he said he would cancel my bill.

I was so thrilled that I had been selected from among others, who, I thought, were better qualified, that I forgot to ask about the nature of the work or for how long I would be thus employed. Mr. Cornell proceeded to explain the work, saying it was important and that I was to begin at once. I was told that the man for whom I was to take dictation and provide other secretarial services was already waiting "in my [i.e., Mr. Cornell's] private office." Mr. Cornell stated that the man was a former prominent Seventh-day Adventist. "I was his first secretary," said Mr. Cornell, referring to himself, "and you will be his last." That spiced my ego, because I knew Mr. Cornell was the foremost shorthand reporter in the State of Michigan. Now I was chosen to work for the same prominent man for whom he had once worked! I left my typewriter and followed Mr. Cornell as we started toward his office.

On our way, Mr. Cornell added somewhat cautiously, "It is part of your training never to repeat anything you see or hear, or divulge any dictated matter or information. Please be good to him." After he extracted a pledge of secrecy and of loyalty from me, he opened the door to his private office. There I was introduced to the man for whom I was to work-Mr. Canright. While this was our first formal meeting, the name was strikingly familiar to me, for I had heard it eight months before, and I had seen him recently in the Battle Creek Sanitarium kitchen on several occasions, but at the time I did not associate the man with the name.

I was surprised at his unkempt appearance and recoiled at the thought of having to serve as secretary to the author of the book "Seventh-day Adventism Renounced," which I had seen and from which I had read. But I had given my word to Mr. Cornell and felt I could not back down now. The door was locked, and I was reminded of my pledge of secrecy, both as to the work I was to do and as to the identity of the man for whom I was to work.

But before going on with the account of my experience with Mr. Canright, what I am to report will be more meaningful if I trace here in detail the background of this rather strange yet intriguing man, as I have come to know him from subsequent research. We will see him first as a young man growing up in the States of Michigan and New York, then as a successful Seventh-day Adventist evangelist and church leader, and following that as a Baptist pastor who aspired to be in the forefront, but died almost in obscurity.

Kinderhook and Coldwater, two small Michigan towns ten miles apart, set in the midst of fertile, open farming country, began to grow and expand when waves of settlers, many from New England and upstate New York, drove stakes and claimed farmland not far from their borders. To this part of southern Michigan the Canright family came in the late 1830's and took out a claim on an eighty-acre farm. Father Hiram and Mother Loretta were true pioneers. Though the climate of southern Michigan might be less extreme than that of upstate New York, settlers were still subject to the rigors of frontier life. Winters were long and cold. Wandering Indian tribe's people could still cause apprehension. When very old, Mother Canright recalled a day when two Indians visited her, alone at the time. Her nearest neighbors were two miles away; she bravely invited the men into her house. They entered and sat down on the floor. She gave them food, and they soon afterward departed, leaving her and her possessions unharmed.

At the time of their move the Canright's had two daughters, Sarepta and Salina. These little girls would be able to help their mother in the heavy tasks performed by farmer's wives in those days. A son, Dudley Marvin, was born soon after their arrival at Kinderhook. The date, September 22, 1840. Father Hiram rejoiced, visualizing a muscular youth helping him in the fields and at some future date taking over the farm. Four years after Dudley's birth, John arrived, then Jasper three years later. Two more little girls, Mary and Eva, completed the family.

Religion was a vital force in the lives of most of the families who settled in Michigan. But as Dudley Canright later wrote concerning his early years: "I had no religious training till I was sixteen," after he had left home.

Hiram Canright may have been disappointed when his first-born son decided that obtaining an education was preferable to the monotony and toil of farm life. The boy, Dudley, attended the nearby public schools. At the age of 16, the last year he was in school at Kinderhook, he was baptized into the Methodist faith. The year 1859 found him nineteen years old and attending an academy near Albion, in western New York, and living with an uncle.

In Albion, Dudley met a Seventh-day Adventist farmer and minister, Roswell F. Cottrell, who witnessed for his faith while the two worked together planting corn ("Review and Herald," May 17, 1877). The young man had never heard of Adventists. While the soil was being prepared to receive the seed for the future crop, Dudley's heart was being prepared to accept the message as taught by that denomination.

Unbeknown to Dudley, plans were being made to hold a brief Adventist tent meeting not far from Albion that summer of 1859. The following notice appeared on the last page of the [Note 1](#) Review and Herald: "Providence permitting, we will meet the brethren in Western New York, August 20th and 21st. The tent will be pitched in Carlton, Orleans Co., on the farm of Bro. Buckland, five miles north of Albion. Those coming on the cars will stop at Albion, on the Rochester and Niagara Falls road." (Signed) James White. -Ibid., Aug. 18, 1859.

The September 1 issue of the Review described how the tent was going up "just over in the field," and notice of the meeting was being given in the region roundabout. "Hope to have a good meeting." The same report continued, "Aug.

22nd Our tent-meeting in this place is closed, and the tent on its way" to another locality. "The number present was small compared with such meetings in Michigan," wrote Elder White, but "quite a number came forward and bought our books."

An eager listener under that canvas roof, one who doubtless hurried to the stand to purchase Adventist books and pamphlets, was young Dudley Canright. The seed of truth that had been planted in his heart grew and developed. He was converted there. Elder Cottrell-the one who had planted the seed-after several months of further study with Dudley, baptized him. "I expect to see him in the kingdom," wrote the young man of his spiritual father. -Ibid., May 17, 1877. Describing his conversion, Canright wrote that he "heard Bro. White's sermon on first-day [Sunday] ^{Note 2} I there came to the conclusion to keep the Sabbath of the Lord; and by his grace assisting me, I have been enabled to do so."-Ibid., Jan. 26, 1860, p. 78. Some years later, in recounting his experience, he told Cottrell how he listened to the preaching, devoured Adventist books, and studied his Bible day and night. He was an enthusiastic believer, and longed to convert others to his new found faith.

His first convert was his own mother. He hurried home to Kinderhook and shared with her the light he had so joyfully received and accepted. He reported in the Review, "My mother kept the last Sabbath, so that I shall not be alone hereafter in keeping the seventh day, for she intends to obey God by keeping His Sabbath henceforth."-Ibid.

By January 1861, two more members of the family had begun keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. Dudley's uncle, Theodore V. Canright, reported in the Review: "It is only about three months since I commenced keeping the Sabbath; . . . I meet with scorn and ridicule on every side, yet I feel to look up and ask my Father in forgive them, for they know not what they know [sic]. My wife and myself are the only Sabbath keepers in this place. . . . But when we read the letters from the brethren and sisters [in the Review and Herald], we feel to take new courage to go on till we shall be permitted to enjoy the blessings of eternal life in the new earth."-Ibid., March 12, 1861.

Dudley kept in close touch with the church he had so recently joined. He became a Seventh-day Adventist before the church was fully organized. He read the Review as it came every week to his home, and occasionally wrote to the editor. An item appearing in the issue of December 30, 1862, three years after his conversion, revealed his studiousness, his earnestness, and his hopeful spirit: "I have heard most of the objections that infidels and worldly professors can raise against the truth, yet these have only increased my faith in the message, by showing the spirit of its adversary, and the utter foolishness of their arguments. O, how good the truth is now, when we see the signs predicted by our Lord as the harbingers of his return to gather his people, fulfilling in quick succession, and know that the hope of God's children is so soon to be realized . . .

"I deeply feel the need of a pure heart. . . . How little we generally realize the importance of keeping ourselves pure and unspotted from the world. May God help the remnant to seek meekness, that they may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, is the prayer of your unworthy brother."

His devotion and loyalty were shown in the manner in which he labored on the farm to sustain his godly mother (Ibid., May 20, 1873) and by his diligent efforts to obtain an education. Commenting on this, Elder James White at a later time said, "He knew what money cost, and had some appreciation of the value of education, and the importance of a calling to this work. God blessed him."

Dudley felt called to the ministry. It was not surprising, therefore, that when about twenty-one years of age he traveled the nearly forty miles north to Battle Creek to talk with Elder James White about entering this line of work. Elder White recounted the experience a few years later:

"He [Canright] came from Coldwater to talk with me on the subject of his preaching. I spent about an hour with him.

"I said to him, 'Do not content yourself with being a small preacher, but be somebody, or die, trying. Do not go out to be a pet, but go out into the field, with the weight of the work upon you, with steady principles, and stand your ground.'

"The last thing I did, was to present him with one of our English Bibles, and a pair of charts, saying, as I did so, 'Here Dudley, take these, go out and try it. When you become satisfied that you have made a mistake, bring them back.'

"The next May, at the conference, I met him, and asked him, 'What about those charts and the Bible?'

"He replied, 'Bro. White, you have lost them.'

"Thank God! I would like to lose more in the same way. We raised means to purchase a library for Bro. Canright and Br. [Isaac D.] Van Horn. And said I to them, 'When you study, study with all your might, and when you visit, visit with all your might, and exercise briskly. Whatever you do, do it with all your might.'" -Ibid.

Dudley faithfully followed this advice. He threw himself wholeheartedly into whatever he did and did it with all his might. During the next few years we find in the Review many reports of earnest work being done by Dudley M. Canright.

In July, 1864, Dudley, with Elder Van Horn, held meetings in Vassar, Michigan, Fifty-four discourses were given, leading more than forty men and women to embrace the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists. The next series was held at Alma, Michigan. It was the time of harvesting, haying, and threshing, but the "congregation ranged from eighty to two-hundred and fifty," wrote Canright.

"As near as we can learn the result of this tent meeting, about thirty have decided to obey the truth. . . As we left Alma for St. Johns by way of Ithaca, we could but rejoice that we had to stop at nearly every house for over ten miles to bid some Sabbath-keeper good bye." -Ibid., Sept. 13, 1864.

"Present truth looks clearer and more beautiful to us the more we study it," wrote young Canright a few weeks later. "Praise the Lord for a religion that agrees with the Bible, common sense, and the wants of man." -Ibid., Nov. 8, 1864.

November found him on his own in Jackson, Indiana, giving forty-eight lectures in about six weeks' time to a crowded meetinghouse. There fifteen began to keep the Sabbath, twelve subscribed to the Review and Herald, and in all \$40 worth of books were sold. (Ibid. Dec. 6, 1864.)

The meetings met with favor. In an adjoining district the people offered to furnish the workers with wood, lights, board, et cetera if they could also enjoy a course of lectures (ibid.).

In late April of the following year a conference meeting was held at Lovett's Grove, Ohio. The workers there were dependent on Michigan for visiting speakers. They were overjoyed when "Brother Canright" came to help them. "Never in Ohio have we had a better conference than this," the Review reported. "One brother and his companion, came a three days' journey to meet with us; and they departed rejoicing in the blessed hope, not regarding time or expense, that they might hear the preached word, and mingle their devotions with the people of God."-Ibid., May 9, 1865.

With so fruitful a ministry, it is little wonder that D. M. Canright was ordained to the gospel ministry when he was only twenty-four years of age. On May 29, 1865, the ordination service was conducted in Battle Creek, Michigan, by J. N. Loughborough, and by James White. (Ibid., June 6, 1865.)

When Elders Canright and Van Horn returned to Michigan and held meetings in Watrousville, other denominations began to take notice of their advance. A Presbyterian journal telling of what was happening in Watrousville reported: "They have set up a large and commodious tent. It is sixty feet in diameter, and will seat a large number of persons. Here are three preachers. They hold meetings every night and are found in the tent through the day studying, or conversing with all that come to them."-Quoted in the Review and Herald, Dec. 19, 1865.

After the Watrousville meeting the believers determined to build a meeting house. The brethren gathered materials and planned to put up their own building. But the sisters-"how could they help?" According to Canright, "They proved the old saying true, 'Where there is a will there is a way.' They concluded to weave a hundred yards of rag carpet and sell it for the benefit of the meeting-house. Each one furnished a few pounds of carpet rags and a few shillings to buy the warp with, while other wove the carpet. This readily sold for one dollar per yard. Thus they will raise \$100 in money which is quite an item with them."-Ibid., June 19, 1866.

In mid-1866 Canright was commissioned to join Elder J. N. Andrews in an evangelistic thrust into New England. In early July the two ministers left for the "Eastern Mission," as it was called (ibid., July 3, 1866). On the way they attended a "Monthly Meeting" at Olcott, New York, during which a baptism was conducted on the shore of Lake Ontario. Many curious villagers watched the ceremony with interest. Some launched out upon the water in boats. "The lake was calm, the people respectful and attentive to the prayer that was offered, and it seemed that angels looked down well pleased to witness" the baptism of "three precious youths" that day. (Ibid., June 19, 1866.) such an event must have filled the hearts of the traveling pilgrims with joy, making them feel hopeful that the blessing of God would attend them all the way.

But in New England the team found themselves in conservative territory. The response was less spontaneous than it had been in Michigan. The workers made Norridgewock, Maine, their center, and planned to visit other New England

communities, while continuing with regular appointments at Norridgewock. Cornville, Eddington, Topsham, Portland, Falmouth, Hartland-in all these towns Andrews and Canright labored and the people benefited from their ministry. They proved a great source of encouragement to the scattered Adventists, one of whom wrote: "Our hearts have been much comforted by the coming of Bro. Canright among us, and the return of our dear Bro. Andrews."-Ibid., Nov. 6 1866. At least once Canright reported a "complete failure" of his meeting-at Canaan, Maine (ibid., Feb. 5, 1867). Winter storms, cold hearts, and the natural conservatism of the people made labor in New England difficult.

When Elder Andrews returned to Norridgewock after a visit to New York he heartily commended the "zealous, devoted, and faithful labors of Bro. Canright," and stated that during his absence eighteen had joined the church, and "between thirty and forty take an active part in the evening prayer-meetings." Tobacco had been "banished from the ranks." (Ibid., Feb. 19, 1867.) There was great hope for the future.

It was during this period that certain perplexing weaknesses first began to reveal themselves in Canright's character. For lengthening periods of time he would be deeply discouraged. Doubt would sweep over his mind. He belief in God would waver and on at least one occasion he veered toward atheism. Then, with success in his work and encouragement from his brethren, he would rise from the gloomy depths of depression. In a small handwritten diary kept during 1867, he described how at times he almost doubted "present truth." [Note 3](#) He wrote of his temptation toward exhibitions of pride, self-exaltation, and a spirit of harshness toward others. He once declared that he was spiritually sick; he feared that God had forsaken him, and was tortured with the thought that he would be eternally lost. He suffered from frequent headaches and often mentioned that he was ill. But on the last day of that year he wrote that God had saved him from falling and that he still trusted in Him. The year, he said, had been a mingling of deep sorrow and great joy.

The happiest event of that year was his marriage. In late March, 1867, Canright wrote with keen anticipation, "I now go home to spend a few weeks in Michigan" (ibid., April 23, 1867). He was looking forward to two outstanding events-his marriage to a nineteen-year-old maiden, Lucretia, and his attendance at the General Conference session in Battle Creek.

Lucretia, born in 1847, the daughter of an ex-Methodist minister, was six years old when her father accepted the Sabbath. At the age of twelve she wrote this description of her experience: "When he told me the seventh day was the Sabbath, I believed it and have tried to keep it ever since. O, how thankful I am that I had praying parents that have instructed me in the narrow way. But now I am bereft of a kind father; never shall I forget his dying words. He called us three children to his bedside and told us he was going to leave us, and that we must obey mother and keep the Sabbath. He early taught me to pray and ask the Lord to forgive my sins and help me to be a Christian [sic]. I want to overcome all my besetments that when Jesus comes I may be numbered among his children, and be prepared again to see my dear father and all those that are keeping the commandments."-The Youth's Instructor, May, 1859, p. 39.

When their mother followed her husband in death, John, Ella, and Lucretia Cranson were taken in by the large hearted Amadon family in Battle Creek. George Amadon was the superintendent of the Review and Herald Publishing Association. James and Ellen White also took an active interest in the welfare of the three children. Lucretia grew up, an earnest little orphan, and an avid reader of The Youth's Instructor from the time she was six years old! (Ibid.) This was the girl who now united her life interests with those of Dudley Canright. The young couple were married on April 11, 1867, in the Amadon home. Visitors came and went all that morning helping in the preparations for the wedding. The groom enjoyed it much and felt that Lucretia never seemed half so lovely and good. About thirty people assembled in the Amadon home at 1:00 P.M., and Elder Loughborough married them. Following the service the guests joined the newly married couple in a meal together. Dudley felt that this was the happiest day of his life.

Almost immediately Canright began feeling the financial obligations of marriage. The wedding was on Thursday. The following Sunday he wrote in his cash account that he had given ten dollars to his wife, and two dollars to Elder Loughborough, "for marrying us."

Exactly one month after the Canright wedding, on Sabbath, May 11, the Battle Creek congregation moved from their humble place of worship on Van Buren Street, two blocks to a "new house, with accommodations, when closely seated, for about seven hundred persons" (Review and Herald, May 14, 1867). The same minister who had officiated at the Canright wedding, Elder Loughborough, president of the Michigan Conference, led the congregation in a day of fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving.

Dudley and Lucretia observed the day, eating but little. The Bridegroom of one month preached at the Battle Creek Health Institute in the morning; in the afternoon he and Lucretia walked out in the woods until sundown. They ended that Sabbath with a pleasant visit to the home of Brother Uriah Smith, editor of the Review and Herald.

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1. Church paper of Seventh-day Adventists published weekly at Battle Creek, Michigan, 1855-1903 and then in Washington, D. C., from 1903 onward. The title of this paper has varied slightly throughout the years, but it has generally been called the Review and Herald or simply the Review.[\[back to text\]](#)
 2. For a time in the early days of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Sunday was called First-day; Monday, Second-day, etc.[\[back to text\]](#)
 3. A term used by Seventh-day Adventists referring to their message.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER TWO

A Successful Seventh-day Adventist Minister

THE CANRIGHTS spent their honeymoon attending the General Conference in Battle Creek. D. M. Canright was listed as a "returned missionary" from Maine. He spoke at least once, reporting his work in that isolated State. At this conference his credentials were granted for the ensuing year. As many as eight hundred persons crowded into the new church for the meetings, with many listening outside.

A few days after the conference closed, the young couple said good-bye to the Amadons, Lucretia's foster parents, with whom they had stayed, and journeyed back to New England. Since Elder J. N. Andrews had been elected president of the General Conference, the Canrights would carry the burden of the work in New England on their own young shoulders. Canright had been away from New England for three months. "It seemed very much like getting home after a long journey," he wrote, "We felt that we were indeed among our friends again."

He reported further from Norridgewock, Maine, "We have obtained rooms in the house of Brother George Barker a few rods south of the village. We think that it is the most lovely situation in all this section. It . . . furnishes a grand prospect of the mountains in the west and north as they tower up in the distance. . . . We . . . feel contented to labor here as long as the Lord wills."-Review and Herald, July 9, 1867. Soon after their return, Canright attended a weekend series of meetings in a large barn. Five hundred to six hundred interested listeners were present (ibid.).

Two full months after their marriage Dudley and Lucretia ate their first meal in their own home. It was late June, but early summer in Norridgewock. Lucretia was delighted to be able to unpack, settle, and become Mrs. Canright, housewife!

In July, nine new members were added to the local church. That same month Elder Canright organized a church of fifteen members in Canaan, Maine, with prospects of more in the near future. On November 1 the first Maine State conference was held in Norridgewock. Elder Canright issued the following invitation through the Review and Herald of October 8, 1867: "Let all come who can, and bring your unconverted friends with you. Come prepared with quilts, robes, &c., and we will entertain you freely. The church at Norridgewock invite all to come and partake of their hospitality, and enjoy the Conference with them. Come to labor to pray, to sing, to exhort, to be a part of the Conference."

Lucretia, always frail, and by November pregnant, [Note 1](#) as well, may have had some reservations about so general an invitation. But the conference opened as planned. By November 4, Ellen and James White had been warmly welcomed and were staying at the Canright home. Lucretia, unable to attend many of the meetings, stayed at home and saw that her guests were well cared for.

Because she could not attend, her husband felt hurt, even though he knew she had good reason for staying home. He often admitted that he was too exacting with his young wife, yet at other times he expressed dissatisfaction because he thought Lucretia was not efficient in the performance of home duties. The young bride wept and Dudley resolved to be more considerate in the future.

In spite of all this, the young couple enjoyed the visit of the Whites, learned to love them, and expressed sorrow when they departed. The home crisis was not reflected at the conference, which was declared to have been a success. "Thus closed the religious meetings of our first Conference in Maine," Canright reported and added, "There were some who profess to be in the message, that would have given much to have kept Br. and Sr. White away. They thought they did not need them nor their help. . . . But, thank God, they came, and came in the Spirit of God, and came just in time to save the cause from reproach and confusion. . . . Never before did I so fully realize the great importance of the gifts in the church, and never did I have so strong faith in them as now. . . . Thank God for the Testimonies. We also realized that God has laid upon Bro. White a work that no other man can do. The cause needs all the gifts, each one in its place. . . .

"For myself, I never prized the gifts as now, never loved God's tried servants as now."-Ibid., Nov. 12, 1867. Emphasis his. In an official report, thanks were tendered to the Whites for their timely visit, and their work accomplished during the meeting (ibid.).

The following year, 1868, marked the emergence of what would prove to be one of Canright's greatest abilities-a talent for debate. Early in the year, in New Portland, Maine, where he held a series of meetings, he met with the most bitter and determined opposition. The Methodists and Baptists united both in public and private in their efforts against the Seventh-day Adventist message (ibid., March 10, 1868), and engaged a Universalist minister-an Elder Johnson-to confront Canright. As the debate progressed, Johnson became very excited. Realizing that he was losing the argument, he did everything in his power to break up the discussion, and raised the question "Shall Eld. Canright be allowed to proceed with his argument?" (ibid.). A vote was taken, and Canright received a majority of forty-nine! The end result was that "the Methodists and Baptists who were so anxious for the discussion, hoping that we would be put down, received no aid nor comfort from it" (ibid.).

From then on, when debate was brewing and Canright was available, he participated enthusiastically, "as the horse rusheth into the battle" (Jer. 8:6). It appears possible that early in his career Canright worked with, and learned to debate from, the brilliant, now ex-Adventist minister Elder Moses Hull.

During this period of his ministry Elder Canright faced strong opposition from embattled ministers of local Protestant churches. From New Vineyard, Maine, he described how the pastor had "preached, and prayed, and exhorted against us, but with little nor no effect thus far. The people will hear for themselves. . . . We expect to stay here some time yet."-Ibid., March 17, 1868. The next week Canright stated that the "opposers have killed themselves" (ibid., March 24, 1868). Six or eight had even decided to keep the Sabbath.

Another summer came, the busy time of year for farmers. But Canright was reaping for the Lord, and nothing stopped his visitation and work program. At Peterboro, New Hampshire, he found a refreshing group: "There are no divisions or quarrels among them; they all seem to love each other. This made me love them very much, and the Lord will bless them for it, too."-ibid., Aug. 11, 1868.

Then follows this rather revealing expression: "I thank God that I have once more got where is not a crime to say that I believe the Testimonies. Nearly all the Sabbath-keepers in New Hampshire and Massachusetts have a strong faith in the Testimonies, and love for them. They have seen their fruits in the past, and know that they are good."-Ibid. (Italics supplied.)

In September, Lucretia and Dudley Canright were sent into Massachusetts to engage in evangelistic ministry. The work in that State was relatively new and proved to be a challenge to the youthful minister. He found only eight keeping the Sabbath in Haverhill and spent a few days with them (ibid., Sept. 1, 1868). After this he made his home for a time at South Lancaster, Massachusetts. General meetings were held there, and he met the older men of the cause in that State.

From Massachusetts he fanned out to various New England States, holding successful meetings in Vermont and Maine. He crossed the State line into New Hampshire in March, 1869, and held meetings in Union Hall at New Ipswich. Canright reported from there: "I have now held meetings at this place four weeks. The interest seems to be about as good as ever. Some have dropped off; but others have come in, so that yesterday I had more out to hear than had been out before on Sunday. . . . Above a dozen are keeping the Sabbath, with a good prospect of more. . . Several others who are convinced of duty will have to make a large sacrifice to keep the Sabbath, as they work in the cotton mills; yet we hope for them.

"My strength has held out beyond what I could have expected. I feel sure that God has specially helped me here. . . . My family are still gaining in health. For all these things I feel very thankful to the Lord. Pray for us."-Ibid., March 30, 1869

By "family," Elder Canright referred to his three-month-old baby daughter Nettie, and, of course, to Lucretia, who had not been well since the baby's birth. On February 11, 1869, Canright wrote of her condition: "Lucretia has suffered exceedingly for the seven weeks I was absent, yet without a murmur or even suggesting that I should come home. Not many would have done this, I think. She is a noble woman and will sacrifice anything for the Lord's sake. God has heard us for her and has specially helped her, we know."

The baby's gain in health was brief. In the Review and Herald of April 20, 1869, we find the obituary of Baby Nettie, age "four months and four days," accompanied on the same page by two paragraphs signed by D. M. and L. C. Canright, acknowledging the kindness of friends in time of grief and affirming that "God is good, and his truth is precious, and it is sweet to work for him." Baby Nettie was buried in the South Lancaster cemetery. She could not have lived. "A post mortem examination revealed an internal malformation, showing that she did not die of disease; nor could any relief possibly have been afforded."

A month after their baby's death, the young evangelist and his wife bade farewell to New England and headed west. In Chicago they purchased a new tent, which was shipped to Iowa, where, in Sigourney, Dudley would begin work in a new field-and he did his best in new fields. The tent was thoroughly "christened." Rain fell every day for more than a week. Roads became gluey quagmires.

Attendance and crops both suffered from the long-continued wet weather (ibid., July 6, 1869), and Canright appealed for the prayers of God's people. Their prayers were answered. After eight weeks he reported about thirty-five Sabbath keepers in that place, and a blue sky! At the conclusion of the meetings a dry tent was taken down and sent on to the next place of labor, Richland, Iowa.

Dudley Canright now began working under the supervision of Elder George I. Butler, president of the Iowa Conference. The two men were destined to labor together for several years, first in that State, then in other parts of the gospel vineyard. During the State conference Canright was placed on important committees. Debating was a common practice in the nineteenth century in the United States, and Seventh-day Adventist ministers were often challenged to debate. Adventists and others in Iowa now learned what New England already knew-in debate, Canright was at his best. Reports appeared in the Review and Herald of victory after victory in those verbal contests. As Scripture evidence became clear to the listeners, men and women cast in their lot with Seventh-day Adventists.

The camp meeting held in Iowa in early October at Pilot Grove brought Elder and Mrs. James White and the Canrights together again. Elder White reported, "We . . . found Bro. and Sr. Canright in the work of the Lord and in the hearts of the people. May the Lord keep these, his youthful servants, from the influence of the world and the power of Satan, and make them a great blessing to the cause in Iowa."-Ibid., Oct. 26, 1869

And Elder Butler wrote: "Bro. Canright, whose gift was new to most of the brethren, spoke several times with good acceptance."-Ibid., Nov. 9, 1869.

In December, 1869, Canright, not yet in his thirties, again demonstrated marked weaknesses of character. At Monroe, Iowa, forty had taken their stand after evangelistic meetings he had held. On Tuesday, December 28, he participated in a debate, the sixth of a series, with an Elder Johnson of the Presbyterian church. The subject was "Life and Death." Mr. Johnson frankly admitted that he could not meet Canright's arguments, and yielded. This had a far-reaching effect in the community. Several more joined the Seventh-day Adventists. Elder Butler attended this debate. Since the house Elder Canright was building was unfinished, the two men shared a room, probably in a hotel. Butler reported that Canright was not in good spirits the night of his success. Butler was astounded to learn that the young man was under the powerful temptation to give up religion, renounce his belief in the Scriptures, and become an out-and-out infidel.

All night long the two men talked and prayed. Neither slept. Butler reported that in the morning Canright seemed more calm and self-possessed, and a few weeks later, at the General Conference session in Battle Creek, he "made some confessions," seemed very much relieved, and again threw himself zealously into the evangelistic field. (Ibid., Extra, December, 1887.)

Dudley and Lucretia longed for a permanent home. At Monroe, in the very heart of Iowa, they hoped to be able to settle down and live, for a time at least, in their own home. From here he could fan out in his labors over the State. "I have just finished building my house," wrote the versatile husband, "and have moved into it. Have had to work very hard to do it; laboring during the day with my hands

and walking to and from my lectures at evening. But we now have a home, for which we are thankful to God. This will now be my permanent address."-Review and Herald, Feb. 8, 1870. He accomplished this task during the bitter cold of an Iowa winter! In June of the following year Elder James White spent a day with the Canrights and enjoyed some of the delicious produce from their extensive fruit and vegetable gardens (ibid., June 13, 1871).

Although the Canrights now had a home, they must often be away. The year 1871 was a busy one for the young minister and his wife as they traveled on good roads and bad, often in the bitter cold.

Canright reported: "Jan. 19 and 20, rode sixty miles to Peru. Had an appointment at the school-house for the evening; but the Methodists put in an appointment over ours, and arrogantly crowded us out. We hastily fixed up our own house, and held meetings there. I spoke six times," Canright reported, "and had a good attendance. A good work is being done here. Some fifteen whole families, besides several in other families, are keeping the Sabbath."-Ibid., Feb. 14, 1871.

By late winter Canright was in Michigan and with anticipation he visited Tuscola, where five years earlier he had conducted evangelistic meetings. He described the reunion: "Our parting meeting five years ago was a marked and touching one. Now as I went from house to house, and inquired after the old friends, we were often melted to tears. What a change these five years have made! Some are sleeping, some have turned back, and others have become cold and silent in the blessed cause. All this is sad. On the other hand, new ones have been raised up, weak ones have become strong, and nearly all have improved much. Could we have known then what we know now, what errors and sad mistakes some of us might have avoided, and none more than I. But God is good and merciful, and we will still trust in Him."-Ibid., March 7, 1871.

That summer he and his wife traveled to State conferences and camp meetings in Missouri, Wisconsin, and Kansas, as well as Iowa, where he was stationed. Tent meetings were held, churches were built, individual decisions were made for Christ. And in the midst of her hectic life, Lucretia, from some lonely spot, penned these words:

I desire to give God unfeigned thanks for life, and for all the blessings it has brought to me. From infancy through youth to womanhood His hand had led me, and through my path has often been rough and thorny, and I have met with many disappointments, seen many sorrows, and shed many tears, I have learned to thank God for even these; for I feel they have been my heart's best discipline; and so I have nothing to complain of in the past, and as for the present, it is good, and the future bright. I desire to come out from the world and be separate; to have more of that fullness that is in Christ; to live nearer to God, to love him with all my heart, and serve Him with all my ransomed powers. Oh! That I may be a pilgrim and stranger on the earth. . .

We are in one sense of the word lonely. We have no society of believers here. No church bell summons us to the house of God when Sabbath morning dawns. No sweet communion with those of like precious faith. No hymns are sung only as we chant them ourselves. Still we thank God that we are not left entirely alone. We live, in one sense, as near the Fountain Head as others do, and we may

hold communion with God as often as we will, and have the constant companionship of the Spirit, which is far superior to all earthly society.

I am earnestly striving by God's grace to be a child of his. To Him and to His service I consecrate the remainder of my life; to be content with whatever position He may assign me; to bear life's burdens bravely, and cheerfully, and well; and oh! is it saying too much, to say that I expect, if faithful a little longer, to hear the welcome applaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant?" And all unworthy as I am, in God's mercy through Christ, I hope to tread the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and wear a crown of glory, and a robe of righteousness.-Ibid., Oct. 3, 1871. (Italics supplied.)

Lucretia was, through tribulation, developing into the "saint" her husband, after her death, declared she had been during the years they spent together.

In mid-October Canright wrote, "Today I go home for a short stay, after an absence of nearly four months; shall return soon."-Ibid., Oct. 31, 1871. Just then the building of a new church at Oceola, Iowa, took precedence over the comforts of home. Lathing and plastering must be done; the meetinghouse had to be dedicated by the middle of November. Other Protestant churches were closed to him-one was actually locked! With the blessing of God, a new Adventist church would soon house the congregation raised up by Elders Canright and Butler.

Early January of 1872 found the Canrights still in Iowa and Dudley making new year's resolutions: "Again I resolve to strive harder than ever to love and obey God this year. Looking over the last year, shame, sorrow, and regret fill my heart that I did not stand the test better. Thank God, probation still continues. My health is good and courage strong."-Ibid., Jan. 9, 1872

His hopes of a "permanent address" were short lived. That June the Canrights were called to work in Minnesota, where they seemed to make small progress. Accustomed to quick success, by August the evangelist was in despair. He appealed from Hutchinson: "We had hoped by this time to have something favorable to report; but are sorry to say that this is not the case. This was the most favorable location we could find, a village of three thousand inhabitants, with a good

farming country around, quite largely Americans. The truth had never been preached here and the way seemed to open favorably, so we pitched our tent and commenced meetings. The weather is good, roads are fine, good moonlight nights, and we have done all we could to advertise our meetings; and yet it is the same here as in every other place we have tried, little or no interest.

"We commenced with an audience of fifty, and this has dropped off to about thirty, with no interest in those who do come. This is the fourth time I have pitched the tent in the State this year in the most favorable locations I could find. The result has been the same every time. Nor is there any way that opens before us. No one asks for any labor; though I have been in the State several months, and have inquired, and written, and traveled, as extensively as I could, yet I have never had a single invitation from any soul-Sabbath-keepers or any one else-to come and hold meetings in their place. . . .

"If there are any friends to the cause in Minnesota, who want to labor where they are, and can obtain a house in which to hold meetings, and will board us while there, we are ready to go. If not, we shall return home; or we are ready to go to any other State where the people do want to hear. We are at your service, brethren, and we want to hear from you immediately. We cannot consent to have these fine fall months go by without some prospect of doing good."-Ibid., Aug. 27, 1872.

About two weeks later, on a Friday night, Canright preached on the subject of spiritualism. He may have known that a "trance speaker, a celebrated lecturer among the spiritualists," was coming to town the next day. In any case, the natural result of the presence of two such men in one town would be a confrontation in debate. So it happened. Canright reported: "He spoke in a trance. Our tent was crowded . . . He . . . said that God told the first lie, and the devil told the truth. . . . The congregation hissed him, upon which he called them geese and other low names. Then they laughed at him, and he got madder still and acted very unbecomingly, until he lost the sympathy of everybody. This made them very enthusiastic in our favor. I think I have never witnessed a better victory in a debate than the truth gained in this. He undertook to lecture in the meeting-house in the afternoon, but he only had about fifteen or twenty to hear him, while we had the tent full; and at night he had to withdraw his appointment, and so came to hear me. . . . We sold all our books on spiritualism."-Ibid., Sept. 17, 1872.

From then on the situation brightened. Instead of thirty, there were sometimes as many as three hundred listeners. Farmers traveled for miles with their plodding teams to hear the young preacher. Canright was unable to cope with all the requests for house-to-house visitation (ibid., Sept. 24, 1872). Where there had been but one believer in that area there now were eighty (Ibid., Nov. 5, 1872). In November, Canright wrote: "Last Sabbath, the friends in Hutchinson had an excellent meeting, in which several made their first start to become Christians. All are settling into the truth and learning to love it. Bro. Grant led the prayer-meeting here, and Mrs. Canright the Bible-class, while I attended the meeting four miles out of town, at what is called Bear Creek schoolhouse. . . .

"On Sunday, about forty brethren and sisters came together at Bro. Whitelock's, and I spent nearly all day in talking to them on practical duties, the progress of the cause, and what the Lord was doing for us. Here, we also had another good social meeting, in which several made a start for the kingdom. Preached that evening to a full house. All the American families in that neighborhood are now keeping the Sabbath. I believe there is not a single exception. . . . Many of these had, heretofore, been strongly opposed to the Advent doctrine, and would not attend the meeting, nor unite with them in Sabbath-school.

"One good sister said to me, 'Bro. Canright, we have set up here nights to hate the Adventists. Another said that if an Adventist came into his house he would set the dog on him! But we have now preached in his house several days, and have not been bitten yet. He and his whole family are obeying the truth. Another man, after attending a few of our meetings, being asked if he was becoming an Adventist, replied, 'When you hear that I have become one, you may set it

down that I am crazy.' He and his family are now rejoicing in the truth. . . . Who can deny that this is the work of the Lord? A half dozen, or more, school teachers, are among those who have received the truth. We hope to see them becoming useful in the cause.

"This is a very new country, and, quite generally, the people have not many conveniences; yet, nearly all have homes and are industrious people. They all make us welcome to their simple fare, and seem to share with us what they have most gladly. . . .

"What we miss most is fruit, of which there is scarcely a taste."-Ibid.

About this time, Elder James White warned his fellow ministers against allowing increasing success to make them proud and unwilling to speak to small congregations. In reply Canright wrote, "No doubt there is danger of this. But I think I have had a pretty good trial of small congregations this year. At the time I read his article, I was preaching in a little, old, log school-house, in the brush, where my head almost touched the ceiling, while standing up eighteen or twenty make it comfortably full. I have preached here to congregations of six, ten, fifteen, and so on. But I kept to work till I got my whole congregation. It is just such houses as this in which I expect to labor all winter. The next one we have in view is covered with bark. So, until we have a little more room, there is not much danger of our being puffed up very high!"-Ibid.

By mid-December there were about 180 believers in Minnesota, and Canright had decided to stay through the winter. But the Christmas season ushered in a temperature reading of forty-two below zero! "Wells twenty-two feet deep froze so that water could not be drawn from them. Men froze their fingers, toes, faces, etc., while feeding their cattle." One evening Canright had to travel sixteen miles by open sleigh across open prairie, facing a bitter wind. He was hurrying to catch a train in order to meet a Sabbath appointment. The sleigh trip took three hours, and though covered with buffalo robes, the traveler was nearly frozen when at last he boarded the train. (Ibid., Jan. 14, 1873.) Such extreme cold, along with the fear of a smallpox epidemic, made the Canrights decide to return to Iowa.

In harmony with his habit of summarizing the events of each year at its close, the thirty-two-year-old preacher wrote concerning 1872: "Thus ends, with the last day of another year, my stay of about seven months in Minnesota. God has been better to us than all our fears. I am resolved not to be so cast down again under any circumstances. . . . I find myself alone in a great city, far from all friends or home. . . . Nine years, I have been laboring in this cause. . . . All along have been, here and there, bright spots and seasons of joy, yet thickly interspersed with mistakes and tears and vanished hopes. I am tired of the conflict, and sigh for the end. Looking ahead, I see only wearisome toil and wearing anxiety. . . . Home I scarcely see once a year. As soon as friends are raised up, I must leave them to again go among strangers in new places, and with the hardest fare. . . .

"Oh! That the Master would come! But in the strength of God, though tired and worn, I will gird on the armor for another year's battle."-Ibid.

January 7, 1873, found Lucretia and Dudley at their Monroe, Iowa, home, after an eight-month absence. But they were able to stay only one day! Appointments had been made for meetings in other places, and the pilgrims hurried on their way.

In March, 1873, notice appeared on the last page of the Review and Herald: "A CITY FARM FOR SALE. In the city of Monroe, population over 1000, thirty miles from Des Moines, . . . 8 acres, well fenced, new house, well, &c., over 200 fruit trees of all kinds, 200 grape vines, 1500 raspberries, one acre strawberries, besides currants, blackberries, &c., &c. On a main road and fine location. Price \$2000. Payments easy. Address, D. M. CANRIGHT, Monroe, Iowa." The traveling preacher and his wife realized that the work of an Adventist evangelist made no provision for settling down. "This has been our lot for years," Canright commented, "and probably will be until the Lord comes. We feel now that we shall never buy another home, but live as it were, in our trunks and satchels, ready to move at any time."-Ibid., Aug. 12, 1873.

Dudley and Lucretia retained only their library, plus what portable items they could carry with them. A baby daughter, Genevieve, born at Monroe in April, 1872, added to their list of "movable possessions."

1. This pregnancy was not carried through to term.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER THREE

Difficult Days and Victory

NO ONE knew Dudley Canright better than Elder George I. Butler, who labored closely with him in his early ministry, and in later years as president of the General Conference played a major part in directing his work. The two had traveled together, had put up tents and taken them down together, had eaten together, and preached in the same general meetings. Such experiences draw men close to each other, and Elder Butler, a kindly, patient, and understanding man, not only labored diligently to help Brother Canright but also frequently hastened to his defense in times of difficulty.

Writing some years later Elder Butler gives us a glimpse behind the scenes in Elder Canright's life: "He was never noted for patience, forbearance, or special regard for the opinions of others. He was a person who formed his conclusions remarkably quick, and was inclined to be rash; and though in the main a genial, pleasant, frank companion, yet his desire to have his own way sometimes got him into trouble.

"He never could bear reproof with patience, or feel composed when his way was crossed. When he came to mingle in important matters with brethren in prominent positions, these and other traits naturally got him into trouble. . . Elder C. had little respect for any one's opinion unless it coincided with his own. The

reader can readily see that very naturally there would be friction. He always hated reproof, hence bore it like a fractious child. So he had some unpleasant experiences, as we well remember.

"On such occasions the Elder was immediately greatly troubled with doubts. When everything went pleasantly, he could usually see things with clearness. When he was 'abused,' as he always thought he was when things did not go to suit him, the evidences of our faith began immediately to grow dim. Dark clouds of unbelief floated over his mental sky, and he felt that everything was going by the board. Here was the Elder's special weakness. He is a strong man in certain directions when all goes smoothly, but very weak in adversity. He failed to 'endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.'"—Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887.

These qualities in Elder Canright's experience showed up in rather a marked way in the summer of 1873 when he was involved in an experience to which in later years he attributed some of the problems he had in his relationship with Elder James White, with Ellen G. White and testimonies from her pen.

James White was recovering from a stroke. His wife was worn from much speaking, writing, and traveling. With Mrs. Lucinda Hall, a valued helper, and their son, Willie, the Whites retired to Colorado for a summer of rest and recuperation. They stayed near Black Hawk, in a house owned by Fred Walling, Mrs. White's nephew, who was engaged in the lumbering business.

In a letter to his brother, Edson, Willie described their mountain home:

Black Hawk, Colorado

July 3, 1873

Brother Edson:

We are here at Walling's old mill, two miles from where he is now operating. It is a good house which he lets us have the use of. There are a parlor, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and a sort of underground room, which serves as butt[e]ry and cellar below, and two bedrooms above.

We are nearly settled. Walling lends us nearly all the furniture we need. Day before yesterday we awoke in the morning to find an inch of snow on the ground and the thermometer two degrees above freezing. How is that for the first of July? . . .

Father is quite well and cheerful. He is tinkering up shelves, bedsteads, etc., and keeps busy most all the time . . .

July 4 Father and I have been mending fence today. Expect Walling will lend us a horse as soon as the pasture fence is mended. . . .

Wish I could see you. Am lonesome enough sometimes. Guess I shall plant some garden next week. . . .

Would like to write more but am so tired and sleepy I can not think of anything to say. Hoping to hear from you soon,

Your brother,

Will.

The Canrights, worn by their labors, were invited to share this mountain retreat with the Whites. They accepted. Canright had been suffering from a throat difficulty, caused by much travel and many speaking appointments during the

severe Minnesota winter. Lucretia had never been strong, and Baby Genevieve was only fifteen months old. Eighteen-year-old Willie White drove to Black Hawk, met the travelers, and brought them to the old mill. His parents welcomed them, and Mrs. White wrote, "They have a very interesting little girl."-Ellen G. White manuscript 9, 1873.

For several weeks the group enjoyed an idyllic summer holiday. They picked strawberries; they went for long walks and sometimes enjoyed horseback rides. They wrote and read. Ellen White described how, early one July morning, she, her husband, and Dudley Canright "walked out in the valley and we had a very precious season of prayer" (ibid.).

Ellen White was watching for a favorable opportunity to present to Elder Canright what had been revealed to her in vision concerning some weaknesses in his character and his work. Somehow the right opportunity did not seem to present itself.

The evening after the Sabbath, August 9, Elder White became so ill that he could not sleep until after midnight. The next day was rainy. There were too many people in a small space, one of them ill, another a whining toddler. This created tensions that developed into irritability and bitterness. Referring to the experience later, Canright declared: "I told the elder my mind freely. That brought us into an open rupture. Mrs. White heard it all but said nothing."-Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, p. 42. Mrs. White described in her diary how, on that Monday and Tuesday, she and her husband talked with the Canrights, but "they both rose up and resisted everything we said. I feel so sorry." On the night of the twelfth Elder White was again quite sick; his wife was up with him for hours. That same night the Canrights moved to the home of friends, Brother and Sister Tucker. (Ellen G. White manuscript 10, 1873.)

The outburst brought clearly to the surface Canright's weaknesses, and this provided an appropriate opportunity for Ellen White to present to him what had been revealed to her in vision and to counsel the young couple. A letter was written bearing date of August 12, 1873, directed to Brother and Sister Canright. Ellen White's message opened with these words:

For some months I have felt that it was time to write to you some things which the Lord was pleased to show me in regard to you several years ago. Your cases were shown me in connection with those of others who had a work to do for themselves in order to be fitted for the work of presenting the truth.

The full communication appears under the title "To a Young Minister and His Wife" and may be found in Testimonies for the Church, volume 3, pages 304-329.

Dudley and Lucretia Canright were not the first to whom messages of guidance and correction had been given through Ellen G. White. Usually such reproofs and counsels were received with humility and with full recognition that the chastening of the Lord "yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." But, as already noted, Canright, as described by Elder Butler, who knew him so well, "never could bear reproof with patience, or feel composed when his way was crossed." Consequently, when he read the message from Ellen G. White he felt very much grieved.

Elder and Mrs. White labored diligently to help the Canrights. Daily diary entries speak of prayer in their behalf, and of letters written to them. Dudley and Lucretia returned for a short time, but they "seem[ed] unfeeling, as unimpressible as stone," states Ellen White's diary. (Ellen G. White manuscript 10, 1873.)

Finally, on August 26, they left for Golden City, some 15 miles to the east.

But James White had been deeply wounded. He highly esteemed the energetic young minister. "It seemed to him so cruel to be pressed and burdened in his feeble health with the case of Elder Canright."-Ibid. Husband and wife, in their mountain retreat, pleaded with God for relief, and relief was granted them.

Dudley Canright soon afterward took his family to California, where he came very near "giving up everything." After "working at farming about two months" (Review and Herald, January 27, 1874) he started preaching again. Letters passed between the two families. The Canrights pondered the long testimony of counsel and rebuke Mrs. White had written them. A letter dated November 8, 1873, in Lucretia's handwriting with her husband's editing, shows their attitude toward Elder James White and the testimony.

In part it read:

As I told you in my previous letter, I am well satisfied now that I did not treat you with due respect and reverence; that I was out of my place in talking and writing to you as I did; that I did not endeavor to please you as I ought, but was too unyielding in carrying out my own ways; that we put an extreme meaning on what you said and were too sensitive over it; that in view of the kindness and interest which you had heretofore shown for me, I did not show you proper gratitude. I regret this and would do differently another time. . . .

Your words and spirit are very tender, humble, and forgiving and they have greatly softened and warmed my feelings toward you. It is becoming quite plain to me that I have not realized the burdens and sorrows which you have had to bear.

Then I was surprised at the readiness you now manifest in your letter to us to forgive the past and still trust us. All these things satisfy me that you have a better spirit than I had allowed.

For weeks now these things have been constantly upon my mind and I have turned them over and over in my thoughts, endeavoring to look at them from every side. With the knowledge I have, I can see no light in any other direction. The doctrine seems plain, sound, and harmonious. It is purifying and elevating in its effects and I cannot doubt that those who live it out will be saved. I know our people to be a sincere and earnest people, free from deception. I have never seen any sins or faults in the character and life of Sister White. . . .

Now Brother White, this in short is how we feel and view things at present. If you have any advice or instructions to give us, do it freely and we will try to profit by it. Probably the experience you have had of late in advising us is not very encouraging in that line; but we think we are better prepared to receive admonition than we were at that time.

We feel that if ever we do get out of this all right, it must be final, whatever may come up. I am satisfied that the time had come in my life when it was important that I should make a radical change in several important points. This I

am now fully determined to do at all events. If this trial was the only way it could be effected, I am not sorry it has come.

In point of health, we are all quite well. Shall be glad to learn of your plans, etc.

Your brother in hope,
(Signed) D. M. Canright

Forgiveness, as requested in this letter, was freely granted by Elder and Mrs. White.

In February, 1874, Elder J. N. Loughborough, one of the first Seventh-day Adventist ministers to work in California, visited and worked with Elder Canright in Watsonville for nearly two weeks. He had not seen Canright for six years and was cheered to find him of good courage, and full of enthusiasm, with improved health. (Review and Herald, Feb. 24, 1874.)

James and Ellen White also had left Colorado in late 1873 and traveled to California. The two men who had differed so seriously in Colorado, met again in Santa Rosa. There, in a manzanita thicket, Canright "broke his heart before God" and confessed in a season of prayer "that he was all wrong." (Ellen G. White letter 18, 1874.) He and James White walked arm in arm down the road, talking. Suddenly "they stopped in the road and cried upon the necks of each other like two children" (ibid.).

Elder White reported in the Review and Herald, April 7, 1874: "The coming of Bro. Canright to the State [of California] seems to have been providential. . . . His success at Watsonville in bringing out a small church, and his discourses at the late quarterly meeting at Santa Rosa, have given him a large place in the hearts of our people here. . . . Elds. Loughborough and Canright will probably labor together at present in this State with the tent."

It was while Elder Canright was in Watsonville that a crisis concerning Miles Grant arose in Napa. This man, a Sundaykeeping Adventist, was preaching strange doctrines intended to confuse the church. He called in question the integrity of James and Ellen White. Writing to her son, Mrs. White reported: He struck for discussion. He said if his proposition for discussion was not accepted he should commence opposition meetings, preaching against the Sabbath. Elder Loughborough prayed over the matter and felt that it was best to accept his challenge. Elder Canright was telegraphed at Watsonville and came immediately to Napa. Grant had held a few meetings with no apparent success. Monday night the discussion commenced. Your father was present. He was highly pleased with Elder Canright's deportment in his speeches. He made good and telling points. . . .

Last night . . . Brother Canright spoke calmly, with clearness, making good points. Elder Grant did not make good a single point. He sought to lead Canright into the covenants and keep him wandering around in a tangle of words, leaving the vital question. But Brother Canright would not be caught. He gave him enough to handle aside from the covenants. He just touched on the covenants and then poured in all the truth he could possibly crowd into three speeches of twenty minutes each.

Grant's last speech was a decided failure. He had nothing to say. He is tied up. We are all praying that he may be confounded. He is a proud, bold defier of God's commandment-keeping people. His self-important manners are perfectly disgusting to those who are not fascinated with his smooth, soft surface talk of sanctification. It is very evident he knows nothing of sanctification of the heart. He is a wicked man, I believe.

The church of Sabbath keepers in this place are only confirmed in the faith by this opposition. Infidels and many unbelievers say that the evidence is all on one side, that Grant brought forth nothing to prove his position.

We humbly pray that God will give the victory to the truth, and we have some precious evidences that we shall come forth from this contest with a triumph for the truth.-Ellen G. White letter 18, 1874.

Napa, Watsonville, San Francisco, Oakland, Petaluma, Woodland, San Jose-in all those places and many others-meeting were held, baptisms conducted, churches organized.

While Miles Grant was hurling slanders, Canright wrote an able defense of Elder and Mrs. White. He declared:

I have traveled and preached three years in Maine; have labored where Sister White was born and had her first visions; also where Eld. White was raised; and have traveled and lectured where he lectured at the time referred to by Eld. Grant; have conversed with many who know Bro. and Sister White, and were familiar with their early lives and labors, and I found these reports to be malicious slanders without the least foundation in truth.

Furthermore, for most of the time during the twenty-five years past Elder White has been the editor of our paper, the ADVENT REVIEW AND HERALD OF THE SABBATH, now having a circulation of over thirteen thousand copies; is the editor of our health journal, The Health Reformer, one of the highest toned health journals in America; is president of our Publishing Association located at Battle Creek, Michigan, with a capital of about \$100,000, running three steam presses, and employing some fifty hands daily; is one of the directors of the Health Institute, Battle Creek, Michigan, which has a capital of some \$500,00, and is treating from forty to eighty patients continually.

Sister White has stood by her husband and greatly aided him in all this work. Eld. White and wife have lived in Battle Creek for nineteen years. I have lived there, and know that no persons are more highly esteemed there than they are. Any time that Sister White will speak, she can have a crowded house, more than any other speaker.

At our annual State camp-meetings where thousands attend, the presence and labors of Bro. And Sister White are always earnestly called for, and nowhere more urgently than in Maine. No more devoted, pious, believing people can be found than those who have thus enjoyed the teachings and example of Sister White for the last twenty-seven years. If she be a medium of Satan to deceive men and women and lead them away from faith in God, Christ, and the Bible, it is about time such fruits began to appear!! . . . "By their fruits ye shall know them."-Review and Herald Extra, April 14, 1874.

And his handwritten letters to Elder and Mrs. White breathed a new spirit of cooperation and a desire to work in harmony with his brethren. One datelined "Woodland, California, April 13, 1874," read:

Dear Bro. White: I feel like saying to you this morning that I have felt sweet peace and much of the blessing of God in my heart since coming here. For this I am very thankful to God. I have seldom, if ever, felt that faith in God and real nearness to, and love for, Him that I do now. I feel deeply grateful to God that my confidence in the work and my courage in God is so good. It is my settled determination to strive hard to walk near to God so that He may trust me with His blessing and His work.

My heart is with your heart and my daily prayer is that God may bless you greatly. So far as I have heretofore failed to understand you and your work and have discouraged and hindered you, I am heartily sorry. And let me say that, by the help of God you may count on what little influence I have to stand by you, to help and encourage you, to cooperate with you in your plans for the advancement of the work of God.

I would like to see a paper on this coast. And whatever plans you may think best to work upon, I will help you all that I can. . . .

Pray for us and aid us by your counsel. In much love,
(Signed) D. M. Canright

In the fall of 1874, after conducting tent meetings nonstop for five months, Canright closed his season. But the "season" did not stay closed. In December he was preaching under canvas in San Francisco. He reported the advantage of a big city effort: "Ministers generally let us alone" (Review and Herald, Dec. 8, 1874). Early spring found him in Petaluma. "By the advice of Bro. White, I came here," he wrote, "though I desired another field. . . .

"Bro. and Sister White spent a few days here; and Sister White remained twelve days, speaking a part of the time in each meeting. I was very glad of this help."-Ibid., April 22, 1875.

In August he wrote from Hollister, California:

Dear Sister White,

. . . We are always glad to hear from you, and to know that you remember us. We have been thankful to read your good reports from the camp meetings this summer, to know that you are both sustained physically and spiritually. We are very thankful that with all these labors, and cares, and sorrows, that you and Brother White especially feel so cheerful and hopeful. . . .

It seems sad that it should be so, but if trials are necessary, God can carry us through them. . . Our numbers are so few . . . that we cannot afford to waste our strength by divisions. It has seemed to be Satan's special effort from the first, to create disunion among those who ought to be the strong, leading minds, in this work. It is sad to think how much valuable time and talent has been lost to the work on this account.

We have the utmost confidence that the hand of God is guiding in this work, and that it will be carried forward to success by some one. If one fails to endure the test . . . God will raise up those who will. . . .

It did not seem possible for me ever to feel that love for Brother White and sympathy with him in this work that I had before, but these feelings have entirely passed away. And as I have become better acquainted with the work of yourself and Brother White and have come to take a more intelligent view of it, the great difficulties that I felt are relieved, and I feel the same unbounded confidence in this work that I used to. What was possible in our case is in others, and we hope it may be realized. . .

Cretia is now with me, and we are all well. We feel very anxious to continue and follow up our labors in these parts all the fall and winter. . . .

I have felt at times some discouraged at the little we have accomplished this summer, but still we are hoping for better success all the time. We should not complain at laboring without any fruit if we only know that it was not on account of failure on our part. This is what I fear, and what makes me feel sad to think that so much might be done, where we do actually accomplish so little. I begin to feel very forcibly that my labors do not amount to a great deal; but the best I know how to do is to keep on whether I accomplish little or much. Pray for us as we do for you.

Your brother and sister in hope of light and victory.

(Signed) D. M. Canright

L. C. Canright

CHAPTER FOUR

Carrying Large Responsibilities

HAVING LABORED successfully for better than two years in California, Elder Canright late in 1875 was called back to the East. He spent the early part of the new year conducting revival meetings in the Michigan churches. Then he moved into pioneer work in the border States of the South, with the raising up of a church on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

During the summer of 1876 Canright attended fourteen camp meetings in the East and Midwest, then between August and October he led out in an eight-week evangelistic tent meeting in Rome, New York. Early in the series his audience was limited only by the capacity of the tent: "Last evening," he wrote, "after crowding every seat inside, hundreds stood around outside." As to living arrangements he stated, "We have pitched a family tent beside the big tent. Here we make it our home, and we find it very convenient when we are not away. Friends bring in plenty of food."-Review and Herald, Aug. 10, 1876. There was no public opposition when he wrote, but he predicted "this will soon come." It did, but this must be passed over.

On Tuesday, August 15, Elder Canright was especially pleased to have Elder and Mrs. White and Elder Uriah Smith with him at Rome. His report to the Review

states, "We advertised that Sister White would speak in the tent, and every seat was crowded, and some stood up. The discourse left a good impression." The audience ran between four hundred and six hundred people. The meetings were carried to a successful termination, and a strong membership was built up. A house of worship was constructed, and Canright attended the dedication, which took place on the second weekend in December. At the age of thirty-six, D. M. Canright, consecrated, energetic, and hard working, had proved himself and was entering upon the most effective period of his ministry.

At the 1876 annual session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, held at Lansing, Michigan, on September 19, Elder Canright was one of three men elected to the General Conference Executive Committee. This action demonstrated the confidence of the delegates in this man who had shown his dedication and ability as an effective minister and evangelist. Indeed it was a high honor. Other members of the committee were James White, president of the General Conference, and S. N. Haskell, of New England. Canright was to be re-elected at the next session, which gave him a tenure of two years in serving on the highest committee in the denomination.

During these years, having gained nationwide prominence among Adventists as an evangelist, debater, and fluent writer, he used his talents in numerous ways. The Review and Herald regularly carried reports of his work and articles from his pen, bringing encouragement and instruction to the church. He was much in the field in revival work in the churches and in evangelistic work in new territories.

Dudley Canright basked in the favor of James White, who admired his drive and accomplishments. White cited Canright in a Review and Herald editorial as an example among the ministers who "have laid their plans wisely and well, and have labored with vigilance to execute them," and as one with the ability "to establish the work in new fields" (ibid., Jan. 25, 1877).

In the spring of 1877 Canright wrote a series of articles for the Review and Herald under the general title, "A Plain Talk to Murmurers," [Note 1](#) presenting "Some Facts for Those Who Are not in Harmony with the Body." He traced the early history of the Seventh-day Adventist church, showing how under the tireless leadership of James White it had prospered in its development. He related at length the sorry experience of some who had apostatized and later fought the church. "They have just enough present truth to make them excellent tools of the devil. You will find them, one here, or one two or three there, on the borders of some of our churches, zealously sowing discord, creating doubts, and warring upon weak brethren. . . . They furnish argument and ammunition for our opponents with which to oppose our work, and tear down even the Sabbath itself." Ibid., June 7, 1877.

Another article in the series dealt with Mrs. White, whom he ably defended. Of her character and her work he spoke freely:

"I have heard Sr. White speak hundreds of times, have read all her testimonies through and through, most of them many times, and I have never been able to find one immoral sentence in the whole of them, or anything that is not strictly pure and Christian; nothing that leads away from the Bible, or from Christ; but there I find the most earnest appeals to obey God, to love Jesus, to believe the Scriptures,

and to search them constantly. I have received great spiritual benefit times without number, from the testimonies. Indeed, I never read them without feeling reproved for my lack of faith in God, lack of devotion, and lack of earnestness in saving souls. If I have any judgment, any spiritual discernment, I pronounce the testimonies to be of the same Spirit and of the same tenor as the Scriptures."-Ibid., April 26, 1877.

Of those who had received personal messages of counsel and reproof he could write from firsthand experience:

"Those who have been the most often, and, probably, the most severely, reproved through the testimonies, are those who have been the warmest supporters of Sr. White."-Ibid.

In midsummer New England beckoned again, and D. M. Canright threw himself energetically into opening unentered fields. After a month-long series of tent meetings at Newburyport, Massachusetts, through July, he pitched his tent on the last day of the month in Danvers, a factory city some ten or fifteen miles north of Boston. The community responded enthusiastically, and the meetings were a success from the start. Glowing reports appeared frequently in the *Review and Herald*. One such from the pen of Elder S. N. Haskell described the tent "as solid as a house, and as trim and neat as a tight-fitting boot." The lighting was "ten lamps, in all, in the sixty-foot tent. Every lamp was as clean and bright as a new silver dollar." The seating: "Every seat has a back to it." The speaker's stand: "The stand extends the whole length in front, but is only twenty inches high. It is covered with a marble oil-cloth, instead of the usual black one which looks so somber. Then the elder has a neat little box large enough for his Bible and lamp."

The hospitality of the town was noted by Haskell. One morning as he watched, a farmer brought six quarts of rich, fresh milk, and promised to deliver it regularly as long as the tent remained in Danvers: another farmer drove up with a "fine lot of potatoes." Soon came a load of nice green corn. This was followed by four pounds of sugar, a lot of berries, a mammoth loaf of the "most relishable home-made bread." Haskell concluded that "there was no danger of our brethren starving in this section, if this was a sample of the way they fare." In addition, the workers were often invited out to dinner.

When it was time for the meeting, each evening Professor Stone took his place at the organ. Mrs. Canright and Mrs. Lamson formed the welcoming committee. "I stood on an eminence," wrote Haskell, "and looked up and down the streets each way. There was just one continuous stream of people till the streets were lined. They came afoot, in single carriages, in double buggies, in farm wagons, in hacks, etc. . . . Officers were in attendance, and aided in seating the audience."

Conference President Haskell concluded by thanking God for the marvelous interest created in New England for hearing the Word of God.

The workers lived comfortably in one large family tent, divided into bedrooms and living room, "well furnished with carpet, chairs, table, and other conveniences." Behind it was a kitchen tent "with stove, cupboards, tables, etc., all of which give the company a very comfortable and cheerful appearance." (Ibid., Aug. 16, 1877.)

To Elder James White, Canright wrote a glowing report in which he made also reference to the coming New England camp meeting which was scheduled for late August at Groveland, Massachusetts, some 25 miles to the north:

Danvers, Mass., August 13,

1877

Dear Brother White: we have now been here just two weeks. We are astonished more and more every day at the tremendous interest we have here. We never saw the like of it anywhere before. Rome [New York] was not more than half as large an interest as this. Our audience has been during the last week from six hundred to one thousand, generally seven hundred. They come from everywhere, loads by loads, from all the surrounding villages. The whole country is stirred up. All the papers give grand notices, publish just what we write. The reporters are on our side. The whole country is stirred. I think we shall find openings here for all winter. . . .

We have a perfect ovation every day of food of every kind, and of flowers without measure.

. . . Well of course we are all glad. It will not do for me to leave such an interest as this for anything. We shall not take down our tent for our own camp meeting [at Groveland, August 22-28], but hold meetings right along and go up there in the daytime. . . .

We are all well and of good courage, and quite busy. We are much interested in the REVIEW from week to week, as that is the only medium through which we learn of the interests generally, as well as of yourself, etc. Your brother in Christ,

(Signed) D. M. Canright

The words "We are all well" were overly optimistic. In May, 1875, while Dudley and Lucretia were in Oakland, California, a son had been born to them. At the time he was writing from Danvers, Baby Fred and his sister Genevieve were both recovering from measles. Both had had a "a pretty sick time," said their mother. Whether the care of her children weakened Lucretia, or whether the arduous work at Danvers hastened a crisis, it was there, a month after this letter was written, that she suffered a lung hemorrhage, presaging the dreaded tuberculosis, which in a not-too-distant future was to terminate her life. (Ibid., Jan. 10, 1878; April 3, 1879.)

The Camp meeting at Groveland was also a great success. For a little conference, with less than a thousand members spread through four States, to draw at its camp meeting from 15,000 to 20,000 people for weekend services was most encouraging. James and Ellen White were present, and she reported that Sunday, August 26, "boats and trains poured their living freight upon the ground in thousands" (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 4, p. 79). When she reached the desk to address the crowd, she said, "A sea of heads was before me. The mammoth tent was full, and thousands stood outside, making a living wall several feet deep."-Ibid. All heard her speak as she addressed them for an hour on the subject of temperance. Then Monday evening she accompanied Elder Canright back to Danvers, where she was to speak in the evangelistic meeting that night. She addressed an attentive audience, which not only filled the tent but included two hundred who were standing outside.

The Danvers evangelistic series continued for ten weeks and on October 16 Elder Canright reported that between eighty and ninety were keeping the Sabbath and were growing stronger and firmer every week. Prayer meetings were being held in the homes of the people, and they were leaving off jewelry, tobacco, tea, et cetera. There was one sad note: "My wife's health has been very poor this fall. We fear the climate is bad for both of us; but we shall not give it up yet."-Review and Herald, Oct. 25, 1877. Land was bought in Danvers and construction for a new church was soon under way.

They hoped against hope that Mrs. Canright might regain her health, but Elder Canright was unable to make any encouraging report. The Review and Herald of January 10, 1878, carried the following word from Elder Canright: "As my wife has traveled with me extensively, and has many personal friends who are interested in her, it is proper they should know of her present illness.

"Over three months ago her lungs began to be affected-bleed some-and she had a bad cough and some fever. We hoped that rest and home treatment would soon restore her. But this has not been the case. She has several times gained considerable, but has again taken cold or in some way fallen back. At present she is very poorly, not able to sit up. She is at Sister Harris's, in South Lancaster, Mass. We ask the prayers of our brethren and sisters that God may help her and raise her up. She would be glad to hear from her friends by letter, though she is not able to answer them."

By mid-February, Dudley could clearly see that her condition was deteriorating. He took Lucretia to Battle Creek and placed her in the Sanitarium, under the care of Dr. John H. Kellogg, while he remained close by for a few weeks. He was drawn into various activities close to the heart of the work, serving on several committees. At a special session of the General Conference in early March, Elder Canright presented the Sabbath morning message, and two days later was elected president of the newly created Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath School Association, a responsibility he was to carry in addition to his other labors. In late March he journeyed to Iowa, which for a time was to be his assigned field of labor.

It had been five years since he had worked in Iowa, and he enjoyed renewing old friendships there. During one of his frequent visits to Battle Creek, he himself became a patient at the Sanitarium. He had preached too vigorously, and his voice had given out, bringing on an old difficulty, hoarseness and sore throat. The doctors put him through vigorous treatment, and he was soon well again.

At this time James White, himself not well, remembering the healing he had previously found in the Rockies, proposed another trip to Colorado. He proposed also that the Canrights go with him. There Lucretia might regain her health.

Both Lucretia and her husband concluded that it would be best for her to remain in Battle Creek, and Dr. Kellogg concurred in this decision. In a letter to Sister White she opened her heart: "I feel how hard it is to be as it were, shut away from the work by physical prostration. How much, oh, how much, to be done in saving souls! I have not felt, nor can I feel, to hinder Dudley this summer. . . . If I went to Colorado I should not know how to make myself comfortable, even if I should take help along with me."

With words of affection she closed the letter: "With very much love and gratitude to you both, my best friends, and wisest counselors. I am as ever, (Signed) Cretia."

While in Battle Creek, Elder White took a fatherly interest in Lucretia. He saw that she had an occasional ride in a comfortable carriage. "The poor child seems to be improving," he wrote, "but I don't see how it is possible for her to live long."-James White letter, June 27, 1878. Her two little children were placed under the care of the largehearted Martha Amadon, who had become a second mother to Lucretia when she was orphaned.

Come what may, she persistently and unselfishly refused to stand in the way of her husband's ministry. In the early summer of 1878 he attended camp meetings in Minnesota and Wisconsin. He was gratified in Wisconsin to observe that the governor, the State treasurer, and the town mayor all attended the Sunday meetings. He commented, "There is no good reason why the laborers should not have success if they walk with God and work hard."-Review and Herald, June 13, 1878.

Canright returned to Battle Creek suffering again from his old difficulty-hoarseness and throat trouble. He needed to be near Lucretia and he needed rest. James White failed to rally healthwise, and his future seemed uncertain.

Thoughts of becoming president of the General conference seem to have been much in Canright's mind. When Elder White persisted in his plan to journey to the Rocky Mountains for a two- or three-month retreat, it seemed hard for Canright to give up the idea of accompanying Elder White. Ellen White was to attend camp meeting through the summer, and it was decided that Canright would serve James White as male nurse and companion during his stay in Colorado. Of this, Elder White gave notice: "This evening, July 4, at eleven o'clock, Eld. Canright, our daughter Mary [W. C. White's youthful wife], and the writer leave for Colorado, to be followed in a few weeks by W. C. White. Providence permitting, we shall all return to the General Conference the first of October."-Ibid., July 11, 1878.

The Rocky Mountain weather was cool and bracing. Elder White took up hiking. He hoped to increase his hikes a mile each day until he could run up the mountains "like a deer." He also planned to swim in the icy, mountain lakes. They mixed writing with the recreation, and James White reported that "many times each day the voice of prayer echoes in these mountains" (ibid., July 25, 1878).

W. C. White, a close observer, who later joined the party in Colorado, in answer to an inquiry, some years later, wrote explaining what appeared to be Canright's motives for leaving his dying wife to accompany James White on the trip west. He said:

Elder Canright was in Battle Creek to be near his wife, who was dying with consumption. Suddenly he decided to go to Colorado with Father, for his health. And he went, contrary to the pleadings of the friends of his wife, and spent several weeks in the mountains near Black Hawk, with us.

At that time my father was President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. His associates on the Committee were S. N. Haskell and D. M.

Canright. Father's health was uncertain, and it was expected that one of these associates would be the next President.

My wife and I were surprised and shocked to observe the diligence and enthusiasm with which Mr. Canright improved every opportunity to exalt himself, and to discredit Eld. Haskell in my father's estimation. In the good providence of God my father's health improved, and he was re-elected, and there was no contest over the office of President.-W. C. White letter to E. W. Barr, July 27, 1920.

These facts were given, averred W. C. White, "that you may better understand the underlying motive for D. M. Canright's strange course of action" (Ibid.).

In early August word reached Canright and James White that Lucretia had suffered a relapse. By this time Mrs. White had arrived to be with her husband, and Canright left for Battle Creek. The Whites "parted with him the morning of the 12th, he to take the cars for Battle Creek, to be with his wife, who is reported to be rapidly failing." Elder White stated, "We parted with this dear brother with feeling of deep regret that he leaves us before our return, and yet we could not hold him a day from his faithful wife, who deserves his sympathy and care in her last hours. . . . We have now been together six weeks, and every day from the first our union has grown stronger and more dear. May the blessing of God go with him."-Review and Herald, Aug. 22, 1878.

Arriving at Battle Creek, Canright found his wife among friends, and more comfortable than he had expected. Soon she was again able to "ride out" two hours every morning and two hours in the evening. On the twenty-first of August the couple drove sadly out to Oak Hill Cemetery, and Lucretia showed Dudley the spot where she would like to be buried.

"Eld. James White and party arrived from Colorado Thursday night, the 26th" of September, in time for the General Conference session in Battle Creek. There, the constituency named to the nominating committee Elders J. N. Andrews, S. N. Haskell, and D. M. Canright. Perhaps it should be observed that the constituency seldom places on the nominating committee those whom they consider likely candidates for office. This committee on which both Canright and Haskell served nominated James White for re-election as president of the General Conference, and brought forward the names of James White, J. H. Kellogg and Sydney Brownsberger as nominees for the General Conference Executive Committee.

The records show that Elder Canright participated actively in almost every important discussion relating to the interests of the church. With the encouragement of Elder James White, he had been leading out in efforts to reorganize the plan of Systematic Benevolence^{[Note 2](#)} by calculating tithe on the basis of income rather than on the cumbersome plan previously in use-of freewill offerings and a tithe of 1 per cent a year on all property holdings. At this session of the General Conference the new plan was adopted. A number of Canright's Review and Herald articles of this period had to do with the tithe and the basis for ascertaining a proper tithe.

For some reason not apparent at present, the General Conference was to appoint a president for the Ohio Conference at this session. The State being nearby, the responsibility was placed on the shoulders of D. M. Canright. He could serve Ohio, and still at no time be far from his wife. He was often in Battle Creek and

by her side. These were sad days, and Canright did some serious thinking. On November 26 he wrote to Ellen White:

I started in very much behind in everything. When I was twenty-one I did not know anything and had nothing. I have had everything to learn since, and I have been very ambitious to know and to do something. . . .

Lucretia never was naturally a student. She is wholly a motherly, domestic woman, loves to stay at home and simply take care of her own household duties, and family, hence it has always been very hard for her to enter into my feelings and to really take an interest in my studies or work. I have no doubt that I did not realize how much stronger physically I was than she, how much more natural energy I possessed, than she. Hence I have made it pretty hard for her. Now as the children get older I see that I must take more time to converse with them and instruct them, and I mean to do it. . . .

I have tried to improve in speaking. I speak slower, more distinctly and with a deeper voice. I find I improve here more than I anticipated. . . .

I am very glad, Sister White, for the advice you give me from time to time, and I do try to profit by it; but you know how hard all habits are to break off; we need line upon line. I hope you will not get discouraged at the little improvement.-D. M. Canright letter, Nov. 26, 1878.

In view of Canright's later defection and statements he was to make concerning the unkind and cruel manner he and Lucretia were treated by Elder and Mrs. White, such a documented contemporary statement as this by Canright and those of Lucretia may be well worth pondering.

While in Ohio, Dudley received a mournful message from his courageous, self-sacrificing wife: "My hopes that returning health will ever be mine to enjoy have faded away in the distance. . . . I realize more and more that I am failing. . . . But all this does not frighten me, nor bring gloom upon my mind. The Lord blesses me with peace of mind which is not often disturbed by doubts or temptations. Then, too, I truly am grateful for the temporal blessings I enjoy. The only thing lacking is your presence, and this lack I can only consent to of because I know the need there is of your labors. If I can never be with you in your work again, I do not want to feel that I have hindered you, however much the natural feelings have to be sacrificed."-Review and Herald, Dec. 12, 1878.

Lucretia's last-known letter was dictated on February 25 from her hospital bed. She addressed her words to one of her closest friends-Ellen White. She expressed thankfulness for the messages of comfort and assurance Sister White had sent, and thanked her for the love and continued interest she had manifested during her year and a half of affliction. She wrote that the Lord had revealed Himself to her in love and mercy, and in His love she rested. In closing she called Elder and Mrs. White her "dearest friends."

A postscript written by her nurse stated:

She is very weak, but ever patient, uncomplaining, and even cheerful. Her room is a light place, and we feel God does care for her tenderly. Her husband has been here for several weeks. Your words were appreciated, I can assure you. She expresses much gratitude and affection for the kindness and interest you and Brother White have extended to her. With love and haste. (signed) Mary Martin.

-Lucretia C. Canright letter, Feb. 25, 1879

On Sabbath, March 29, near sunset, Lucretia Canright died, at the age of thirty-one. The Review reported: "The funeral was held in the tabernacle, March 31, at 3 p.m., a large congregation attending. . . . Bro. Canright, with his two little ones, will have the sympathy of his many friends in this bereavement."-April 3, 1879. Burial was at Oak Hill Cemetery, in the plot Lucretia herself had chosen. One of her last wishes had been that she might live to see her little family settled in a home of their own. Dudley had bought a house and lot in Battle Creek on Champion Street, and was preparing to move in when she died. Her desire was that Mary Martin, her nurse, live there as housekeeper and care for Genevieve, who was seven, and little four-year-old Fred. But she did not live to see her desire fulfilled. Sister Martin did move into the house and cared for the children. Mary White reported that "she is an excellent person to train children, she is so even in all her ways and yet so firm" (Letter, May 3, 1879).

1. See [Appendixes](#).[\[back to text\]](#)

1 The practice in early Seventh-day Adventist history of making regular contributions to the church in accordance with a predetermined plan. This was later superseded by the tithing system in present use.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER FIVE

Ups and Downs in the Battle

ON SUNDAY, April 20, 1879, the Battle Creek Tabernacle was dedicated. The young widower, Canright, had a part in the opening ceremonies along with such men as Uriah Smith, J. N. Andrews, and George I. Butler. James and Ellen White were not in Battle Creek at the time. Canright was now at the height of his influence. His pay equaled that of the president of the General Conference-\$12.00 per week. As president of the Ohio Conference he was serving in executive capacity. But he still found real satisfaction in holding meetings in new areas where the message had not been proclaimed. At heart, Canright was an evangelist.

In August the Ohio Conference at its annual constituency meeting held in connection with the camp meeting elected D. M. Canright president. But he continued with his evangelistic thrust. His responsibilities in Ohio did not prevent him from making forays into the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, which at his suggestion was divided and organized into two separate State conferences. (Review and Herald, Oct. 23, 1879.) Nor did they prevent him from holding meetings from time to time in Michigan.

As president of the Ohio Conference, Canright planned and executed a strong program. One who witnessed to this was Drury W. Reavis, a student of Battle Creek College, called by Canright to come to Ohio to carry on special Sabbath school promotion. Reavis, longtime employee of the Review and Herald publishing house, recalls in his book *I Remember* that as a president, Canright "was a fine general" (page 114, and stated: "I found Elder D. M. Canright, who was then regarded as one of our most efficient ministers, to be a most congenial man, fair, honest, ready to help everybody in every way possible. He was a wonderful help to me, and I shall always feel greatly indebted to him."-Ibid., p. 116.

"I felt highly honored by being selected by Elder Canright to do special Sabbath school work in Ohio. This appointment," declared Reavis, "proved to be the beginning of a very close, mutual, friendly association."

Reavis recalled that he was acquainted with the Canright family. Lucretia had been a close friend of some of his intimate friends.

Continuing, Reavis writes: "Elder Canright talked freely with me about everything in which he was interested, about his personal difficulties, about his past trials and sorrows, and of his future hopes and plans. He seemed to find consolation in going over these things with me. He evidently felt that while I sympathetically listened, I would not repeat. . . .

"The elder was remarkably bright, and grew rapidly from his humble beginning, through the blessing of God, and the power of the message he proclaimed with Heaven-bestowed ability. He was so greatly admired and openly praised by our workers and the laity, that he finally reached the conclusion he had inherent ability-that the message he was proclaiming was a hindrance to him rather than the exclusive source of his power."-Ibid., p. 117.

Then Reavis recounted a significant incident that occurred in the summer of 1880. Canright had continued his administrative ministry in Ohio apparently with a steady purpose. But, as he confided in a published statement later, in the summer of 1879 he met with almost insurmountable personal trials. (*Review and Herald*, Sept. 13, 1881.)

One problem he had to contend with about this time was his throat. On May 4, 1880, he wrote of this and his plans to Ellen G. White:

You know the difficulty I have had in my throat, and with my voice, on account of bad habits of speaking. From the little instruction I have had since last fall, in Elocution, I believe I can get over that and learn to speak properly and easily. If not, it is certain I will have to abandon speaking sooner or later. I have the opportunity of giving my whole attention to it this summer. Brother Miller from the College is to be with me several weeks in O [hio] and teach me and others in this line.

Then in the middle of the summer I propose to spend a few weeks with Hamill in Chicago. The way is open for me to do this now, and if I lose this chance I may never get it again. I feel as though it was about life or death with me. As you know the importance of this better than I do, I think you will sympathize with me, and agree that I ought to take this chance to improve in speaking if I can.-D. M. Canright letter to Ellen G. White, May 4, 1880.

This Canright did. The late summer found him in Chicago studying elocution at Hamill's school. Reavis says:

During the summer and fall of 1880, immediately after graduation, I, with other students from Battle Creek College, attended Professor Hamill's School of Oratory in Chicago. Elder Canright, inoculated, at heart, with a belief that through a thorough study in, and mastery of, expression he could accomplish his consuming desire to be a popular public speaker [while still president of the Ohio conference], joined us; and because of my former pleasant association with him, I became his critic as he lectured, upon invitation, through the influence of the School of Oratory, in many of the largest popular churches in Chicago during the summer vacation of the pastors of these churches. In these lectures he applied the oratorical principles taught in the school, and needed a critic versed in these principles, to follow him in his lectures and later point out his misapplications, and of course to compliment him on all that were rightly applied. He had more invitations than he could possibly accept; so he selected the largest and most popular churches.

One Sunday night, in the largest church of the West Side, he spoke on "The Saint's Inheritance" to more than 3,000 people, and I took a seat in the gallery directly in front of him, to see every gesture and to hear every tone, form of voice, emphasis, stress, and pitch, and all the rest. But that was as far as I got in my part of the service, for he so quickly and eloquently launched into this, his favorite theme, that I, with the entire congregation, became entirely absorbed in the Biblical facts he was so convincingly presenting. I never thought of anything else until he had finished.

After the benediction I could not get to him for more than half an hour, because of the many people crowding around him, complimenting and thanking him for his masterly discourse. On all sides I could hear people saying it was the most wonderful sermon they had ever heard. I knew it was not the oratorical manner of the delivery, but the Bible truth clearly and feelingly presented, that had appealed to the people—it was the power in that timely message. It made a deep, lasting impression upon my mind. I saw that the power was all in the truth, and not in the speaker.

After a long time we were alone, and we went into a beautiful city park just across the street, which was almost deserted because of the late hour of the night, and sat down to talk the occasion over and for me to deliver my criticisms. But I had none for the elder. I frankly confessed that I became so completely carried away with that soul-inspiring Biblical subject I did not think once of the oratorical rules he was applying in its presentation. Then we sat in silence for some time. Suddenly the elder sprang to his feet and said, "D. W., I believe I could become a great man were it not for our unpopular message."

I made no immediate reply, for I was shocked to hear a great preacher make such a statement; to think of the message, for which I had given up the world, in the estimation of its leading minister, being inferior to, and in the way of, the progress of men, was almost paralyzing. Then I got up and stepped in front of the elder and said with much feeling, "D. M., the message made you all you are, and the day you leave it, you will retrace your steps back to where it found you."

But in his mind the die was evidently cast. The decision had doubtless been secretly made in his mind for some time, but had not before been expressed in words. From that night the elder was not quite the same toward our people and the work at large.-I Remember pp. 118, 119.

Reavis then makes reference to Canright's later defection and presents some of his personal observations:

"His estrangement began and developed through harboring that greatest seductive thing that finds its way into some human hearts, which I name an abnormal desire to be great, not great in the true meaning of the word, but great only in the estimation of people-to be popular."-Ibid., p. 117.

"The feeling that being an Adventist was his principal hindrance increasing as time passed, he finally reached the conclusion that he could achieve his goal of fame through denouncing the unpopular doctrines of the denomination, and he finally worked himself out of the denomination."-Ibid., p. 119.

Canright's thirst for popularity was so strong that at that time, it seems, he began to cast about for ways to achieve his ambition now audibly disclosed to a close friend. He went to the Ohio camp meeting in late September fully intending to close up his work there and to decline any invitation, should it be extended, to continue as president of the conference. And indeed he did, but as the matter was pressed upon him he consented "to act as President with the privilege of being absent from the conference a share of the time." The report is that "he was unanimously elected" (Review and Herald, Sept. 30, 1880). He was soon, very soon, to resign this post of duty. George I. Butler reports, "In October of 1880, he had another backset. He became discouraged-we never knew from what special cause-and ceased to preach." (Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887.) He began to lecture on elocution.

Reavis locked in his heart the experience he had with Canright that summer. But the Lord who reads the hearts of all men opened up to Ellen G. White the basis of Elder Canright's weakness and lack of stability. On October 15, she wrote to him: I was made sad to hear of your decision, but I have had reason to expect it. .

.. Satan is full of exultant joy that you have stepped from beneath the banner of Jesus Christ, and stand under his banner. He sees in you one he can make a valuable agent to build up his kingdom. You are taking the very course I expected you would take if you yielded to temptation.

You have ever had a desire for power, for popularity, and this is one of the reasons for your present position. But I beg of you to keep your doubts, your questionings, your skepticism to yourself. The people have given you credit for more strength of purpose and stability of character than you possessed. They thought you were a strong man; and when you breathe out your dark thoughts and feelings, Satan stands ready to make these thoughts and feelings so intensely powerful in their deceptive character, that many souls will be deceived and lost through the influence of one soul who chose darkness rather than light, and presumptuously placed himself on Satan's side, in the ranks of the enemy.

You have wanted to be too much, and make a show and noise in the work, and as the result your sun will surely set in obscurity. [underlining supplied] Every day

you are meeting with an eternal loss. The schoolboy who plays truant thinks he is cheating his parent and his teacher; but who is meeting with the greatest loss? Is it not himself? Is he not cheating and deceiving himself, robbing himself of the knowledge he might have? God would have us become efficient in copying the example of Christ in good works; but you are playing truant, you are nursing a feeling which will sting and poison your soul to its own ruin, playing truant upon important eternal things, robbing your soul of the richness, the knowledge of the fullness of Christ. Your ambition has soared so high, it will accept of nothing short of elevation of self. You do not know yourself. What you have always needed was a humble, contrite heart. . . .

God has chosen you for a great and solemn work. He has been seeking to discipline, to test, to prove you, to refine and ennoble you, that this sacred work may be done with a single eye [sic] to His glory which belongs wholly to God. What a thought that God chooses a man and brings him into close connection with himself, and gives him a mission to undertake, a work to do, for Him. A weak man is made strong, a timid man is made brave, the irresolute becomes a man of firm and quick decision. What! is it possible that man is of so much consequence as to receive a commission from the King of Kings! Shall worldly ambition allure from the sacred trust, the holy commission?

The Majesty of heaven came to our world to give to man an example of a pure and spotless life, and to sacrifice Himself to the joy of saving the perishing. Whoever follows Christ is a colaborer with him, sharing with him the divine work of saving souls. If you have a thought of being released from it because you see some prospect of forming an alliance with the world which shall bring yourself to greater notice, it is because you forget how great and noble it is to do anything for God, how exalted a position it is to be a colaborer with Jesus Christ, a light bearer to the world, shedding light and love upon the pathway of others.

You will have a great conflict with the power of evil in your own heart. You have felt that there was a higher work for you, but, oh, if you would only take up the work lying directly in your path, and do it with fidelity, not seeking in any way to exalt self, then peace and joy would come to your soul, purer, richer, and more satisfying than the conquerors earthly warfare. To live and work for God and make the best use we can of all our time and faculties, is to grow in grace and knowledge. This we can do, because it is our work. You must needs put away your questioning doubts, and have full faith in the reality of your divine mission, to be indeed successful in labor.-Published in Selected Messages, book 2, pp. 162-168.

Her letter closed with these earnest words:

I now appeal to you to make back tracks as fast as possible; take up your God-given mission, and seek for purity and holiness to sanctify that mission. Make no delay; halt not between two opinions. If the Lord be God, serve Him; but if Baal, serve him. You have the old lesson of trust in God to learn anew in the hard school of suffering. Let D. M. Canright be swallowed up in Jesus. . . .

Now, Elder Canright, for your soul's sake grasp firmly again the hand of God, I beseech you. I am too weary to write more. God deliver you from Satan's snare is my prayer.-Ibid.

As Elder G. I. Butler writes of this experience he reports of Canright that "when he gave up preaching he began to lecture on elocution, and traveled considerably in Wisconsin and Michigan, holding classes. He told me himself that for a time he then ceased to observe the Sabbath. . . . He thought then quite seriously of preaching for the Methodists. . . . But the Elder's conscience troubled him greatly at times. He wrote me, desiring to see me and have a long talk. We met in Battle Creek the following January, and had some fifteen hours' conversation."-Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887.

Canright's version appears in an article of his entitled, "Danger of Giving Way to Discouragement and Doubts," published in the Review and Herald of September 13, 1881. He confessed:

About a year ago I became wholly discouraged. It seemed to me that my work amounted to nothing, and that I might as well give up. . . .

I passed four months in this way. I looked in every direction to see if there was not some mistake in our doctrine, or if I could not go some other way. But I could not see why, according the Bible, the great pillars of our faith were not sound. . . . I found that my faith in the Advent doctrine was so strong that I could never believe anything else; so I gave up trying to. . . .

So. . . . I came to Battle Creek . . . and freely talked over with Eld. Butler, Bro. and Sr. White, and others, my difficulties and trials. They did all they could, and all I could ask, to assist me. . . .

As I took hold again to labor, and tried to look on the side of courage and faith in the work, I found my difficulties disappearing, and my former interest and confidence in the message reviving, till now I feel clear and settled in the work again. .

If the Bible does not plainly and abundantly teach the doctrines of the third angel's message, then I despair of ever knowing what it does teach. . . . I have not further doubt as to my duty and the work of my life. As for years in the past, so in the future, all that I am and have shall be thrown unreservedly into this work. . . . I humbly trust in the grace of God to help me keep this resolution.

Elder White was pleased to report in a letter to his wife, written from New York City on February 4, 1881, that "Elder Canright is doing splendid in getting on the track." He had taken Canright with him on a short itinerary to New York State. As White reported this he states: "I am glad to report him on better ground than ever before. Poor C[anright] has been crowded too hard, but God is rescuing him."-James White letter, Feb. 17, 1881

During the preceding fall months, while lecturing on elocution in Michigan, Elder Canright met Miss Lucy Hadden, of Otsego. Their friendship developed into love, then to a marriage proposal. In early April, 1881, with Canright back in the ministry, the two visited Elder and Mrs. White. "She is a girl highly thought of and intelligent, . . ." wrote Ellen White, "not perhaps devotional." Lucy was indeed intelligent-she was skilled musically and had taught school. Her mother had long been a Sabbathkeeper, but her father made no profession of religion. There would never be the closeness between Lucy and Mrs. White that had existed between Lucretia and her.

The Canright marriage was the last to be recorded in James White's handwritten record book. He performed the ceremony on April 24, 1881. Dudley Canright was forty, Lucy twenty-five years of age.

On May 17 the bride wrote the following letter of appreciation:

Dear Brother White:

. . . I feel desirous of tendering you my sincere thanks for your kindness to me while in B[attle] C[reek], and I will try and not take too much of your time in doing so.

[I] shall always remember with pleasure our visit at your romantic home, and also the fine ride to the city you and I took together. I used to be somewhat afraid of Bro. White, but since our wedding and especially that ride, instead of feeling that way, you seem almost like my father. Indeed, [I] shall love you for making our wedding go off so pleasantly.

Dudley and I often speak of it and wonder if there ever was a nicer wedding; of course we think not.

Sometime, and we hope before very long to have the pleasure of entertaining you and Sr. White in our home. . . . We hope to make it a home in every sense of the word. I feel that the beauty of our home will be the children. I hope I may wait patiently for the time to come when we will be all together. . . .

Dudley will attend the camp meeting at Spring Arbor, and the one at Allegan. I should be more than pleased to accompany him, especially to A[llegan]; but we wish to attend the meeting at Alma, and they want Dudley to dedicate the church at St. Louis; so we feel I had better remain near here while he goes. But if I could be of any service by going, would try and go.

The friends in Lake View express a strong desire to see Bro. and Sr. White. I think it would do them good to have you come here. Remember me to Sr. White. I hope she is gaining all the time.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) Lucy H. Canright

Genevieve and Fred found in Lucy a second mother. This marriage seemed for a time to aid in stabilizing Dudley's personal faith. Just three months after the wedding, writing from Carson City, Michigan, he made the following promise:

Dear Brother White:

. . . You can set your mind at rest about my making you or the cause any trouble. When I cannot labor in perfect harmony with my brethren and our doctrines I will quit and give you due notice of it. If there is anything I don't see or understand as the body of our people do, no one shall know it only by my silence about it.

-D. M. Canright letter to James White, July 15, 1881.

On August 6, 1881, Elder James White died. Canright wrote to his widow:

I know how close this blow must come to you, but I believe that your faith in God together with your good judgment will sustain you so that you will not sink down under it as some do. In the notice of the funeral I was glad to see your hopeful words and determination to go right on with your work. You will have the prayers of twenty thousand people to sustain you.

At both camp meetings all speak of Brother White with the greatest tenderness and mourn his death as a personal loss. I am very glad now that I had the

privilege of being with him so much the last few months. All the feeling of trial which I have felt toward him were entirely removed. No one could have been more kind and fatherly toward me than he was. We had many very free talks together about our mutual trials and mistakes. I think I never saw Brother White so tender and patient as he was these last few months of his life. I shall always remember this with pleasure. It seems now to me that the Lord was preparing him for what has come. Notwithstanding all the trials I have had with him as you know, I shall remember him with tenderness and kindness. I have confidence that his purpose was to do right. I cannot yet bring myself to realize that he is really gone. It leaves a vacancy which no one else can ever fill.

As I take hold and labor with our people I find my interest in the work growing stronger and my difficulties disappearing. . . I have no other thought than to put all my energies in the work just as I formerly did. You can rely upon it that there is just where you will always find me. . .

Lucy is with me and joins in sending you our sympathy and kindest feelings of regard.-D. M. Canright letter, Aug. 22, 1881. (Italics and underlining supplied.)

Readers of the Review and Herald read Canright's eulogy of his old friend:

"During the last few months of his life I was with him about eight weeks. . . .

Previous to this time, for a short period, there had been some difference between us; but he met me in the most friendly and cordial manner, and did all any person possibly could to help me. Where he thought he had made mistakes, he acknowledged it frankly, and most cheerfully forgave what I had done to grieve him; and I must say that I have never found any person more ready to do both these things than Br. White. In our travels together, he often mentioned the mistakes he thought he had made in his life. As we prayed along together, he would weep over them, and plead for grace to be a true Christian man. . . . Several times I saw him tried in a manner to test the patience and good grace of the mildest man. I was exceedingly pleased to see him bear it with the greatest kindness and patience."-Review and Herald, Aug. 30, 1881.

A month after Elder White's death, Elder Canright wrote the article "Danger of Giving Way to Discouragement and Doubts" mentioned earlier. In it he confessed:

One who has not experienced it, can have little idea how rapidly discouragement and doubts will grow upon a person, when once they are given way to. In a short time, everything seems to put on a different color.

Twenty-two years ago I embraced the Seventh-day Adventist faith. I received it as a whole, with unbounded confidence and enthusiasm. It was like a new revelation to me, and it filled my heart with rejoicing. Five years later, I began preaching it. . . .

Of course I regret now that I gave way to discouragements and doubt but I think I have learned a lesson by it which I shall not need to learn again as long as I live.-Ibid., Sept. 13, 1881. (Italics supplied.)

CHAPTER SIX

"If I Ever Go Back"

DUDLEY M. CANRIGHT apparently had not learned the lesson he thought he had mastered. After a few months he again lapsed into doubt and darkness. In the fall of 1882 he gave up preaching and went to farming in Otsego, Michigan. For two years he tilled the soil. In a letter to a friend he wrote that he was busy and hard at work, doing what he loved to do "the best of anything." He declared that he had no intention of ever again engaging in ministerial work. He clearly stated that his reason for abandoning his ministry was his impaired confidence in the work of Ellen G. White. "I am thoroughly satisfied that the visions are not from God, but are wholly the fruit of her own imagination."

"But," he continued, "you can not separate her visions and work from the third message as held by our people."

He expressed high regard for "Elder Butler and all the other leading men. . . . I have no feelings against any of them, excepting Mrs. White. I dislike her very much indeed. . . . But they are good men for all that, and I never shall willingly oppose them. I am a member of the church still and do all I can to help it. But if I were situated differently, I would just as soon join some other church."-D. M. Canright letter, Dec. 8, 1883. (Italics supplied.)

The expression "our people" was one that, as will be seen, Canright would never be able to drop, even after years spent in active opposition to Seventh-day Adventists.

This time, Canright's lapse was a serious one. Elder Butler commented that "so notorious was his apostasy at the time, that without doubt the church stood where a little encouragement would have led them to withdraw the hand of fellowship from him. But some of us who felt a pity for him, knowing his weakness, counseled delay, and commenced to labor earnestly to help him."-Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887, p. 3.

In response to the pleading of his friends, Canright attended a camp meeting at Jackson, Michigan, in September, 1884. After much prayer and counsel, with explanation of some matters he had viewed in an exaggerated light, he once again publicly took his stand with Seventh-day Adventists. A thousand people, many with tears in their eyes, heard his heartfelt confession. He spoke of the clouds of darkness that had enveloped his mind; but now, he declared, all was clear to him.

He confessed freely that for years he had harbored in his heart bitter feelings toward Mrs. White because of the testimonies he had received from her. Then in the company of a select few he confessed this all to her and begged her forgiveness.

"You then humbled your heart," wrote Ellen White to Canright of this experience, "and upon your knees asked me to forgive you for the things you had said about me and my work." And she reports, "I freely forgave you, for it was not against me. None of these things were against me: I was only a servant bearing the message God gave me."-Testimonies for the church, Vol. 5, p. 623.

He seemed like a changed man as he went forth to work once more. All rejoiced that Elder Canright was again in the gospel field, preaching with power the message of the Sabbath and the soon return of Jesus.

In the Review and Herald he published an explanation. His problem, he stated, went back some eleven years to the time he and Lucretia had received a testimony from Sister White, and they had thought it too severe. This was in connection with their Colorado visit in 1873. Then, in 1879, he had received another testimony. Again, he had been in Colorado with Elder White. Again he had rejected the rebuke. But finding no comfort away from his lifework, he started preaching "practical truths largely." This had satisfied no one, so he gave up and bought a farm.

Then came that Michigan camp meeting. With Elder Butler's encouragement, Canright re-examined those testimonies of reproof and rebuke. He saw that he "had put a wrong meaning on some things, and that other things were certainly true." Light came, and "for the first time in years," he admitted, "I could truly say that I believed the testimonies. All my hard feelings toward Sister White vanished in a moment, and I felt a tender love towards her. Everything looked different."

Canright confessed to a hasty, harsh spirit in his work and went on to say:

I think that my disbelief of the testimonies and other truths has come by opening my heart to doubts, cherishing them and magnifying them. . . .

Like Peter, I did not know myself till God left me to be tried. I feel greatly humbled under the shameful failure I have made. . . .

Friday, Sept. 26, while on the camp-ground at Jackson, Mich., I felt in my heart the most remarkable change that I ever experienced in all my life. It was a complete reversion of all my feelings. Light and faith came into my soul, and I felt that God had given me another heart. I never felt such a change before, not even when first converted, nor when I embraced the message, nor at any other time. . . . I want to say to all my friends everywhere, that now I not only accept, but believe the testimonies to be from God. Knowing the opposition I have felt to them, this change in my feelings is more amazing to myself than it can be to others. . . .

I am fully satisfied that my own salvation and my usefulness in saving others depends upon my being connected with this people and this work. And here I take my stand to risk all I am, or have, or hope for, in this life and the life to come, with this people and this work.-Review and Herald, Oct. 7, 1884. [bold supplied]

W. A. Spicer, a young Adventist stenographic secretary in one of the Battle Creek institutions who "ran down for the weekend to attend" that 1884 Jackson camp meeting, saw and described Canright's dramatic reconversion. Spicer states that Canright read a testimony from Sister White that he said he had rejected eleven years before: "I did not believe it when I read it eleven years ago," he told us, holding it up before the congregation. 'But I have lived to see every word of it fulfilled.' "He came back into the work. But for me," Spicer continued, "that camp meeting brought a coming 'into the work' also. . . . At the Jackson meeting somebody's preaching sent the conviction into my heart that going only halfway

into this thing meant losing eternal life. I surrendered anew to Christ and this message. Then everything was new to me. I went back to the headquarters 'in the work.' I was in this movement heart and soul and all."-Ibid., Nov. 17, 1949.

Thus the reconversion of one man had its influence in the life decision of a younger man, one who became a completely dedicated, faithful worker for God and a church leader.

The General Conference session was called for the first three weeks of November at Battle Creek. Canright attended. With the close of the conference Thursday, November 20, 1884, general meetings were announced for Otsego, Michigan, to begin Friday evening and run through Monday. Ellen White journeyed the thirty miles to Otsego on Friday and arrived as the church bell was ringing calling the people to worship. Of this series of meetings Ellen White wrote:

"The brethren and sisters had come together from different churches, and the house of worship was crowded. The gallery was full, seats were placed in the aisles, and quite a number could obtain no seats. My own soul was strengthened and refreshed in dwelling upon the gracious promises of God. In watering others, my own soul was watered."-Ibid., Dec. 2, 1884

As the meeting progressed, all eyes were on Elder Canright. In her report she continued, "How my heart rejoiced to see Bro. Canright all interest, heart and soul in the work, as he used to be years in the past! I could but exclaim, What hath the Lord wrought!"-Ibid.

Elder Canright was the speaker for the meeting the evening after the Sabbath. His discourse was impressive.

But it was on Sunday morning, when he recounted his past experience, that the people gave their most earnest attention. Elder E. P. Daniels, who took down the discourse in shorthand, recorded what he said. We give this in part:

I have had a great desire to come back here and labor; but the General Conference has thought best that I should labor in other States for a time. If I do that, I shall not therefore be here very much; and I feel it a great disappointment. Of course, the brethren here know more or less of my relation to the cause during the past twenty-five years. Having been a preacher among our people, most of our brethren know me in some way, in almost every State in the Union, from Maine to California.

It seems to me . . . that my whole soul is now bound up in this present truth. I have told my brethren that if the world were before me, the truth is so clear that I know I could make them see it. I have also said that I do not believe any man takes as much pleasure in worldly pursuits as I do in this.

I have tried to analyze my feelings, and I have reached some conclusions. Sometimes an individual gets started on a wrong train of reasoning, and he sees it when he is far away. Then he finds it hard to get back again. This was my case, exactly. I did not see as the brethren did, and so I concluded I would leave the work for the time being. So I went to farming. I have tried to keep my trials to myself; that I think you all know. I have not seen a day when I did not love my brethren.

The most painful thing I had to think of was that my course had been a stone of stumbling to others, and that I had perhaps caused some one to be lost. I have

great charity for brethren who are in trouble. I myself wanted to know what was right; and they may say, Why did you not do right? I am satisfied that man's wisdom is not always reliable. He must have the Spirit of God to guide him, or he will go wrong.

` Now I want to say that I have been changed right around in my feelings and convictions. I do not say I am fully satisfied in everything; but I believe the truth as I used to believe it. . . .

There is a point that has bothered me a little, and I want to speak of it. In the twenty-five years I have been with our people, I have traveled from Maine to California, and I have never known one man who has drawn back and begun to harbor doubts who did not begin to separate from God. I have never known one who through such a course has become more spiritual or more anxious to do something to save his fellow men. I have never known one man to do that, and I do not believe I ever shall. When I left off preaching, I vowed to myself and to my God, that I would go right along laboring as I had done, be faithful in the church, and do my duty every time. Well, brethren, after I had gone that way for a time, I found that I had lost my hold upon God. I lost my spirituality. Now there must be something wrong about such a course; for if it is right it seems to me that a man would certainly prosper in that way. . . .

Brethren, I will say this: So far as I am concerned, I will start right here; and all that I have, all that I am, I will put into this work, and take my risk of everything. I will never do this backing up any more; and I believe that if I ever go back from this I am lost. All I have I will give to this cause. I believe there is the wickedest of men saved by it; and may God help us to triumph with it when Jesus comes.- Ibid. (Bold italics supplied.)

During the meetings at Otsego, Mrs. White was entertained in the Canright home. She wrote:

We were made very welcome at their pleasant and comfortable home, which is conveniently furnished, yet with simplicity. It is indeed a home. All was done that could be done for our ease and comfort. We were continually grateful to God that we felt indeed at home, and that Bro. Canright had met with so great a change in his feelings, that he had been transformed by the sanctifying grace of Christ, and that peace, and hope, and faith in present truth were again cherished in his heart.

My heart was filled with joy as I looked upon his wife and his children, and thought, These will follow Eld. Canright in the path of light, and peace, and faith. While he shall go forth from his family to his labors, responsibilities must rest heavily upon his companion, to educate and discipline and mold the characters of the dear ones in her charge. . . .

I felt that peace rested in the plain but comfortable home of Bro. and Sr. Canright. I could but make melody to God in my heart every moment as I considered the work that had been wrought so wonderfully in this case. Eld. Canright saved to the cause! His precious family led into ways of truth and righteousness! I said in my heart, as I looked upon them, Saved, saved from ruin! If there is joy in the presence of the angels in heaven, why should there not

be joy in our hearts? I do rejoice, I do praise the Lord, that mine eyes have seen his salvation.-Ibid.

Reports of progress in the Review and Herald sounded like old times, Elders Butler and Canright were in the field working together once again. The two men held general meetings in Pennsylvania, in Minnesota, and in Iowa, where Canright doubtless met many of his own converts from the years he had labored there. (Ibid., Jan. 6, 1885.)

He seemed unable to restrain a constant flow of expressions of joy and renewed faith. In this same Review he wrote: "I have just returned home from attending four general meetings, in Pennsylvania, New York, Minnesota, and Iowa. . . .

"God has blessed me greatly. While I have carefully read the first, second, and third volumes of 'Spirit of Prophecy,' [Note 1](#) heaven has seemed very near to me. If the Spirit of God does not speak to us in these writings, then I should despair of ever discerning it. . . . God is

good, and the sweetest thing on this earth is to love and serve him."

That winter the Canrights experienced deep grief. Their fourteen-month-old son, George, died on February 24 at Otsego, Michigan. The father had gone to meet preaching appointments in New England, leaving a well and happy baby. He returned to find little George dead. He sat down and wrote a brokenhearted, questioning letter to Ellen G. White:

We have met with a great affliction to us. Our dear little baby boy is dead. You will remember him. He was 14 months old the day before he died. We always supposed he was well and strong. He was so good and playful and all that we could desire. The children loved him and grandfather's family loved him almost as much as we did. It seemed as though we needed him to unite all our hearts together.

Lucy cheerfully and trustingly let me go away off to New England to be gone several months. Two weeks ago he was taken sick. After waiting one week, she telegraphed me to come. I still waited five days, hoping he would be better. I got home to find him dead. It seems as though it could not be so, that we can not have it so, and yet it is so. Poor Lucy, it almost kills her and my own heart feels as though it would break.

I can not see why this should come upon us. To others it does not seem to be any great matter no doubt; but to us it has taken the joy and light out of our home. I don't know what to think about it. "Does the Lord really over-rule all such things, or do they only happen so? We fasted and prayed earnestly hoping that God would hear us and spare our child. But he died. Was it then really the will of God that it should be so? Does it mean that it was for the best? Have you any light about such things? Is it sure and certain that such little babes will be saved in the kingdom? I can not believe that all the babes who die in all the world will be saved. Will it then be those of the righteous only? Does his salvation depend upon our being righteous? The Bible says but little about children, yet enough to give me hope. Have you any light on this point? I wish you would tell us if you have any. I remember that you lost a babe once.

My confidence in the message and all parts of our faith has grown much faster and stronger than I expected it would. God has blessed me in preaching and

laboring. I have felt very different from what I ever did before. I am sure that my heart was thoroughly converted to God this time. I have a feeling of sadness and depression which I wish I could get over. I don't feel as hopeful and as ambitious as I used to. The joy and love of life some way have dropped out. So far as I am personally concerned, aside from my family, I had as soon die as live. I don't want to feel that way. I hope I may feel better and more hopeful sometime. I feel that I have made so many mistakes and been so far from what I ought to be, that I have but little courage for the future. But I shall leave no effort unmade to serve God here and secure eternal life hereafter.

I have read vols. 1-4 of Spirit of Prophecy and also Paul's Life [Sketches From the Life of Paul]. They have been a great blessing to me. I wish now that I could have the privilege of being with you a while. I think I should prize it more than I used to. I really never got down to the bottom of things to understand the nature of God's work as I do now. It has cleared up many things to me so that I shall not be as easily troubled over difficulties as in the past.

Hope I may see you at our camp meetings next summer. We are quite well, but much worn with watching and anxiety. Elder Butler attends the funeral tomorrow. A very sad house we have tonight, so different from when you were here. Wish you could write a few lines to Lucy.

Hope God may bless you..

In hope,

(Signed) D. M. Canright

-Letter file 1884 & 1885.

Ellen White was at her Healdsburg home in California when she received this letter, and her handwritten reply must have been sent without taking time to make a copy for her files. None is on record. Her sympathetic reply would have been most interesting and helpful.

To other parents who passed through similar experiences and were troubled with like questions, Ellen White wrote:

You inquire in regard to your little one being saved. Christ's words are your answer: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Remember the prophecy, "Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted. . . . Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to thine own border."

This promise is yours. You may be comforted and trust in the Lord. The Lord has often instructed me that many little ones are to be laid away before the time of trouble. We shall see our children again. We shall meet them and know them in the heavenly courts. Put your trust in the Lord, and be not afraid.-E. G. White letter 196, 1899. [Published in Child Guidance, pp. 565, 566.]

1 Ellen G. White's volumes presenting the conflict between the power of righteousness and the

power of evil in the age long conflict beginning with the fall of Lucifer and the fall of man, available in facsimile reprints from this publisher. Patriarchs and Prophets (1890) & The Desire of Ages replaced these earlier volumes.[[back to text](#)]

CHAPTER SEVEN

Closing Years in Adventist Ministry

WHILE LABORING in New England early in 1885 Elder Canright attended a Salvation Army meeting in a Boston theater. In an article in the Review of February 24, 1885, he expressed strong disapproval of the "jocular, light, and trifling way which was painful to hear." He felt that the meetings lacked solemnity and twice in his article referred to the fact that "not a tear was shed, not a particle of emotion was shown by one of them." The apostle Paul, said Canright, had labored with tears, "both publicly and from house to house." "Bunyan's 'slough of despond' has been filled up. No one falls into it any more. They are converted with a song, saved in a minute, have perfect peace in an hour, and are on the stand as preachers the next night!" Continuing he declared: I have attended the meeting of Mr. Moody, Mr. Hammond, Mrs. Van Cott, and other prominent revivalists. While Mr. Moody's are much above any of the others, yet in them all there is a lack of that deep, solemn contrition for sin, that used to be. There is a feeling that it is an easy, short work to "come to Jesus, and be saved." Much singing, few prayers, and short anecdotes with more or less witty hits and merriment, are largely the means used. . . . The more I see of it, the more I search the Scriptures, the deeper experience I have in my own heart, the more I am convinced that it is largely a surface work which will not stand the awful test of the Judgment.

After a careful investigation of other religious systems, Canright had satisfied himself that the church of which he was a member was the one that would stand the "awful test of the Judgment."

Through the year 1885 and the early months of 1886, nearly every number of the Review carried an article from the pen of D. M. Canright. In a double-column article in the issue of March 24, 1885, he nailed down strongly the indisputable fact of the seventh-day Sabbath and testified as to his faith in it: "The Bible nowhere says," he wrote, "that the first day of the week commemorates the resurrection of Christ; in fact, it is totally silent about any change of the Sabbath whatever."

In the closing paragraph of one entitled "Prepare Ye The Way of the Lord," he expressed his confidence in the near return of Jesus:

"The population of the United States, to a greater degree than that of any other country, is composed of people from every nation. Anything learned here is immediately communicated to the nations whence they came. How fitting, then, that in this nation and at this time should arise the proclamation of the second advent of God's Son to the earth! Everything is favorable; the way is prepared in a marvelous manner to warn the whole world thoroughly and yet briefly. Surely the hand of the Lord is in all this. Happy are those who understand and work in harmony with the providence of God."-Ibid., May 19, 1885.

In one article by Canright entitled "Look at Facts" after enumerating all aspects of the spectacular growth of the Adventist church, both in America and overseas, he asks in conclusion: "Who but a veritable doubting Thomas can find ground for discouragement?"

"Really, it seems as though we could almost begin to see Beulah land. If any do not see it near, it is because they are either asleep or are looking the wrong way. Courage, brethren, a few more struggles and the battle will be over!"-Ibid., Feb. 9, 1886

Perhaps Canright's best remembered article of this period appeared in the issue of February 10, 1885, under the title "To Those in Doubting Castle."[Note 1](#)

Drawing a lesson from those shut up in Doubting Castle of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, he recounts his own experience and gives counsel, which he hopes will help some and warn others who may face some of the same problems. He wrote:

Twenty-five years ago I embraced this message. The complete system of truth which it presented seemed to me something wonderful and very glorious. The study of the Bible was a continual feast to me. To preach it to others, and see them embrace it, filled my heart with gladness and peace. But at length things came up which threw me into doubt on some points, and finally were the occasion of my ceasing to preach the message. As the same things have affected others more or less, and will be liable to affect still others in the future, I wish to give a few of the reasons why I still think that the work is all right, that the Lord is in it, and that these doubts are not well founded. . . .

It is the accepted rule in all the affairs of this life to decide the questions, even where life or death is at stake, by the balance, or preponderance of evidence. The existence of God, the inspiration of the Bible, the truth of Christianity, etc., are accepted and firmly believed upon these grounds. I firmly believe that the truth of our message can be just as clearly proved in the same manner. It is by ignoring this rule of evidence that men become skeptical concerning God, the Holy Scriptures, and all religious faith. In just the same way some of our people come to be doubters concerning our message, the testimonies, etc. They let a few light objections on one side outweigh a mountain of truth on the other.

After drawing lessons from Bible history Canright turned to the Seventh-day Adventist church and came at once to the point that had been a stumbling block to him- Ellen G. White and the testimonies. He drives in stake after stake as he enumerates incontrovertible evidences for the validity of the work of Ellen White and of her messages. He closes his article with this affirmation:

I find that there is peace and joy, hope and confidence, love for souls, and the blessing of God in giving full confidence to the whole message; and these I have never found in doubting it, nor have I ever seen any one who did find them that way. All admit that we have truth enough, if lived out, to save us. We know that all other churches have many errors. How shall we gain anything, then, by going there? Start a new church of our own? Well, the success of those who have left us and tried that has not been very encouraging.

No, the real trouble lies close at home, in a proud, unconverted heart, a lack of real humility, an unwillingness to submit to God's way of finding the truth.-Ibid.

From April 23 until mid-May of 1885, Canright, with other leading ministers, attended a special course at our school at South Lancaster, Massachusetts. Its aim was to help to prepare workers for the solemn time facing the church. It was felt that those attending would have the benefit of "experience and instruction." (Ibid., April 14, 1885.)

Early summer found Elder and Mrs. Canright and five assistants conducting a tent meeting in Worcester, Massachusetts, "the last place I should have chosen," he declared. "We secured a prominent location. . . . We advertised thoroughly with large posters and handbills, and through the daily papers. We began Saturday evening, June 13, in the most remarkable place for boys that I ever saw; they literally swarmed. The first evening we had a hundred and fifty boys and about sixty grown persons; but we succeeded in securing good order."-Ibid., June 23, 1885. The next night, to the relief of the tent company, the proportions were reversed.

His report of the Pennsylvania camp meeting held in early June which he attended appears in that same number of the Review. The young people on the grounds received special attention. Two services a day were held with them and with the children. "There was also a class of perhaps twenty small children under ten years of age. . . . Here is another thing," Canright pointed out, "that ought to be attended to on the camp-ground. Some good sister could gather the young children once or twice a day, and give them very valuable instruction during the meetings."-Ibid. This was a forerunner of the well-planned kindergarten, primary, and junior meetings that now operate at every Adventist camp meeting.

That summer Canright reported to Mrs. White:

Myself and wife are real well. Lucy is improving as a worker so that I find her excellent help almost anywhere. As for myself, the old difficulties which I had, as you know, have been removed. I think I see now clearer and better than ever I did before. There was always something that bothered me because I did not have a right understanding of it. I feel as though my faith and confidence are stronger and on a more solid basis than ever before. I think that the evidence is rapidly increasing that this is the Lord's special work. I have no other thought but to give every energy of my life to it. I pray God will bless you, and give you strength to do the work you are so much needed to do. It would be worth a good deal to us if you could be here a few days now. It may be that you can come here yet this summer.

Your brother in the faith,

(Signed) D. M. Canright

-Letter, June 23, 1885.

That summer Ellen White did pay the Canrights a visit. She was on her way to Europe and as she was to sail from Boston she planned a few days' rest with old friends at South Lancaster. Instead of a rest, she found several speaking appointments awaiting her. At nearby Worcester on the evening of July 31 she spoke to a well-filled tent.

On Sabbath morning before breakfast she wrote twenty-two pages for the Review and Herald, then she preached during the church service-again in the tent. The following morning she rose at 4:00 a.m. to write, while there would be no interruptions. Again, that evening, she spoke. The tent was more crowded than it had been before. The next day she left for South Lancaster, "to see the church there and to rest." (Manuscript 16a, 1885.)

On Thursday she "again visited Worcester, held a meeting with the missionary workers there, and then returned to Lancaster" (Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions of Seventh-day Adventists, p. 161).

Mrs. White had stayed in the "Mission House" with the band of missionary workers. Over the dinner table they discussed plans of work, and enjoyed one another's company.

After her departure for Europe, Canright wrote appreciatively of her visit. About forty new converts had been made, he said, and baptisms were being conducted regularly.

The end of that busy summer found the Canrights heading for their Otsego home. They had left a little company of new believers in Worcester, ten of whom Canright himself had baptized. He had received a blessing in "searching out and defending the truth." Also, he was still singing Lucy's praises. As a pastor's wife and as a musician, she excelled. At home they found Lucretia's children, Genevieve and Fred, "well and doing nicely." The little family was happy to be reunited. (D. M. Canright letter, Sept. 30, 1885.)

In January, 1886, the first Sabbath school convention was held in Otsego. Both of Mrs. White's sons, Edson and Willie, [Note 2](#) were present. Concerning the convention, Canright wrote:

I never saw more interest in a meeting than there was in this, early and late and to the close. Everybody was pleased. The boys made a fine team and we hardly know which did the best. They seem to be just adapted to the work. It also gave them new interest in the Sabbath School cause. . . .

Mother Hadden remarked that you had reason to be proud of two such boys, they seemed to work together so nicely.

We have had remarkable success with a Sunday School in our church. Lucy took hold of it at the beginning of winter. . . . By hard work and much visiting the attendance has reached 130. They come from the best families in the place. It has opened a grand field of missionary work for our church. Why would it not be a good plan for other churches to do the same?--Letter, Jan. 12, 1886.

Lucy continued the story:

If one of our pupils is absent, we are sure to go and call on him and take him the Instructor. . . . I have been greatly blessed in the work and believe the Lord has helped us. My whole heart is in it.-Lucy H. Canright letter, Jan. 16, 1886.

Then she reported on the Sabbath school convention.

Edson and Willie worked together very harmoniously. It seemed that what one could not think of the other could. We wished many times you were here. The Lord helped them. At the last meeting they both talked so good. They stayed with us and had the room you had when you were here a year ago. Bro. Willie will tell you all about it. Our people feel to thank God that you have two such noble boys.-Ibid.

Mrs. White spent the full year 1886 in Europe at church headquarters in Switzerland. Elder Canright found time to write interesting, friendly letters to her such as the following:

Battle Creek, Michigan

February 17, 1886

Dear Sister:

Knowing that you are always interested in matters here, I will write you a few lines. My family are well and doing well. Vievi is coming up to be much like her mother, a real little lady and a Christian too, I believe. Fred is as good as a boy need to be, though more full of fun as yet. Both take a deep interest in the Sabbath school and love the truth. Lucy worked too hard in her Sunday School and so ran down some. Is now with me a while to rest. Her heart is in the work and she is a great help anywhere. I never felt better physically. Can work hard all the time and feel well, too. My courage is good and I love the work.

For a while I was teaching Bro. Smith's class in the college. I like it better than anything I have ever done. We have our room full. Bro. Smith had so much to do that he had to have help a while. I assist on the new paper [The Gospel Sickle], speak in the tabernacle, and help wherever I can. We are now thinking of preaching in the Sanitarium every Friday evening on the truth. Have tried it and it takes well. . . .

Well there, Sister White, pardon me for writing all this to you. Where I am wrong just lay it onto me and I will take it like a major. . . .

May the Lord bless you and encourage you in all your hard work.

Your brother, (Signed) D. M. Canright.

The teaching he referred to was done three weeks before the close of the long winter term at Battle Creek College. Elder Uriah Smith, instructor in Biblical exegesis, had found it impossible to finish his work, because of failing health. Elder Canright filled out the three remaining weeks of the school year so successfully that it was decided by the college board to employ him the next school term as an assistant to Elder Smith. Then, when school opened and Uriah Smith was occupied with other tasks, Elder Canright organized the class and continued it for five weeks. Thus for a total of eight weeks he filled a teaching position at the church's principal college.

I mention these details for the reason that upon this brief appointment he would later elaborate. He was also one of five members of an editorial committee of a short-lived missionary paper entitled The Gospel Sickle.

At about this same time Canright was asked to prepare eleven Sabbath School lessons, which were to appear in the Youth's Instructor. Also, in plans made for a ministerial coverage of Seventh-day Adventist churches in Michigan, he was asked to make contacts in a given area, which he numbered as eighteen. He

served on the executive committees of several denominational organizations. His articles in Adventist journals were read with interest. Two books carried his name: *The Bible from Heaven*, a revision and enlargement of a volume originally published by Moses Hull; and *The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul*, a volume of 186 pages that he himself had written. In addition to these, he authored four pamphlets of approximately one hundred pages each, and 15 tracts of some 24 to 32 pages each.

About this time his old recurring weaknesses began to reappear. Canright's name was widely known. This did not displease him. He was talented, highly esteemed, and greatly respected as a Seventh-day Adventist church leader. But those close to him understood well his weak points. Butler reported: When everything went pleasantly, he could usually see things with clearness. When he was "abused," as he always thought he was when things did not go to suit him, the evidences of our faith began immediately to grow dim. Dark clouds of unbelief floated over his mental sky, and he felt that everything was going by the board. Here was the Elder's special weakness. He is a strong man in certain directions when all goes smoothly, but very weak in adversity. He failed to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." He was good in a fight, and appeared at best advantage when in a hot debate. This was his forte. But when things apparently were against him, he seemed to have no staying, recuperative qualities.-Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887.

As we have noted before, Butler also observed that Canright's "desire to have his own way sometimes got him into trouble. He never could bear reproof with patience, or feel composed when his way was crossed. When he came to mingle in important matters with brethren in prominent positions, these and other traits naturally got him into trouble."-Ibid.

It appears likely that these traits, observed by his brethren, constituted the reason why he was repeatedly passed by when choices were made for the president of the General Conference, or the presidents of State conferences, or the president of the Michigan Conference in the fall of 1886.

Elder E. R. Potter, long-time minister in Michigan, reports: About the year 1918 a cousin of Eld. D. M. Canright came to our home and spent a few days. I asked this cousin what he knew about D. M. Canright. He replied "I will tell you one thing. Just before he left the denomination Eld. Canright came to the [1886] Michigan camp meeting with his team and I took care of his horses. On that occasion my cousin said, 'If I am not elected President of this Conf[erence] at this meeting I am not going to preach for them any more.'" -Statement concerning D. M. Canright by Ray Birmingham, Alma, Michigan, Sept. 7, 1947.

George I. Butler, not D. M. Canright, was elected president of the Michigan conference.

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1. For the full article see [Appendixes](#). [\[back to text\]](#)
 2. W. C. White having accompanied his mother to Europe in August, 1885,

returned for a few months to attend to a number of urgent matters relating to the work in both America and Europe.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER EIGHT

Canright Boards the Phantom Ship

WELL ALONG in the 1880's, the perils that endangered Elder Canright were opened to Mrs. Ellen G. White in symbolic representation. The warning was passed on to him in the following letter:

Dear Brother Canright:[Note 1](#)

I had an impressive dream last night. I thought that you were on a strong vessel, sailing on very rough waters. Sometimes the waves beat over the top, and you were drenched with water. You said: "I shall get off; this vessel is going down."

"No," said one who appeared to be the captain, "this vessel sails into the harbor. She will never go down."

But you answered: "I shall be washed overboard. As I am neither captain or mate, who cares? I shall take my chances on that vessel you see yonder."

Said the captain: "I shall not let you go there, for I know that vessel will strike the rocks before she reaches the harbor."

You straightened yourself up, and said with great positiveness: "This vessel will become a wreck; I can see it just as plain as can be."[Note 2](#)

The captain looked upon you with piercing eye, and said firmly: "I shall not permit you to lose your life by taking that boat. The timbers of her framework are worm-eaten, and she is a deceptive craft. If you had more knowledge you could discern between the spurious and the genuine, the holy and that appointed to utter ruin."

I awoke, but it is this dream that leads me to write to you. I was feeling deeply over some of these things when a letter came, saying that you were "under great temptation and trial." What is it, Brother Canright? Is Satan tempting you again? Is God permitting you to be brought to the same place where you have failed before? Will you now let unbelief take possession of your soul? Will you fail ever time, as did the Children of Israel? God help you to resist the evil and to come forth stronger from every trial of your faith!

Be careful how you move. Make straight paths for your feet. Close the door to unbelief and make God your strength. If perplexed, hold still; make no move in the dark. I am deeply concerned for your soul. This may be the last trial that God will grant you. Advance not one step in the downward road to perdition. Wait, and God will help you. Be patient, and the clear light will appear. If you yield to impressions you will lose your soul, and the soul is of great value with God.-

Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 571.

But he could not wait. In January, 1887, he took the position that he would be a Seventh-day Adventist no longer. He informed his old friend Elder George I. Butler, president of the Michigan Conference and of the General Conference, of his decision.

On February 17, 1887, Elder Canright in a formal way took the step he had been counseled and warned not to take. He left the "strong vessel" to board a phantom craft, which, it seem to him, gave greater promise.

In his statement made at the business meeting of the Otsego church upon which its action was based, Elder Canright made it plain:

That he had come to a point where he no longer believed that the Ten Commandments were binding upon Christians and had given up the Law, the Sabbath, the messages, the Sanctuary, our position upon [the] U[nited] S[tates] in prophecy, the Testimonies, health reform, the ordinances of humility. He also said that he did not believe the Papacy had changed the Sabbath. And though he did not directly state it, his language intimated that he would probably keep Sunday.

He thinks that Seventh-day Adventists are too narrow in their ideas, and that in quoting so much as they do from the Old Testament are going back into the moonlight rather than experiencing the sunlight of the gospel of Christ. He thought we were exalting the law above Christ. Also has not faith in the missionary work as conducted by our people, feels as if it is not the way God designed to do the work.

He still claimed to believe that the coming of Christ was near, making the same application of Daniel 2 and 7 and Matthew 24 that he always had, but did not believe that there was to be any special message preceding Christ's second coming in the sense in which Seventh-day Adventists teach.-Church clerk's record, Feb. 17, 1887, Otsego, Michigan, SDA church.

The church could do no other than drop his name on the grounds of apostasy. His wife, Lucy, who took nearly the same position, was also dropped.

Elder Butler's report of the meeting, over which he presided, reflects the careful spirit in which the matter was handled:

February 17, he [D. M. Canright] gave his reasons in public before the Otsego church, of which he was a member. The writer was present. In his remarks concerning our people and the treatment he had received among us, he was very kind and conciliatory. He stated that he thought there was a larger percentage of true Christians among our people than among any other denomination with which he was acquainted. He expressed a high appreciation of, and confidence in, some of our leading men, believing them to be honest, devoted servants of Christ. He said he was perfectly satisfied with the treatment he had received among Seventh-day Adventists. He had no fault to find with them on that score, and felt that they had used him in all respects as well as Christians should.-Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887.

Ellen G. White was still in Europe when Canright took his fateful step. She immediately wrote to him, and he replied. A portion of his letter, with emphasis supplied, is quoted:

Otsego, Michigan

March 18, 1887

Mrs. E. G. White

Basel, Switzerland

Dear Sister:

Your kind and friendly letter was received some day since. . . . Thank you for your efforts to help me. You have learned before this the position which I have taken. I know it will grieve you as it has my friends in America. It cost me a terrible struggle to do it. Of course it would be of no use for either of us to argue the question now. My mind is fully settled and my course decided. Whether I have decided right or wrong the judgment must tell. Sister White, believe me when I say I wish you and our people well and hope that you may help to save some and reach eternal life with them.

Of course I have to think you are mistaken in some things, though thoroughly sincere in it. For my part I earnestly wish that there might continue to be a friendly feeling between me and our people. On my part it shall be so. . . .

My wife and family go with me. . . .

Yours in hope,

D. M. Canright

Lucy, it is true, followed her husband out of the Adventist church. But her husband recorded that "she cried when circumstances separated her from these old ties" (Review and Herald, June 12, 1913).

As to Elder Canright's future plans, Elder Butler reported that "he expected to unite with the Methodists, Baptists, or some other evangelical denomination, and continue to labor in the ministry as long as he lived" (ibid., Extra, December, 1887).

Perhaps it is well to observe that Canright, now an ex-Seventh-day Adventist, was not certain as to which flag he would, in the future, sail under. It might be the Methodist, Baptist, or some other. He soon chose the Baptist banner.

On March 5, 1887, Mr. and Mrs. Canright and their daughter Veva (Genevieve) applied for membership in the Otsego, Michigan, Baptist church and were accepted. On March 6 he occupied the pulpit and on March 17 was given a license by them to preach. He was ordained as a Baptist minister on April 19, and served the local Otsego congregation.

When Canright left the Adventist church and joined the Baptists, his elderly mother, living in Colorado, was deeply grieved. W. A. Spicer, who had been acquainted with D. M. Canright from 1884 on, in recounting experiences of earlier days wrote of this:

She was one of the old-line Seventh-day Adventists, right in Christian experience, happy in the blessed hope, the hope of the second coming of Christ to gather His people, which was the joy and rejoicing of the apostle Paul and all new Testament believers. While our former minister was representing to the people of the great churches that he was finding great blessing in being free from "legalism," as he called obedience to the commandments of God, would he not want this good old mother to have the same experience. Not at all. Apparently our old associate had no inclination to lead that mother of his into the new way.-Ibid., Jan. 13, 1949.

The turning aside of the son never caused the mother's faith to waver. She lived to a ripe old age, falling asleep in Christ in 1904.

The local newspaper, the Otsego Union, of May 20 carried a D. M. Canright article entitled "The Reason Why," in which he explained to his neighbors and friends in the community his change of allegiance from Seventh-day Adventism to the Baptist church. In a series of Sunday night meetings during May and June he dealt with the Sabbath, the historical evidence for keeping Sunday, and on June 17 announced that he would speak the next Sunday evening on "Mrs. White and the Visions."

The congregation evidently was pleased with Canright's performance, and on July 3, 1887, engaged him for a year as their pastor, the members subscribing to a plan to pay him ten dollars a week.

He was invited to speak in nearby communities against the Adventists. C. A. Russell recounts how just at this time Mr. Canright came to their vicinity near Allegan, Michigan, where shortly before his apostasy he had helped to bind off a small evangelistic effort and had baptized several into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Now a Baptist, he was hired by the Disciples group to come back and preach against the Adventists. Russell reports:

He delivered three lectures. Father went to hear him all through. I didn't go, but father felt that if he didn't go the neighbors would say, "Russell didn't dare to go and hear on the other side." The third night he devoted almost exclusively to Sister White and her work, called her an Adventist pope, a deceiver of the people, an imposter [sic], and holding her up to ridicule in every way that one could think of. . . .

When the harangue was over, but just before dismissal, a rough old fellow sitting in the back of the congregation, blurted out, "Well, Elder, how do you think old Mother White will come out in the judgment anyhow?"

Father said Canright stood there for a full minute and never said a word. He didn't seem to know what to say and then he said this: "I believe she is a good woman and will be saved in the kingdom of God, and only wish I were as good a man as she is a woman." I have never forgotten the exact words as father repeated them to us that night.-C. A. Russell Statement to W. C. White, Feb. 18, 1935.

Records of the time would seem to indicate that Mr. Canright was at first well received by his Baptist friends in the local community. Favorable testimonials, such as the following, appeared in newspapers:

Otsego, Michigan, May 6, 1888

This is to certify that Rev. D. M. Canright has been a faithful and efficient pastor for us the past year, and that God, through him, has accomplished a glorious work for our church. He won the love and confidence of his people. We were glad to secure his services for another year.

Done by the order of the church.

Mrs. Ida M. Wheeler, Clerk

The circumstances that would call for such statements in the public press are difficult to imagine, unless for some reason Canright felt insecure in his new environment. No such laudatory [sic] published notices ever appeared while he

was with the Adventists. From this time on, however, the record shows that there was a flow of testimonials, the wording of which often sounds strangely like Canright's phraseology. These testimonials were early to figure in certain discussions involving Canright and his relationships. But more of that later.

He continued to pastor the Otsego church and in 1888 accepted a renewal of his contract. After serving a few months in his second term, he asked to be relieved of his pastorate as of October 1, 1888. The reason given, he explained, was that he might have more time to devote to his writing in his anti-Adventist crusade.

However, there seem to be indications that all may not have been going well with Canright in his relationships with the Baptists. It was only natural that these relationships were watched with interest by his former Adventist brethren and fellow ministers, who were so well acquainted with him, and, quite naturally, as Canright entered upon a work of opposing Seventh-day Adventists, information on his relationships with his new friends was frequently conveyed from one to another in personal correspondence. Elder E. J. Waggoner, careful and responsible editor of the Signs of the Times. Wrote as follows:

From a letter in my possession dated Jan. 18, 1889, written by Elder I. D. Van Horn, president of the Michigan Conference, I quote the following concerning Mr. Canright:

"He is certainly losing influence among his own [Baptist] people. The first evidence I had of this was about one year ago. He went to Grand Rapids and made application for the first Baptist church, to speak against Seventh Day Adventism, and the pastor, Rev. Mr. Tupper, one of the first men in his denomination in the State, with the deacons of his church, decided against him, and would not let him into the house for that purpose. I have it direct from one of the deacons, Mr. Buchanan, a dentist in that city. I went to see him personally and he was free to tell me all about it.

"Another evidence I have from a Baptist minister, about six months ago, who then lived in Otsego, and who had formerly been pastor of the church of which Canright was pastor for a year and a half, the fact that Canright was losing the confidence of his members, by trying to enforce the tithing system on them, and for showing no special regard for Baptist usages, and because of which many of his members were leaving.

"From another source I heard that this congregation had come down from 200 to 25, and he was obliged to resign his pastorate, which he did some five or six months ago. There were only twenty-five present to hear his farewell sermon.

"Another evidence is from Sister Oviatt (whose husband is now a Baptist minister)^{[Note 3](#)} of Hastings, Michigan, through Elder L. G. Moore, one of our most faithful brethren, who has long lived in Hastings, we have the fact that Sister Oviatt has heard at different times very disparaging remarks about Canright, from some of the leading Baptist ministers, as they have been at her house talking with her husband. Some of these remarks showed the feeling of these ministers that Canright seemed so important and overbearing."

Now about that testimonial which Mr. Canright published from the clerk of the church in Otsego. Whoever will look at his article^{[Note 4](#)} will see that that testimonial is not dated: but the same thing is given in his book, where it bears

date May, 1888, nearly a year ago. But that doesn't matter much anyway, as it is not a very difficult thing for anybody to get testimonials. The polity of the Baptists is such that if a preacher can find a single society, or part of a society, that will acknowledge him, he cannot be shaken off, although he may be despised by the great body of Baptists. It is often unfortunate for the Baptist's denomination that such is the case, but so it is. Mr. Canright was wise in selecting that body when he left the Adventists.

One thing more about his resignation from the Baptist church in Otsego. He himself has never told anybody here why he resigned, but you have the reasons in Elder Van Horn's letter. In corroboration of that statement, I will state that shortly before his resignation, a part of his church went to the Seventh-day Adventists in Otsego, to get their house of worship so that they could hold a separate meeting. Perhaps Mr. Canright can tell a plausible story to explain why they could not worship with him, but the fact is that he was very soon seized with a spirit of resignation. . . .

"I did not make my statements rashly. I have given my evidence, and it will stand although Mr. Canright may rail against it."-E. J. Waggoner, in *Healdsburg Enterprise*, Feb. 27, 1889.

That same number of the *Enterprise* carries another strong testimonial in Elder Canright's defense signed by Mrs. Wheeler, of the Otsego Baptist church.

Pains were taken by Mr. Canright to secure other testimonials from neighbors, friends, and business acquaintances, attesting to his good character and his integrity in business transactions. However, it should be noted that these points had not been challenged by his former brethren. Yet, to him they apparently seemed essential in the light of the course he had taken. Subsequently these testimonials were frequently seen in the press and in introductions to his published works.

Residing in Otsego, he at times preached and served otherwise in the church when at home, and was on several occasions delegated by his church to represent them in certain general meetings. At such times he served on temporary committees and at least once acted as chairman.

In late September, 1890, D. M. Canright with his family moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan. He had been unable to sell his Otsego home and held this for another two years, until it was purchased by his father-in-law.

The Otsego church commended the Canright family to the Wealthy Avenue Baptist church in Grand Rapids. Apparently Mr. Canright had spent some time in Grand Rapids. There are references to his assisting in meetings being held in the north part of the city and then going to a church that was organized on June 5, 1892, with 50 charter members who had transferred from the Fountain Street Baptist church. It took the name Berean Baptist church, and they claimed the "Rev. D. M. Canright" as their "first pastor." In this capacity he served for one year and a half. The reasons for his resignation at that time are not known, but two years later he served for another year, again as pastor, from October, 1895, to October, 1896. (*History of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Church Directory*, p. 1170.) Doubtless the intervening years were spent largely in the preparation of articles for publication of his book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*.

After his second term as pastor of the Berean Baptist church closed in October, 1896, he moved to South Bend, Indiana, and then to Toledo, Ohio, where he engaged in door-to-door selling of religious books. Three years later he returned to Grand Rapids.

The records indicate that in that year he was listed as an ordained Baptist minister in the State of Michigan, who, though not holding a pastorate, was issued yearly credentials, a practice followed subsequently, except possibly during the interval between 1904 and 1907. While members of the Berean Baptist church, and members of the Canright family have testified that his counsel was often sought by the Baptist brethren, there is no record that Canright served actively for the Baptists after 1897, when he should have been in his prime.

It thus becomes increasingly clear that, as Mr. Canright sailed his phantom craft in the Baptist fleet, he was never called to the bridge of the flagship, nor to any position beyond that of a locally elected pastor of two medium-sized congregations. He proudly displayed, in carefully worded testimonials, the positions of responsibility to which he had been elevated by Seventh-day Adventists-author, teacher, committeeman, executive-but under his new flag those with whom he associated never saw fit to honor him with any office higher than that of local church pastor, and this for only brief periods of time. The thoughtful reader may ponder why Mr. Canright, who held positions of trust as an Adventist and served the Baptists in two communities, was not considered by the latter as one to whom some major position in the Baptist church should be entrusted. Instead, we find him in his later years gaining a livelihood by going from door to door selling and laboring with his hands.

The Baptists should be commended for their method of handling the case of the man who sailed a phantom craft under their banner. He was treated as a brother and elected pastor of two local churches for a little less than four years. He also represented these two churches at Baptist conferences; but he was never trusted at the helm of any major interest of that denomination.

1. The initial "M" in place of the name is used in the letter as published in the Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 571.[\[back to text\]](#)
2. A phrase often employed by D. M. Canright in conversation.[\[back to text\]](#)
3. Note: D. B. Oviatt was ordained a Baptist minister the same day as was D. M. Canright.[\[back to text\]](#)
4. For the circumstances of statement from D. M. Canright and E. J. Waggoner published in the Healdsburg Enterprise see reference to Canright's trip West in early 1889, his debate with Wm. Healey, and the reports of the public press. See pages 95, 96. While this must have been the case with the copy which Waggoner saw, other copies are dated.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER NINE

Crusade Against the Adventists

ON THE evening of February 17, 1887, when Mr. and Mrs. Canright and their daughter Genevieve were separated from the Seventh-day Adventist church, Elder George I. Butler, chairman of the meeting, reported that the transaction was carried out with no ill will. Christian charity was manifested on the part of the officers of the church from which he was separating and by Mr. Canright himself. "He professed," Butler stated, "the most pacific intentions concerning us, saying that he should never pursue the course some others had who have left us, becoming bitter assailants of our people, but should give himself to revival and Christian work, which was the work of his choice. He was utterly sick of the debating and fighting spirit. He had formerly had some love for such things, but now his only desire was to labor for the salvation of souls. He expressed himself very strongly on this point, and said that he never could become a Campbellite, a first-day Adventist, or a Seventh-day Baptist. He was opposed to their fighting spirit, and expressed strong dislike for them."-Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887.

Canright asked Elder Butler if he might make a brief statement to his former Adventist friends through the Review and Herald. He was permitted to do this after giving some explanations of his recent action he said, "Personally I have not one word of fault to find either with the church where I live or with those with whom I have labored. I have been treated justly, liberally, and tenderly. There is not one hard feeling between us as far as I know. It will always give me pleasure to regard our people and speak of them as an honest and devout people."-Ibid., March 1, 1887. (Italics supplied.)

The Seventh-day Adventist church leaders were determined to give Mr. Canright no cause for complaint. A friendly correspondence continued between him and Elder Butler. In the ensuing months Canright's name appeared only a time or two in the columns of the Review. One note, however, commenting on the welfare of the church at Otsego, speaks of "The report of his apostasy." That one word apostasy was to Mr. Canright a red flag indicating to him that the truce was broken. Now, quite contrary to his declared intention, he began to wage war against the Seventh-day Adventist church, selecting Mrs. E. G. White as his specific object of attack.

The religious press of the United States soon became the recipient of a number of articles from D. M. Canright, written with the purpose of "exposing Adventism." He made himself available for lectures against Adventists and Mrs. White "on the basis of \$2 per night." Even so the Adventist leaders determined to remain silent, quite certain that the public, through the spirit Canright manifested, could well judge his reliability as a witness. But an old friend and fellow minister, protesting against his new course of action, wrote a letter to him doubtless typical of others: My Dear Brother,

It troubles me not a little to address you thus. . . . I see your present calling and work. I am filled with sorrow and tears. An absolute horror seizes me. Not for my sake, nor for the truth's sake, but for yours alone. I cannot be relieved from the impression that a spirit of malevolence has possessed you. I do not say you

are conscious of it. . . . To my mind your equivocating and vacillating course for some years in the past, has not made you a safe leader.

And then, again, the influence you claim over a score of ministers or more, in our ranks, is quite conclusive proof to me, that your defection was wholly premeditated for some time, when you professed to be in full fellowship and harmony with our people. . . . I . . . must declare that your own arguments are as weak and forceless as you have met a hundred times. . . .

What will not a man do for the honor that comes from man? Balaam was a prophet of God and doubtless felt well, as you say you do, with the wages of unrighteousness in his hand, and the emoluments that a king could bestow. But he perished on the field of battle, when arrayed against the people of God. I do not envy you your lightness of heart nor your freedom of soul. I choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. I am astonished, but not disheartened that you have joined the hue and cry against us.

For you, and yours, whom I remember with tenderest feelings, I pray, as Jesus prayed on the cross. I have spoken plainly and without the least acrimony, that you may know just where I stand.

Most truly and sincerely yours,

(Signed) D. H. Lamson

Armeda, Mich., Aug. 16, 1887

In September, 1887, Seventh-day Adventists held a large camp meeting at Grand Rapids, Michigan. Articles from Canright's pen bitterly attacking them appeared in the newspapers. Their publication coincided with the opening of the meeting. Canright had also prepared handbills containing some of these articles. They were widely circulated throughout the city and among crowds of people attending the West Michigan Fair. Those intent on distributing such material even appeared on the Adventist campground on Sunday, circulating handbills designed to prejudice people against Mrs. White, who was one of the speakers, and against the Seventh-day Adventist church generally.

How very strange this seemed! Only half a year earlier he had solemnly pledged that he would never pursue such a course. Now the use of that one word apostasy was taken by him as the signal to fight. And fight he would. In his bitter tirade against the Adventists, Ellen G. White and the visions became his focal points of attack.

The reader may well ask, Why should his attack lie first in this area? How could a woman, whom he claimed to know so well and of whom he had repeatedly written in sincere and glowing terms, become the object of such bitterness? To those who had been close friends and associates during his Adventist days, this was no great mystery.

As we have seen: "He never could bear reproof with patience, or feel composed when his way was crossed. . . . He always hated reproof, hence bore it like a fractious child."-Review and Herald Extra, December, 1887.

Canright himself dated his first serious backset to that visit he and Lucretia had made to Colorado in 1873, described in chapter 3. Off and on during the intervening years, as the reader has seen, a resentment against Ellen White's written reproof ^{Note 1} had simmered and smoldered, although its aim had been to

correct weaknesses in his and Lucretia's characters, and he had declared more than once that the messages had accomplished this work.

The Canright correspondence reveals that other dark periods in his experience bear a time relationship to his receiving messages of counsel and admonition from the pen of Ellen G. White. As noted earlier, Canright himself had spoken of this freely and fully in his confession at the Michigan campground in October, 1884. (See chapter 6, "If I ever Go Back.")

As he received a number of messages of counsel and reproof, he had come to see that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." And the assurance is given, "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Hebrews 12:6, 7). Canright had written long articles, presenting in clear-cut terms the reasons for his confidence in the messages coming to Seventh-day Adventists through the pen of Ellen G. White.

He has asked: "But are there not difficulties in these writings hard to explain? Passages which seem to conflict with one another, or with some passage in the Bible, or with facts? I freely grant for myself that there are some passages which bother me, and which I do not know how to explain. But I believe them for all that just as I do the Bible. There are many passages in the Bible which I should have to admit I could not explain nor harmonize. If any man says that he can explain and reconcile all the statements of the Scriptures, he simply shows his self-conceit and ignorance. Yet I profoundly believe the Bible for all that." Then he adds:

"And now I want to reason awhile with those among us who are holding off and living in doubt about the testimonies. I believe that your course is not only wrong, but that it is unsatisfactory to you here, and will be unsatisfactory at the judgment."-Review and Herald, Feb. 10, 1885.

Other men and women in the work of the church had learned well the blessing that followed a wholehearted acceptance of testimonies of correction and reproof. But this was hard for Canright. Ellen White declared that "he has used every check put on him by myself as a cause to throw himself" (Ellen G. White letter 13, 1887). And so he did. Elder Butler emphasized Canright's experience in fighting the Testimonies in several letters addressed to Dr. J. H. Kellogg, when he, too, was in peril of taking the same course. On May 10, 1904, he wrote:

I dislike to see you, who have professed, time and again, to be a full believer in the Testimonies, as strong as anybody, begin to reflect upon Sister White as you do occasionally of late. It reminds me too much of Snook and Brinkerhoff, [Note 2](#) Canright, et.al. That is always the way those things commence. They were "believers in the truth" and all that, but "Sister White, Sister White" and you know the result. Over and over did I try to save Canright who was once a power to the cause, a lecturer, and a debater. He was one of those who could not endure hardship. When every thing went hard, he would "fly the track." Four times I helped that poor man back into the light, but the fifth time he went. It is enough to look into his face again and see what kind of a wreck he is left. He could do great things when God was with him, and the Spirit was with him, but after he moved out, the Spirit did not go with him; he was left to his own spirit

and that of another power, and that has been the trouble with all those who go away from the body.-G. I. Butler letter to J. H. Kellogg. (Italics supplied.)

A few days later Butler wrote again to Dr. Kellogg:

Canright thought . . . he was going to preach good revival discourses never was going to do anything that Snook and Brinkerhoff did, and was going to be awful[ly] good.

His freewill remarks up at Otsego, which I went up there purposely to hear, when he talked half or three quarters of an hour. The tears ran down his face as he told what he was going to do. He felt it just as clearly and fully as a man could, and thought he was going to be awfully good.

But when he got over into the Baptist church; withdrew; and the Spirit of God ceased its influence upon him largely, he became the most bitter, wicked antagonist we have ever had since the Denomination started. His book against Seventh-day Adventists is full of sneaking falsehoods. I do not say that he realizes they are such, but they are such. They are perversions of truth.

I pity the man, from the bottom of my soul, when I think of what he is coming to, and where he has brought himself. But a man can no more control himself, after he goes off there and takes his stand away from the truths he has well known, than a man could in a boat a few rods above Niagara Falls.

I say this to you, doctor, and just as much as I do to anybody. There is a border line which, if a man crosses, he puts himself on the enemy's ground, and if you cross it, or any other man crosses it, he will put himself under the greatest possible disadvantage, where it will be just morally out of the question for him to keep from going clear overboard.-G. I. Butler letter to J. H. Kellogg, June 9, 1904. (Italics supplied.)

These statements help us to answer the question of why, as soon after leaving Seventh-day Adventists, Mr. Canright made Ellen G. White his special object of attack.

Available records indicate that Mr. Canright, in responding to calls for his services in various Protestant churches, sometimes made extensive journeys. One such trip was made to California early in 1889, at the request of the Pastors' Union of Healdsburg. Healdsburg, the location of the second college established by Seventh-day Adventists, was quite a strong denominational center in the West. There Mr. Canright entered into debate with one of his former Adventist brethren, Elder William Healey. The character and work of Ellen G. White figured prominently in this debate.

In the public press it was reported that "Mr. Canright emptied himself before the debate began. His part in the debate was simply a rehash or repetition of what he had already said in his pervious course of lectures. At the close of these lectures the Pastors' Union . . . would

better have allowed him to depart. The debate added nothing to the evidence against the Adventists. It merely gave them an opportunity to reply, before a very large audience, to Mr. Canright's attack upon them. . . .

"(Mr. Canright had written them that the Adventists would not meet him in debate.) The Adventists did accept the challenge."-Healdsburg Enterprise, March 9, 1889.

At the close of the arguments, public sentiment was declared to be divided as is frequently the case in debates. But there was "an increased want of sympathy for the Pastors' Union," who had invited Canright to debate in Healdsburg. "There has not been so much bitterness between neighbors in Healdsburg since the war, as now." In conclusion the report stated that religious persecution has never succeeded in weakening the cause attacked.

As observed earlier, Mr. Canright resigned his pastorate of the Otsego Baptist church after serving it for fifteen months, to have, as he reported, more time for writing. The fruit of this labor soon appeared in ten eight-page pamphlets entitled "Adventism Refuted in a Nutshell." Number Four was entitled "Mrs. White and Her Visions."

Quite naturally, Mr. Canright's writings were welcomed by religious groups desiring to refute the teachings of Seventh-day Adventists.

His published statements were accepted with rejoicing and used extensively. In the year 1889 he brought out his 413-page book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*. In six years' time there were three printings. Its circulation extended to a number of countries outside the United States, and it gave promise of being an effective weapon against Adventist teachings. Many who read it soon observed inconsistencies in its arguments and detected the author's bitterness. Others found it a conscience-soothing document, one that relieved them from further investigation of Adventist teachings.

When, in 1889, Canright's mother heard that her son had written a book against the faith he had once held dear, she wrote him, asking, "Will you not send me a copy of the book? I want to see it."

Her son replied, "No, Mother. . . . It is not a book for you to read. It was not written for people like you. It would only trouble and disturb you."-W. A. Spicer, in the *Review and Herald*, January 13, 1949.

By 1919, the year of Canright's death, fourteen printings had been made of his book; more have since been printed. The work attempts to refute the teachings that for twenty-two years he had so confidently proclaimed for the public desk. These points Seventh-day Adventists dealt with clearly during Mr. Canright's lifetime. The book *In Defense of the Faith*, [Note 3](#) by W. H. Branson, currently available from this publisher, is a standard work that answers the arguments contained in Canright's volume, usually in Mr. Canright's own words spoken while he was an Adventist. Not Canright's literary style, not any soundness of argument-only the fact that his book professes to expose Seventh-day Adventism has led to its continued existence and to its distribution.

Seventh-day Adventists early noted that "there is one point connected with the raid of Canright's. . . . It is the eagerness with which his attacks have been received by leading religious papers and by the Protestant ministry even in Europe, Australia, and the most distant parts of the world."-*Ibid.*, Extra, December, 1887.

In 1915 a second book authored by D. M. Canright appeared on the market entitled *The Lord's Day From Neither Catholics nor Pagans*. Never receiving much acclaim or enjoying popularity, it soon passed out of print.

One interesting feature of this book is a half-page statement of commendation of the author, uniquely characteristic of the three Canright books. In this case the statement precedes the author's preface. It is dated September 23, 1915, and carries the signature of A. J. Bush, church clerk, Berean Baptist church. Twice in the brief statement the man eulogized is referred to as "Elder Canright." It is interesting to note that Baptists generally use the term reverend, not elder, when they are addressing or speaking of their ministers.

The thoughtful reader immediately asks: Was it because the church clerk in writing of the "Pastor Emeritus," considered Canright more Adventist than Baptist? Or was it that Canright himself wrote the statement and inadvertently, and from the long habit, used the term elder? In so doing he may have unwittingly revealed his true feeling by using Adventist terminology rather than Baptist. The statement appears on page 20 of his book. Here is the statement: "The Berean Baptist church was raised up by Elder Canright and organized June 5, 1892, with fifty members. Since then four hundred and fifty have been baptized into the church. It has prospered steadily from the first. Its membership now is three hundred and thirty-one and steadily increasing. Its location is one of the best in our city of 120,000. It has a good church edifice with all modern conveniences and is clear of debt. In the city and state it is recognized as one among the most alive, aggressive, and strictly evangelical Baptist churches. "The church has always acknowledged with gratitude the work Elder Canright did under God in starting it on a solid Scriptural foundation, which it has always zealously maintained." (Italics supplied.)

The last book Canright wrote, *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, published in 1919, the year of his death, reveals his true spirit without moderation. Bitterness and misrepresentations fill the 291 pages of this work, which is still in current circulation.

The unfounded and inaccurate charges made against Mrs. White in this volume have provided the basis for a number of smaller works by others, written with the motive of "exposing" Seventh-day Adventists. Thus many a modern author, quite often sincerely misled, is indebted to Mr. Canright for distortions and untruths appearing in his articles, pamphlets, or books.

To disprove arguments and distorted exhibits employed by Mr. Canright and those who have followed his presentations, the carefully documented volume *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, by F. D. Nichol, was issued by the publisher of this work and is currently available. Nichol has painstakingly placed the Ellen G. White statement and historical events in their full and true setting.

These publications indicate that Seventh-day Adventists are concerned only that those who investigate the teachings of their church do so honestly and that they acquaint themselves with the facts. But as to whether the crusade against Seventh-day Adventists will continue, with the Canright books in part furnishing its basis, they have no illusions.

1. Note: The letters [Aug. 12, and Nov. 12, 1873] from Mrs. White to the 33-year-old minister and his wife exhibited rare insight as indicated by the following excerpts:

"Brother Canright, in your labors with others, you have been the man who was severe and overbearing. Where your gray-headed gospel father [James White] would be pitiful, discreet, and cautious, you have sometimes been provoking and insolent. It is your nature to be overbearing. . . .

"Rashness is natural to you. You need to restrain yourself. Unless you bridle and restrain your rash spirit, you will be hurried to make some move which will ruin your usefulness, forever. You may expend energy sufficient for the highest success, yet you will fail of achieving good and permanent results, unless you are willing to receive instruction and to learn wisdom by receiving counsel of others.

"Successful energy and rashness are two different elements. The former is power while the latter, unrestrained and uncontrolled leads to destruction. Calm, unhurried efforts will do more than rash hurried movements. Do not confound rashness with energy. Your energy is too much controlled by impulse. It is spasmodic, affected by circumstances and surroundings.

"You are either on the pinnacle, or down in the low slough of despond. An accidental circumstance will arouse you, and call out every power of your soul. For a season, you will be exhilarated, and come up upon the wave of excitement or popularity. You will excel yourself and astonish your friends. But you are in danger of spending your force, and losing the exhilarating power which stimulated you to action, and sink down into despondency and discouragement. In these fitful efforts you lose more than you would gain by steady, earnest effort. . . . Consider me not an enemy because I tell you the truth. I long and pray that you may be found in your right mind sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning of Him. . . . I pray the Lord to help you to get rid of some of your lofty ideas of yourself and come down in meekness, feeling your nothingness without Christ. Then will He be unto you a very present help in time of need."-Ellen G. White letter 1, 1873.[\[back to text\]](#)

2. Two early ministers in Iowa who withdrew from Seventh-day Adventists in 1865 because of opposition to the church name, organization, and the Spirit of Prophecy.[\[back to text\]](#)

3. This book is a reprint of Reply to Canright published in 1933 by the same author.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER TEN

"Too Late!"

AS HE grew older, Canright, who never seemed to feel altogether at ease with his Baptist connections, seemed to value highly any gesture of friendship shown to him by those with whom he had been associated during his twenty-two years as a Seventh-day Adventist minister. This I witnessed many times while I was his secretary.

It is interesting to note that while his former brethren could not sympathize with his departure from the faith he had once held and taught, several among them who had labored closely with him kept in touch. He was always pleased whenever he was invited to meetings where he knew he would meet his former brethren, and

occasionally he attended Adventist church services. I shall cite several examples of this in due time.

D. W. Reavis, Mr. Canright's lifelong friend whom I have quoted earlier, tells of his last interview with Mr. Canright. He writes:

All the years intervening between the time of our Chicago association in 1880, and 1903, I occasionally corresponded with Elder Canright, always attempting to do all in my power to save him from wrecking his life and injuring the cause he had done so much to build up. At times I felt hopeful, but every time my encouragement was smothered in still blacker clouds.

I finally prevailed upon him to attend a general meeting of our workers in Battle Creek in 1903, with the view of meeting many of the old workers and having a heart-to-heart talk together. He was delighted with the reception given him by all the old workers, and greatly pleased with the cordiality of the new workers. All through the meetings he would laugh with his eyes full of tears. The poor man seemed to exist simultaneously in two distinct parts-uncontrollable joy and relentless grief.

Finally when he came to the Review and Herald office, [Note 1](#) where I was then working, to tell me good-bye before returning to his home in Grand Rapids, Michigan, we went back in a dark storeroom alone to have a talk, and we spent a long time there in this last personal, heart-to-heart visit. I reminded him of what I had told him years before in Chicago [see p. 58], and he frankly admitted that what I predicted had come to pass, and that he wished the past could be blotted out and that he was back in our work just as he was at the beginning, before any ruinous thoughts of himself had entered his heart.

I tried to get him to say to the workers there assembled just what he had said to me, assuring him that they would be glad to forgive all and to take him back in full confidence. I never heard any one weep and moan in such deep contrition as that once leading light in our message did. It was heartbreaking even to hear him. He said he wished he could come back to the fold as I suggested, but after long, heartbreaking moans and weeping, he said: "I would be glad to come back, but I can't! It's too late! I am forever gone! Gone!" As he wept on my shoulder, he thanked me for all I had tried to do to save him from that sad hour. He said, D. W., whatever you do, don't ever fight the message."-I Remember, pp. 119, 120. [bold underlining supplied]

This was not the only time in his later years that Mr. Canright expressed regret to his Adventist friends for having withdrawn from the church. Nor was it the last time he counseled: "Don't ever fight the message."

Seventh-day Adventists around Otsego remembered Elder Canright well. There he had lived as an Adventist minister in the middle 1880's. It was from the Otsego church he had been disfellowshipped, and from time to time in his later life, though he made his home in Grand Rapids, he would be in Otsego.

Miss Florence E. Ransaw, who for a number of years resided at Otsego, Michigan, recounts an experience that occurred about the year 1912:

While we were yet living in Otsego, Mother and I went to church on Sabbath. The church was full of people that Sabbath, as we had a visiting minister, an

elderly man. I don't remember his name now. He preached a powerful sermon; it sank deep in every heart.

All during the sermon I could hear some one stepping around in the entry-way as the door from the entry-way into the church was open some six or eight inches. I supposed it was some mother trying to keep her child quiet during the meeting as they often did. But instead it was D. M. Canright that was out there all during the sermon, and he surely heard a wonderful[ly] good sermon.

As soon as the minister finished and sat down, and the Elder of the Church announced the closing hymn, in walked Elder Canright briskly up the center isle to the front of the Church and facing the audience said,

"I don't think I need any introduction. I think you all know who I am-D. M. Canright. I love this church, I love this people-I got my first wife out of this church and a better woman never lived-I love this church, I love this people and by rights this is where I belong."

All the while he was speaking he was weeping, using his handkerchief freely. . . . Then the minister spoke up and said, "Well, brother, if that is the way you feel you had better come back to us."

Elder Canright turned to the minister and said, "I can't. I've gone too far." Then he sank down on the front seat weeping and was still sitting there when we left the church."-Letter from Florence E. Ransaw to J. H. Rhoads, written from Charlotte, Michigan, Aug. 26, 1958. [underlining supplied]

D. M. Canright seemed to have no hesitation about visiting freely with the Adventist Church leaders. Elder F. M. Wilcox, for thirty-three years editor in chief of the Review and Herald, relates one such incident:

I recall an interesting conversation which I had with D. M. Canright some time before his death. I was attending a general meeting held in Battle Creek, Michigan. Elder Canright was at the sanitarium taking treatment. He attended some of our meetings.

One day I sat down beside him, and after a pleasant greeting we had the following conversation: I said, "Elder Canright, you may not recall that you organized the little church to which I first belonged in northern New York. I have followed your work through the years, and have regretted to see that you have separated from your former brethren. I am now engaged in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I would like to ask what your counsel is to me. Shall I do as you have done?"

He dropped his head and meditated for a full minute. Then he inquired, "Do you believe the things you preach?"

Is said, "I do with all my heart."

He then asked, "Are you in difficulty with any of your brethren?"

I said, "not in any way. I have always worked very harmoniously with my associates."

Then he said, "My counsel to you is to remain right where you are." It seemed to me that this was significant advice from one who had spent years in fighting the cause which he once espoused. . . . He did not feel free to advise another to follow in his steps.-F. M. Wilcox, in Review and Herald, Aug 22, 1940. [underlining supplied]

Here is yet another incident that reveals how Mr. Canright felt at times. The late Elder K. F. Ambs, of Washington, D.C., recalled the following incident that occurred when he was a boy growing up in Otsego:

One afternoon, while father and I were away at work, mother answered the door and admitted an elderly man who was selling a small book. When she looked at the title it read, Gospel Primer, by J. E. White.

Surprised, she said, "This is a Seventh-day Adventist book, isn't it? To which the old gentleman replied, "Yes, ma'am, it is." "And are you a Seventh-day Adventist? She asked. To this he replied, "Well, I was a Seventh-day Adventist."

Upon asking him his name he replied that his name was Canright.

Are you D. M. Canright?" she asked.

"Yes sister, I'm D. M. Canright."

"Are you that man who had so much light and who turned his back on it?" mother asked.

His response was significant. Said he, "Yes, sister, I am that man, and how often have I sought to find my way back but have been unable to do so."

As he was leaving he shook mother's hand saying, as tears filled his eyes, "Sister, you have the truth, hold fast to it, never let it go. It is the very truth."-Letter from K. F. Ambs to D. A. Delafield, Dec. 4, 1964. [underlining supplied]

But this is not all. Elder J. C. Harris, for many years a minister in the Michigan Conference, soon after the turn of the century met Mr. Canright at Battle Creek and had some conversation with him. Elder Harris could never forget that meeting, and the incident provided a useful illustration, which he often used in his evangelistic work. The account comes to us from his son, William J. Harris, long in ministerial service and later connected with the General Conference in Washington, D.C. He wrote:

I recall how my father on several occasions, when in his public evangelistic efforts he was encouraging new converts to make definite decisions, related an experience he had with D. M. Canright.

Some general meeting, a conference session, or some such type of general gathering, was being held in the old tabernacle at Battle Creek. My father happened to meet Mr. Canright, who had come to meet some of the brethren. They knew each other fairly well and called each other by their given names. After a word or two upon meeting, my father said, "D. M., isn't it about time for you to reconsider and get back into the faith before it is too late?" "No, Jap" (my father's name was Jasper, but many called him "Jap"), said Mr. Canright, "No, I can never do that. The Holy Spirit has left me for good. I can never do that. My heart no longer feels the impression of the Spirit."

I have heard my father repeatedly tell this experience as he sought to warn people of the danger of rejecting the appeals of the Holy Spirit to their hearts.-Statement of William J. Harris to Arthur L. White, Dec. 30, 1964. [underlining supplied]

Elder Clinton Lee, who was living in Battle Creek about 1913, also reports that on one occasion Mr. Canright called at the home of Sister Howe, who lived a couple of blocks from the Battle Creek Tabernacle. Apparently Mr. Canright did not know she was an Adventist.

"How do you do, Elder Canright," she said in response to his knock at the door. She invited him in. "Do you know me?" he asked.

"Indeed, I do," she replied.

After they had talked for a time she asked, "Why don't you come back to the church?"

His reply, spoken in tones of unutterable sadness was: "Sister, it is too late."

With every gesture denoting despair he arose and walked out the door, the words "Too late; too late," like an echo, following him as he made his slow way down the street.

Elder Lee remembers seeing Canright only once, when he walked quietly into a workers' meeting at Grand Rapids. Whenever possible, this seemed to be Canright's custom during the years 1910-1916. He especially enjoyed attending meetings of Seventh-day Adventist ministers. When Canright was pointed out to Brother Lee, the young minister observed that he had only one eye, the result of surgery. Everyone noticed how pleased he was to meet with some of his former brethren. [bold & underlining supplied]

Canright's visit to Battle Creek about the time this incident took place is attested to in a letter he wrote to Elder J. H. Morrison, dated June 25, 1913. Speaking of his former brethren he says: "I have just spent two weeks in Battle Creek, attending all their meetings and having long visits with ministers, brethren and sisters. All greeted me in the kindest way and I enjoyed it greatly."

These expressions of regret and despair made by D. M. Canright over a period of years, sometimes in private and occasionally in public gatherings, quite naturally became known. And revealed that in his sincere, quiet moments Mr. Canright freely admitted that when he turned his back on Seventh-day Adventists he turned away from light. Mr. Canright the Baptist was not as happy apart from the Adventists as he sometimes wished people to think. I was to personally witness this fact many times during my brief period as his secretary.

But there was another side to Mr. Canright's personality. As rumors spread that he regretted having left the Adventists, he wrote and published denials. He often repeated these to relatives and to his Baptist friends. One such was published in the Review and Herald. Another he notarized and put in the public press, hoping to smother these reports once and for all. And yet I know from personal experience that there was truth to these reports. Why, then, did he go out of his way to deny them? I think I know why.

Canright was a proud man, and it would not have been advantageous to him for the general public to become aware of his admissions in moments of "weakness."

Perhaps these contradictory statements reflect the dual personality that Mr. Canright had early revealed in his work as a minister in the Adventist Church. Be this as it may, his consistent counsel to his Adventist friends and former brethren was: "Stay where you are." In witness to this is the signed statement of a Seventh-day Adventist very close to him-his own brother, Jasper B. Canright-written in the year 1931 to Elder S. E. Wight, long a Seventh-day Adventist church administrator.

Battle Creek, Michigan

Feb. 24, 1931

Elder S. E. Wight
120 Madison Avenue, S. E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dear Elder Wight:

My brother, the late Elder D. M. Canright, often told me to remain true to the message. He said too: "If you give up the message, it will ruin your life." [Note 2](#)
Many years ago in a public meeting at West Le Roy, where he had been called to oppose the work of a Seventh Day Adventist minister, he made the following statements: "I think I know why you have called me out here. You expect me to prove from the Bible that Sunday is the Sabbath, and Saturday isn't the Sabbath. Now I can't prove from the Bible that Sunday is the Sabbath, for it isn't there, and I think I can convince you that Saturday is not the Sabbath [sic]."

Then again as he stood at Sr. White's casket with one hand in my arm and the other hand on her coffin with tears streaming down his cheeks, he said: "There's a noble Christian woman gone." [Note 3](#)

Sincerely yours in the blessed hope,

(Signed) J. B. Canright

In a letter written a few months later to Elder W. H. Branson, Jasper Canright affirmed his personal faith in the message his brother, D. M. Canright, had taught him. He said:

Battle Creek, Michigan

May 11, 1931

Dear Bro. Branson:

I learned this truth from my brother, D. M. Canright, when I was twelve years of age and it is clearer and brighter now than ever before and I am eight-three years old.

I believe the Lord is soon coming and I am looking forward to seeing Him and having a home on the new earth.

I am thankful for the Sabbath, which is a weekly memorial of His creative and redeeming power.

Your brother,

(Signed) Jasper B. Canright

In my contacts with him as his secretary I learned that Mr. Canright intermittently turned to selling religious literature-often Seventh-day Adventist books-and not infrequently the children's books written and published by James Edson White, elder son of James and Ellen White-a rather strange anomaly. During these years he lost his left eye, his children grew up and embarked on life for themselves, his finances waned, royalties from his literary productions slumped, and he supplemented this and the income from his poor little farm with the sale of children's books.

It was in this period that I became acquainted with Mr. Canright and for seven months served as his secretary. Mr. Canright was then seventy-two years of age. His wife had just died, and with the aid and encouragement of his friends in Battle Creek he was again turning to the production of literary works as a means of bolstering his income.

But before relating my experience as Mr. Canright's secretary, I would like to tell how I became a Seventh-day Adventist.

1. The main building burned on December 30, 1902, but the book depository across the street known as the West Building was untouched. It must have been here that the experience described in the following paragraphs took place.[\[back to text\]](#)
2. Jasper Canright died at Battle Creek, Michigan, September 4, 1931. In his obituary in the Review and Herald, October 15, 1931, it is reported: "His brother, D. M. Canright, once said to him, 'Don't give up the message; for if you do, it will ruin your life.' He heeded well this admonition." [underlining supplied][\[back to text\]](#)
3. Others who overheard Canright at the Ellen G. White funeral, July 23, 1915, have attested to statement. See pages 156, 159.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

My Family and Canright's Book

BOTH MY father's and my mother's people immigrated from Europe to the New World. My father, John Januszewski, emigrated with his parents from the Russo-Polish border country to Quebec, Canada. When they took up their new life here they were ardent Catholics, and it was the Catholic priest who sponsored the family when they came to the Western world. They thought it an honor to apprentice father, at the age of ten, to the priest. He became the man's personal valet and altar boy, and was carefully trained in the routine of the church.

As a boy he became skilled in his duties and in time became adept at lifting coins from the church coffers. He observed others engaged in this latter activity and reasoned, Why not me? When his father and mother, brothers and sisters, crossed the border into the United States and settled in Winona, Minnesota, John was left in Canada in the care of the clergy. At age sixteen he became restless and determined to follow his parents. To get into the United States where they now lived, he swam part of the way across the St. Lawrence River. In time he married my mother, Susan Koenig.

My mother's parents had immigrated from Posen, Prussia, where they served in the household of Prince Otto Von Bismark. Grandfather had been quartered on Prince Bismark's summer estate as veterinarian. Grandmother was first lady's maid to the princess. They were strict Lutherans and chose to come to America because of religious persecution. Grandfather also wanted to avoid being drafted into the king's personal army guard.

While in Prussia, grandma had listened to conversations by the princess about the Seventh-day Sabbath. It appears that literature on this subject had been sent to the royal household by J. H. Waggoner. Now, many years later in America, my mother's parents heard the same subject again discussed.

Father attended church only occasionally and probably went to confession once a year at Easter time. He remained a Catholic all his life, and exhibited fiery intolerance at the sight or sound of a Seventh-day Adventist. Mother allowed the children to be baptized Catholics, and at first she shared father's attitude toward Adventists.

When I was nearly five, my parents lived on a farm at Plover, Wisconsin, where I was born, the eleventh of twelve children. Plover was nine miles from Stevens Point, Wisconsin. In 1897 Elder Allen Moon, with an associate, organized a group of Sabbath believers in Stevens Point. Someone in this group sometimes sent a Sabbath school quarterly in German or the *Hausefreund*, the Adventist church paper for German-speaking believers, to my mother. She appreciated this friendly gesture. It provided something she could read in her own language. Each of my parents understood the other's language.

Father spoke Polish to mother, and she spoke German to him. I often wondered how the farm animals understood and responded appropriately to their commands in different languages. As children we absorbed a little of both languages until we started school, after which we spoke mostly in English.

One hot summer day while we were living at this farm in Plover, Wisconsin, mother was baking bread with the windows and doors wide open. All at once she noticed a man coming over the hill. She concluded that he must have come by train to Stevens Point and then walked the nine miles to our home. As he came closer, she realized that it must be Uncle John.

Mother knew that her parents and family had attended Elders Schultz and Hill's Bible class in Winona, Minnesota, and had been baptized as Seventh-day Adventists and that they were now members of the Winona Seventh-day Adventist church. To her at that time, Uncle John was an unwelcome guest.

She declared, "If he says anything about that Sabbath, this time I'll fix him good." Soon Uncle John was seated in the kitchen in front of the open window with me on his lap. He proceeded to teach me how to count from the calendar on the wall. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven is the Sabbath," he repeated time and again until I could count to "seven is the Sabbath."

After I had learned this sequence he taught me the days of the week in a similar manner: "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday," always ending with, "Saturday is the Sabbath."

Before long this dialog was more than mother could stand. Suddenly she seized a piece of stove wood, which she had carefully laid aside for just such an occasion, and rushed at Uncle John, brandishing it and shouting, "I'll show you about that Sabbath!"

Uncle John, who was small of stature but nimble as a cat, dropped me unceremoniously and plunged through the open window, breaking the mosquito netting.

Once outside, he stood at a safe distance and quoted Mark 6:11 to mother in German. I shall always remember his saying, "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them." Having delivered his message, he proceeded over the hill in the direction from which he had come, whistling as he went.

Suddenly the realization of what she had done struck home to mother. She began to cry.

"What have I done?" she lamented. "I have chased my brother away. He may never come back, and he came all the way from Winona, Minnesota, to see me."

In deep remorse and contrition, she said to her eight-year old son, "Fritz, make it fast, overtake Uncle John and bring him back. Tell him I will listen to him, and that he must come back!"

Fred (Fritz) Shasky^{[Note 1](#)} still remembers how fast he ran that summer day to bring Uncle John back.

The next day Uncle John was again ordered to leave the house, this time by my father, who straitly commanded him to make a hasty exit and forbade him ever to darken our door again.

While father turned a deaf ear to Uncle John's teachings, mother pondered his words-"One, two, three, four five, six, seven is the Sabbath."

During the next twelve years we moved five times, mostly because father wanted to get away from the Adventists. Yet it seemed that each time we settled near Adventists.

After our first move to Caledonia, Wisconsin, father learned too late that his second closest neighbor was a Seventh-day Adventist by the name of Grant Owens. This realization brought on an outburst of anger, but in time father simmered down and eventually Grant Owens became father's most helpful and trusted neighbor. The other moves to Lewiston, Wisconsin, and Moundville and Tomah, Wisconsin, again brought us close to Adventist neighbors, so that one day father declared in frustration that Adventists were neither born nor made, they just oozed up from the ground.

The move to the Tomah farm brought the family closer to Winona, Minnesota, where Uncle John and Aunt Augusta lived. One day Uncle John and his wife drove into the yard with horse and buggy to visit mother. Mother welcomed them heartily.

Father was not home when they arrived. Uncle John, an interior decorator, often carried rolls of wallpaper in his buggy. Mother quickly figured a way to make it possible for Uncle John and his wife to be allowed to stay in our home for a few days. She ordered us children to quickly strip the old wallpaper from the dining room and kitchen walls. When father returned three hours later, Uncle John and Aunt Augusta were cheerfully applying new wall paper. What could he say? He could not order them out of the house, so he gave them a time limit to complete the job. With Mother's subtle encouragement,

Uncle John took his time, but eventually there was another explosion, which ended in another sudden departure for Uncle John.

There was an Adventist church twelve miles from our home in Tomah. My older sister, Mary, and my brother Fred decided to investigate that church. In order to

attend each Sabbath, they walked through swamps and woods, crossed fields and climbed through barbed-wire fences, but at least they arrived on time for Sabbath school and church. Here they were baptized and became members of the Tomah, Wisconsin, church. Mary Omans and Fred Shasky, still living at this writing, marvel at their then-youthful energy and zeal.

Father's next move was to Perham, a northern Minnesota prairie town of 1,300 inhabitants. Nearly all his relatives lived in the surrounding community-almost 150 of them. In this place my associates were all Catholics. This included my relatives, my teachers, and the nuns and priests. Who frequently visited father, eating at our home and partaking with father of his choicest liquors. I attended Catholic functions, mass, and liturgical sessions and joined my cousins attending confessionals.

Early one Sunday evening in the spring of 1912, an older sis, a cousin, and I returned from services in the Catholic church. As we passed the little Methodist church, we observed that lights were burning in it. Twice a day going to and from school we passed this building. It had been boarded up, so when we saw lights in the church we became curious and wondered what we should do.

"Shall we report it to the police," we asked one another, "or shall we investigate the matter ourselves?" We knew it was a Protestant church, and we also knew we would be violating the rules of the Catholic Church if we were to enter. We had been taught that to enter a Protestant church would be a "mortal sin."

My cousin, the boldest of the three of us, said, "Oh, come on, we can confess it later to the priest!"

As we entered cautiously we were greeted by several people, including an itinerant Methodist preacher. He inquired whether any of us girls could play the organ. I answered that I could. His stentorian voice covered my errors, and we enjoyed a lively song service.

I still remember the first hymn, "Marching to Zion." The words of the opening line-"Come ye that love the Lord, and let your joys be known:-still linger in my memory. It was an exciting experience. I gladly accepted the preacher's invitation to return the following Sunday night to play for the service. Soon he asked me to teach a class of children in the Sunday school. These meetings were new and very different from the meetings to which I had been accustomed. I had to study the Sunday school lessons and lesson helps diligently each week as I prepared myself to teach the children. But I enjoyed the work.

Everything went smoothly because father supposed that when I left home on Sunday evening I must be going to the Catholic church. But before long the preacher began to urge me to become a member of his church. At the time, membership in a Protestant church was the farthest thing from my mind. The preacher persisted, and I felt he was badgering me. He said I could not play the organ or teach the children's Sunday school class unless I joined his church. This made me most unhappy. Why should I have to do that? Finally I blurted out, "If ever I become a Protestant, I will be a Seventh-day Adventist."

To this he retorted, "There isn't a Seventh-day Adventist church within thirty-five miles of here."

I know it," I replied, "and that is why I said it. I don't want to join any Protestant church."

In exasperation he said, "I have a book that I will bring for you to read. If you read it, you will have all you want of Seventh-day Adventism."

I promised to read the book as a way out of a tight situation. The next Sunday the preacher handed me the book-Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, by D. M. Canright. He told me in considerable detail who D. M. Canright was, and assured me that the author was still living.

I took the book home and showed it to mother, wishing I hadn't promised to read it. My mother didn't read English or speak it well.

"You read to me what stands in there," she requested. Carefully concealing the book from father, I read to mother after he had retired. I found the book hard to understand. But after my mother listened to me read from it a few chapters, she said, "There is error in that book. You take it back to the preacher."

I took the book back to the church the next Sunday evening. Not knowing what to say, I said rather undiplomatically, "I brought your book back. Mother says there is error in it."

He asked, "What do you think about what your mother said?"

I replied, "Well, you say the author is still living. If I should ever meet him, that will be time enough to decide whether he is right or wrong."

The exasperated Methodist preacher quickly terminated my activity in his church. However, his congregation felt that without the organist the services had lost something. Attendance dwindled from this and other causes, and soon the building was closed and boarded up.

With my abrupt dismissal I felt as if the center beam of my physical structure had collapsed. My Sunday school girls of ten and twelve had been my pride and joy. I had been teaching them music on the church organ, and was organizing children's programs for the benefit of the church. I had no desire to return to my old associates. Now all this activity I had enjoyed so much was over. My sister, who had accompanied me into the church to investigate, was now in Fargo, North Dakota, attending a normal teachers' training school. For my part I had completed high school, but what was there left for me to do?

About this time an inner voice kept saying, "Make good what you told the preacher. Make good what you told the preacher." Over and over it repeated, "Make good what you told the preacher."

I began to wonder what I had actually told the preacher. With deliberate and serious concentration, I finally remembered. I remembered I had told him that if ever I joined a Protestant church it would be the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1. The public school teacher, unable to negotiate the name Januszewski, changed it to Shasky, and the family, father excepted, adopted this simplification.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER TWELVE

Baptism and Battle Creek

MOTHER HAD learned that in a few days a Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting was to be held in Northfield, Minnesota, June 6-16, 1912. She arranged that I should attend that camp meeting with an older sister and her husband. Mother didn't seem concerned about the storm that would surely follow when father learned of it, but she did take steps to avoid precipitating it before we left.

The next Sunday evening I left home as usual, presumably for Sunday night services. Instead I went to the home of friends to wait for the midnight train. My sister and her husband, who were also going to camp meeting for the first time, went to Frazee, a station before Perham, and bought their tickets and mine. This fast train did not stop in Perham unless the tickets had been purchased in advance.

At home I had been sleeping with an older sister, Rose, because she frequently had nightmares and had to be awakened. She generally had these nightmares when the locomotive and cars thundered past at midnight. As mother expected, the nightmare came this Sunday night just as the train was passing. Dad asked, "What's the matter with Carrie; why doesn't she awaken her?"

Mother replied, "Because Carrie is on that train that just passed." Father had to awaken Rose.

Dad's fury at discovering that I was on that train and that I was going to a Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting was something to behold. But by the time I returned home eight days later it had abated considerably. Yet it still rankled in his heart.

For my part the thrill of actually being on my way to camp meeting and riding on that train was soon dampened. I began to suffer at intervals with abdominal pains, which increased in intensity with the passage of time. When we arrived at the campground a Dr. Nelson was promptly summoned. He readily diagnosed my case as appendicitis and urged immediate surgery. But this could not be performed without father's consent, because I was a minor.

Knowing in advance that father would say, "Let her die," I told the doctor how I had left home and had come to camp meeting to be baptized, and that I felt certain I would not be cheated of this privilege by dying ahead of time.

The baptismal service was scheduled for the last Sunday of camp meeting. Dr. Nelson declared, "under the circumstances, I will do all I can and leave the results with the Lord." This pleased me. He ordered ice, in which to pack me. I was to have no food or drink, and I was not to be left alone day or night.

Sabbath came, and since I was without pain I urged my sister who attended me to go to the meetings. As soon as she was gone I got up and dressed. I was weak and dizzy, but I made my way to the night meeting in the big tent and found a seat. I was late but happy. In spite of the darkness in the tent Dr. Nelson recognized me as I sat down beside him, and he quickly inquired, "Did anyone help you dress?"

"No," I replied.

"Have you had something to eat?"

"No."

"You have disregarded my orders by getting up and dressing," he said sharply.

"Yes," I said, "because I came here to be baptized, and tomorrow is the day."

"All right, young lady, go back to your tent," he ordered. "Have some grape juice and corn flakes. I'll see you early in the morning."

Dr. Nelson came early and to his surprise found me up and dressed. He personally supervised my activity and diet for the day. He took me in his car to the lake, where the baptism was conducted by Elder S. A. Ruskjer. This was the first time in my life I had ridden in an automobile. It made for two high lights in one day.

When I arrived home the next day, father greeted me with what I expected- "Why did you come home? I wish you had died."

Within three months after the camp meeting father decided to move to Battle Creek, Michigan. He had suffered severe losses, crop failures, and financial reverses as a result of a drought. But the deciding factor was the fact that about this time we received a letter from my brother Joe, a trained nurse at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, saying, "Come to Chicago where the sun shines on both sides of the fence." This settled it in father's mind. Somehow he was willing to leave his Catholic relatives and move to a more promising community, even if it took him into a predominantly Adventist neighborhood.

On August 25, 1912, there was much excitement in Perham. Six full-fare tickets had been purchased to Battle Creek, Michigan. Normally the noon train passed this little station as if it weren't there. But the six tickets brought the leviathan to a halt, just long enough for us to climb the steps and load the baggage. Then it resumed its run.

Friends, neighbors, relatives, had all come out for the occasion, and some said they got close enough "to hear some words spoken by the engineer and conductor."

Sometime after dark we arrived in Minneapolis, and after transferring to another station, had time to visit with my brother William and his wife, Clara Kressin. [Note 1](#)

The all-night coach seat became very uncomfortable long before we reached Chicago. Here we transferred again. The change in scenery was dramatic. From an almost soundless Minnesota prairie, to which we were accustomed, we were suddenly thrown into a babble of sights and sounds and confusion of tongues that was both exciting and distracting. The wash rooms on the trains and in the stations seemed marvelous to us. This was our first experience with modern plumbing.

As we traveled along on the Michigan Central, we passed Kalamazoo, Michigan, and before long the conductor boomed, "Battle Creek; this way out." A huge pile of trunks, valises, suitcases, traveling bags, were unloaded. Sanitarium porters were there to greet the many people. It seemed as if almost everyone on the train was stopping at Battle Creek. These people were taken to the Battle Creek Sanitarium in hacks and limousines.

We made our way to a street car, paid the five-cent fare, and soon were on our way to my brother's home. As we went out North Washington Street past the Sanitarium, we saw a crowd milling on the steps and lawn. We went to the end of the line, then walked a few blocks to the home of my brother Joseph and wife, Nina.

The words "Battle Creek" are enshrined in memory's hall by Seventh-day Adventists. This is understandable, because this is the place where the church grew up, so to speak. It was here that the various lines of the work of the church came to full development. It is said that a letter from any country in the world addressed to: "The Sanitarium, Battle Creek, U.S.A.," would be delivered to the once-famous Battle Creek Sanitarium.

Mother discovered that Battle Creek was a place where she could worship without interference from father. While father waited to take possession of a farm he had purchased some six miles out of Battle Creek, the family lived in a rented apartment, and mother could walk to the Battle Creek Tabernacle for church services. I remember that she was especially eager to partake of the communion service. She had heard about this service, but longed for the privilege of participating personally. The coveted privilege she enjoyed but once, five weeks after reaching Battle Creek. The following Sabbath, or six weeks after we came to Battle Creek, her funeral was conducted from the Tabernacle.

My mother's funeral was the first occasion involving her over which my father had no control. Mother and the four children living at home had requested membership at the Tabernacle, and the children insisted that the funeral be held there. After raising his voice in protest, Father acquiesced to the funeral arrangements, and for the first time in his life entered a Protestant church. To a great extent the heavy hand of Romanism was lifting. My eldest sister, Rose, volunteered to keep the home intact. I chose to be independent and make my own way. Father was soon on his farm a few miles away.

I quickly found work in the Battle Creek Sanitarium helper's kitchen, washing and drying glasses and silverware and assisting in kitchen work. I arranged to live with the Carl Kelly family, occasionally baby-sitting to help pay for my board and room.

While working in the Sanitarium kitchen I noticed from time to time that a tall poorly clad elderly gentleman would come in the back door of the kitchen. He stood straight, and his bearing indicated that he had been a man of some distinction. He carried a courtesy meal ticket and he would sit at the corner of a worktable. Someone would fix up a tray for him and take it to him. At times I fixed the tray. His uncut hair, his untrimmed and dirty finger nails, his unkempt attire, the absence of one eye, made this stranger somewhat repulsive to the girls who waited upon him. We were all curious to know who he was, but no one seemed to know. We called him "Mr. X." All we knew was that we did not enjoy his presence in the helper's kitchen, and that he entered and left by the back door.

After a few weeks' employment at the Sanitarium I enrolled in the Battle Creek Business College to continue my studies and improve my skill in shorthand and typewriting. Mrs. Kelly encouraged me in doing this. She introduced me to Mr.

W. E. Cornell, and on her recommendation Mr. Cornell consented to wait for tuition until I had completed my studies and had begun to earn wages.

1. Clara became my sister-in-law, and at this writing (1970) is now a retired employee of the Voice of Prophecy, in Glendale, California [[back to text](#)]

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Work Begins With D. M. Canright

IT WAS in Mr. Cornell's office, as I stated in the opening chapter, that I was first introduced to Mr. Canright. It was nine-thirty Thursday morning, January 2, 1913. Early that morning Lucy Hadden Canright, Mr. Canright's wife, passed away. This blow brought him grief, confusion and frustration to the point of shock. He hastily boarded the trolley at North Park near Grand Rapids, Michigan, and journeyed to Battle Creek, seeking his early Adventist friends. Instinctively he turned to the Amadons, only to find Martha Amadon living with her daughter and George Amadon very ill. Martha directed Mr. Canright to W. E. Cornell's home, just two blocks away.

Together the two men came to the business college about nine o'clock that morning, where Mr. Cornell approached me a few minutes later in the typing room, prior to the introduction in his private office. Mr. Cornell had once been an Adventist, and later returned to the church. [Underlining supplied]

After being sworn to secrecy, I was told that I was to work for a former prominent Seventh-day Adventist minister. Mr. Cornell told me that he himself had been his first secretary and that I would be his last secretary. I was reminded that I should not reveal what was said or done or for whom I was to work.

I was petrified in Mr. Cornell's office as I was introduced to D. M. Canright. I recognized with consternation that my new boss, "the former prominent Seventh-day Adventist," was none other than the familiar "Mr. X" whom I had seen in the helper's kitchen. Mr. Cornell sensed my distress, and hurried out of the office, locking the door. My thoughts were What have I been tricked into? After I got hold of myself, I remembered that eight months earlier I had declared to the Methodist preacher who lent me the book by Mr. Canright that if I should ever meet Mr. Canright it would be time enough to decide whether he was right or wrong. The thought crossed my mind that maybe he was right. If so, this would be my chance to find out.

Moments later Mr. Cornell returned, explaining his reason for locking the door. The students were assembling, and he was afraid that someone might barge in, but within those few moments much passed through my mind.

As I evaluated the man standing before me, I couldn't help also thinking, How are thou fallen! All this and more raced through my mind as I braced myself to face the challenge of my first secretarial job.

When Mr. Cornell returned he outlined some regulations to which Mr. Canright and I were to adhere. He elaborated on this a few days later.

Mr. Cornell then plunged into helping Mr. Canright notify those he knew in Battle Creek of the circumstances that brought him there. Mr. Canright dictated an announcement of his wife's death for the Otsego Union. This was my first work for him, and it was a trying experience for both of us as the tears, not under control, rolled down his face. The paper, a weekly journal, carried the notice on the day of the funeral. The Dorcas Society of the Battle Creek church sent an appropriate floral tribute. His friends in Battle Creek invited him to stay in Battle Creek after the funeral and pursue his literary work there. Among his projects were correspondence to carry on and a book manuscript to finish- *The Lord's Day From Neither Catholics nor Pagans*.

For a few days Mr. Canright was in Grand Rapids and then in Otsego, where he attended the funeral. I was now in Mr. Cornell's employ, and he sent me to the Sanitarium College library to do piece work, such as addressing envelopes at \$1.00 per thousand. In three days I was recalled by Mr. Cornell. Mr. Canright was back, and I was placed at his disposal for secretarial work. The routine of dictating personal letters now began.

As the news of Mrs. Canright's death spread through Adventist circles, letters of condolence began to come in. Sympathy, tributes, and some monetary contributions came from his old Adventist brethren. These gestures of kindness were gratefully acknowledged by him through letters that he dictated to me.

Mr. Cornell now became very specific in outlining the regulations by which we would work. I must tell no one that I was working for Mr. Canright or what I was doing. I was to come and go as if attending classes. The door was to be kept locked to prevent student intrusion. I was to keep Mr. Canright well informed of all Tabernacle church announcements, where and when weekly prayer meetings were to be held, et cetera.

A little later, in private, Mr. Cornell instructed me to learn from Mr. Canright what his activities would be, and report back to him. I was to report whom he saw and conversed with. Once again I was required to pledge secrecy and loyalty to him.

While making arrangements, Mr. Cornell requested that Mr. Canright not arrive at the school before nine-thirty in the morning, and that he must always use the rear entrance. After school hours he was free to leave by either exit.

All these injunctions left me with a troubled mind. I felt hemmed in, even tricked, at having been sworn to secrecy without the right to discuss my perplexity with others and seek counsel. I remember that Mr. Canright was greatly disappointed when he learned that he could not stay at the Amadon home, owing to Mr. Amadon's illness. As noted earlier, it was at the Amadon home where Lucretia Cranson, Mr. Canright's first wife, had lived after her parents passed away, and this is where she was living when she married Dudley. It was also here that the two Canright children, Fred and Genevieve, stayed for about two years

after Lucretia's death. The Amadons had always befriended the Canrights, but now George Amadon was very low and near death.

Mr. Canright also learned before long, if he didn't already know, that Battle Creek was not the same place he had known some thirty or more years before. Many of his old Adventist friends had moved away, and others were lying in Oak Hill Cemetery, where Lucretia was buried.

The college had been moved to Berrien Springs, the Review and Herald Publishing house had burned down and was now situated in Washington, D. C., as was also the General Conference. The Battle Creek Sanitarium had also burned and had been rebuilt, and was now under new management. The Health Reformer, a Seventh-day Adventist publication, was gone. The Haskell Home Orphanage was gone. The only thing left as Dudley knew it was the good old "Dime Tabernacle," built from dimes contributed back in the late 1870's.

Mr. Canright either would not or could not be consoled. His grief was heart rending. When Martha Amadon urged him to return to his former faith he replied, "I can't; it is too late." [underline supplied]

It was then that I began to understand the full impact of his inconsolable grief. Even though his former brethren suggested many devices to occupy his mind and time, all were to no avail. His greatest concern seemed to be that he could not stay with the Amadons. To all this another grief was added when, a few weeks later, George Amadon died-on February 26, 1913.

Mr. Canright, adjusting as well as he could to the inevitable, lived in the cottage room furnished by Dr. Kellogg and ate his meals at the corner of the worktable in the Sanitarium kitchen on a meal ticket furnished for him by Dr. Kellogg himself. Meanwhile he settled down to writing and working in the office at the business college I have described.

His daily dictation was divided into two main parts: The answering of personal letters he had received, and the dictating of portions of the manuscripts for his books.

The letters he received daily dealt with questions that had come to the minds of those who read his book Seventh-day Adventism Renounced. He had a form letter he often had me type to be sent to persons who had made inquiry. I was to enclose with the letter certain little pamphlets he had written with one or another aspect of Adventist teachings.

The second half of his dictation, as I mentioned, related to the books he was writing. At the time I became his secretary his book on The Lord's Day was nearly complete. He had prepared this as "an answer to Seventh-day Adventism" on the subject of the seventh-day Sabbath. At the same time he was revising the introductory material for a new printing of his book Seventh-day Adventism Renounced.

Almost every day he wrote a letter to Madge Knevals Goodrich, writer for the Baptist Herald, published in Detroit, recounting somewhat in serial form his life history. Through these letters I learned a good deal about his life. In these letters he told about severe headaches that had troubled him from youth. He also told of an eye ailment, with its burning physical agony, that had plagued him viciously for years, and what steps he had taken to obtain relief. The eye trouble, I

remember, had been diagnosed as tic douloureux. I recall that he had finally been told by a surgeon in Ann Arbor that if he were willing to lose his left eye he might save the other. But he was also warned that the operation might prove fatal.

I gathered from what he dictated that he underwent surgery without the comfort or benefit of any assurance he would awaken from the anesthetic, and that in this tortured situation, extreme mental depression intensified in his mind. It was strange how he seemed to have the will to live, but not the courage to die. I observed that an overwhelming desire for peace of mind seemed to dominate his subconsciousness. He seemed to yearn to be free from a kind of demonic power that controlled him. He craved the warmth of companionship of his former Seventh-day Adventist associates, yet he seemed incapable of ceasing to fight their beliefs and teachings.

I have gathered that after his operation, he was informed by his surgeon that his left eye, together with the facial nerves, had been removed, and that if a delicate tissue in his brain did not become blood soaked and break loose within six hours after the operation, his chance for recovery was good. It all went well, the burning sensation in his brain would subside and the unbearable pain would leave. During the six critical hours he was kept awake, motionless, and in a sitting position by nurse attendants, after which the surgeon pronounced him out of immediate danger. As I have already indicated, the operation left D. M. Canright with a sunken, empty eye socket, which, when I knew him, he seldom took pains to hide.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Mr. Canright and His Friends

MR. CANRIGHT worked off and on during the rest of the winter months. He frequently took the trolley to his home in Grand Rapids. While he now had no desire to remain there, he did need to look after the place. He became irregular in his office hours, and some days failed to show up at all. This irritated Mr. Cornell, because I came to the office faithfully each day only to find he was not there, and Mr. Cornell was well aware that I could have been gainfully employed at the library.

Cornell was a man of moods and speedy action. He demanded reasons of Mr. Canright for his irregular behaviors. His explanation again drew our sympathy, and we were ready to overlook the inconvenience he caused us.

Canright explained how much he needed money. Among other things, he needed money for trolley fare to his home at Grand Rapids as well as money to visit his daughters and grandson in Hillsdale. Besides these relatives he had a brother, Jasper, in Urbandale, a suburb of Battle Creek, and other relatives here and there; and though trolley fare was only a nickel, nickels were hard to come by in those

days. I remember that Mr. Canright had some copies of Elder J. E. White's books Gospel Primer and Best Stories From the Best Book, besides Bibles, which were left over from his wife's former canvassing, and these he had been selling from door to door to help make ends meet.

I asked him one day why he didn't canvass in Grand Rapids and live at home. He replied, "I'm a Baptist in Grand Rapids. These books do not have so ready a sale there as in Battle Creek. Battle Creek is stuffed with Adventists. They are the people who buy these books and Bibles."

As time went on his financial needs became increasingly acute. This concerned both his former Adventist brethren and others in Battle Creek who knew him.

One day in late April that year Mr. Cornell told me he had counseled with Drs. Kellogg and Steward, and that the money had been raised to send Mr. Canright to Lincoln, Nebraska, to connect with a group of ex-Adventists by whom he was well known. As I remember they were publishing a paper titled The Gathering Call, which was devoted in part to attacking Adventist doctrines. Apparently it was hoped that he would fit into their scheme of things. Mr. Canright didn't seem pleased with this move, but due to his impecunious situation there was nothing he could do but conform to the wishes of those upon whom he was largely dependent.

Mr. Cornell, relieved of his burden, sent me to work for the Good Health Publishing Company. Everyone was happy, but not for long. Very soon I received a proposal for marriage. I wasn't interested, but the suitor was so insistent that one day I got up from my desk, walked out, and went back to Cornell's school. On the way there I wondered what I was going to tell Mr. Cornell. When I met him I said, "I guess I got fired and came back."

Mr. Cornell grabbed his telephone and called the supervisor of the department where I had been working, and after a heated conversation turned to me and said with all the earnestness at his command, "Now what am I going to do with you? Aren't you ever going to say Yes, when a man asks to marry you?" Considering the frame of mind I was then in I wasn't about to accept a proposal for marriage from any man.

Just at that moment we heard familiar footsteps on the long stairway. We recognized them as Mr. Canright's. This momentary interruption broke the tension, and I went to the assembly room to pick up some odds and ends I had left in my desk, fully expecting to be dismissed from school. But on my way out, Mr. Cornell called me to his office. I learned that Mr. Canright had just returned from Lincoln. He was tired and discouraged. As he sat in Mr. Cornell's office he told us that John F. Ballenger, who had headed The Gathering Call, had died; that M. E. Kellogg, A. T. Jones, A. F. Ballenger, and Elder Rupert were quarreling among themselves. He further said that The Gathering Call was about to be moved to California, and that they had no vacancy for him.

He now poured out his lamentations. In substance he declared, "I'm a man without a home. My daughters Bessie and Nellie are schoolteaching. They stay with their half-sister, Genevieve, who lives in Hillsdale and is having a hard time maintaining a home for her son, who is in college, and her two half-sisters. I am welcome there, but I can't put another burden upon her."

"I have no way of maintaining myself. The royalties on my books have run out. The farm is a sand hill. I can't raise much on it, neither can I rent it profitably."

Mr. Cornell questioned him about the Baptists.

With tears in his eyes he replied, "The Baptists here in Battle Creek have provided me with a key to the church basement and with an old desk in a corner. I can go and come there at will, and at Grand Rapids they have honored me with the title of Pastor Emeritus. But they say I am too shabby and don't grace the Baptist dignity, so they don't contribute to my support. I am virtually rejected by the Baptists.

"The Adventists still owe me something for all the work I did for them and all the money I raised. There are the fundraising projects I promoted, which they still use.

"My daughter Nellie is a Christian Scientist and a practitioner for the Christian Science people. All the girls follow Christian Science. Jasper is in the country; his wife is sick; I can't go there. My cousin, Theodore, lives in town; I don't get along with him; I can't stay there. I have no money to get a glass eye or suitable clothing."

I later learned that adverse financial conditions had prevailed for years, and that for two years prior to his wife's death he had been unable to maintain their household. His wife had lived with her brother's family, and had sustained herself by door-to-door selling of Adventist children's books.

Our hearts were touched by this recital of woe. Mr. Cornell suggested he again stay in the same cottage in back of the Sanitarium helpers' kitchen, where he had stayed off and on before. In this way he could come in, in the morning to dictate his letters and do such other work as he chose. I agreed to return and work for him, since I was still working off my bill to Mr. Cornell.

The next morning, or soon after-on May 5-Mr. Canright dictated the following letter to D. W. Reavis:

Grand Rapids, Michigan [Note 1](#)

May 5, 1913

D. W. Reavis

Review and Herald,

Takoma Park,

Washington, D.C.

Dear Brother:

I enclose an obituary of my wife. Will you please put it in the Review right away. I think you must have known her, as she was in Battle Creek a good deal. I have written the notice very carefully so that I think there is nothing objectionable in it. If you think there is, cut it out, but don't add anything or change anything.

By reading it you will see she had a large circle of warm friends among Adventists. I think it is proper that they should know of her death. Of course, you know she was united with the Baptists with me. I have not mentioned that and it wasn't necessary. She took no interest in religious controversies and loved everybody and would have worked readily with Adventists had I stayed with them, but she went with me heartily, and we worked together nicely.

Had a fine letter from Brother [M. E.] Cornell and another from [F. M.] Wilcox. Brother Reavis I am becoming ashamed of the sharp, harsh spirit, I, with others, have had. I think a little more charity and kindness will be better all round and that is what I mean to cultivate from this on. Your kind letters help me a good deal that way. I am going up to Battle Creek shortly and have a good visit with my old Adventist friends.

Sincerely,

(Signed) D. M. Canright

The same day I took down in shorthand this obituary. It seemed incomprehensible to me why, four and a half months after his wife's death he should belatedly send his wife's obituary to the Adventist weekly, Review and Herald, with the request that it be promptly published. This, just before the General Conference session which was due to convene in Washington, D.C., on May 15. I wondered if he was again reaching out to his former Adventist brethren. Was he seeking an invitation to the General Conference session that would bring him again in close association with Adventist ministers? Having observed his eagerness to attend Adventist meetings in Battle Creek, I wondered.

I remember that he was particularly pleased when he received a letter from Mr. Reavis, promising that the obituary would be published. The obituary appeared in the issue of June 12, 1913, as follows:

CANRIGHT-Died, recently, at Grand Rapids, Mich., Mrs. Lucy Hadden Canright, wife of Elder D. M. Canright, of pneumonia and heart failure, aged 57 years. She had been failing some for nearly a year, but neither she nor the family supposed it was anything serious. At last she was persuaded to see the family physician. All were shocked when told that she was in the last stages of heart-disease, could live but a few months at the longest, and might die any day. This was kept from her, and everything possible done to make her life as pleasant as possible. She expected to be well again soon, but caught a slight cold, pneumonia set in, and six days later she died. She suffered very little, and quietly fell asleep, all her family being present.

She leaves one son and two daughters, all of age, unmarried, and at home, when not away teaching, also two brothers and two sisters. The remains were taken to Otsego, Mich., her old home, and buried in the family cemetery. The funeral services were conducted by her pastor, Rev. R. M. Scott.

When she was a small child, her mother, with many others, embraced the Adventist faith under the preaching of Elder M. E. Cornell, at Otsego, Mich., where there has been a strong church ever since. Here Lucy grew up a Sabbath-keeper. Being an excellent organist, a good singer, and an apt teacher, she was always a great help in the Sabbath-school. . . . Mrs. Canright attended the college at Battle Creek, Mich., where Professor Bell was teacher. In 1881 we were married by Elder James White, only a few weeks before his death. Together we visited many of the churches in Michigan, attended a series of camp-meetings in Canada, Maine, New England, New York, etc.

One summer we, with a large company, conducted tent-meetings in Worcester, Mass., and raised up a church there. This was the last time either of us ever saw Sister White. My wife was with me most of the time during my work in the

church and college at Battle Creek, and thus was widely known among Sabbath-keepers. She greatly enjoyed entertaining the ministers and brethren in her own home, and loved them dearly. Among these were Brother and Sister White and both their sons, Edson and W. C., also Elders Butler, Smith, Corliss, and Fargo, and many others. During all her life she often spoke of all these with very kindly words and tender feelings.

She took little interest in doctrinal discussion, a big heart and tender sympathy for all, dominating her life. She cried when circumstances separated her from these old ties, but she went with her companion, and [was] greatly beloved by the church for her efficient and unselfish work. In my absence she conducted services in the pulpit, prayer-meeting, or Sabbath-school. If any in the neighborhood were sick, or poor, or in sorrow, she was the first to know it, the first to be there and see that something was done. She shortened her own life by caring for others when she needed to be cared for herself.

She lived a long life in a few years; but often thought she did not amount to much because not eloquent in speech nor gifted in argument. But when brethren and sisters and neighbors gathered around her casket and their tears fell on her dead face, while they said, "She was a mother to us all," that told a different story. It reminded me of our Lord's parable when he selected those to sit on his right hand who were surprised to be told that they had ever done anything.

There is no mention that Jesus selected any one because he was smart and good in debate. I felt ashamed of myself, for one, that I had not been more like my good wife. By God's grace there shall be hereafter less sharpness and more kindness toward all.

D. M. Canright (*Italics supplied*)

On May 15, having received a favorable response from D. W. Reavis, he wrote at considerable length a letter typical of not a few I transcribed for him at the time and typical also of his conversations with Adventists in the Battle Creek area:

Grand Rapids, Mich.

May 15, 1913

Elder W. A. Colcord,

Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.

Dear Brother:

I write this for you and brother Reavis both together. If it is convenient, wish you would sit down and read it together; if not read it, and hand it to him, as I would say exactly the same thing to each of you. Your letters were both so unexpected and so kind and Christian, that I have had to cry over them several times. I am surprised that you brethren feel so kindly toward me; it has made me ashamed of any harshness I have ever given way to in the past, but I have settled it in my heart now. It has ended forever, and I pray every day that more of the sympathizing of the Master may influence all my thoughts and life.

Bro. Clarke of the Tabernacle announced my wife's death in the pulpit and made very tender reference to me. All this has been too much for me. When a man pitches into me with an argument I rather enjoy it, but when he goes at me as you brethren have, I have no defense whatever. Your willingness to publish my wife's obituary was a very kind act. I wish she could know it. How I would enjoy being

at your conference, but if all the brethren treated me as you do, I'd be afraid to risk it. My sympathy and love for the old brethren would override my judgment.

Now I am glad to say I owe much to Adventism. From them I learned a deep reverence for every word of the Bible, and this abides with me still; a love for the prophecies, which I never would have learned from anybody else; I learned in my sermons to use largely the Bible, couldn't preach any other way. It pains me to hear a minister take a text and then give simply his own talk, sometimes good, often poor.

I have the same faith in the personal second advent of Christ, resurrection of the dead, the judgment, the new earth, the Holy City, recognition of friends, eternal separation of the righteous and wicked, faith in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and all the other grand truths, which are born into my soul, during my early ministry, I preached all this to my church till they are as sound on that as the S. D. A. In return Adventists owe something to me.

Then in detail he recounted the contribution he made to Seventh-day Adventists as he assisted on committees, made suggestions and promoted various activities. His closing paragraphs carried his appreciation for the kindness extended to him, which among other points revealed that he was a subscriber to the Review and Herald. He said:

You are very kind to offer to send me copies with wife's obituary. It will accommodate me a good deal if you will mark her obituary with a blue pencil and mail it to the list that I enclose, and then send me two or three extra copies. You see you could do it at the office so much easier than I can. I enclose \$1.00 to pay for these and the Conference Bulletin, which please send me. If you refuse to take the 50 cents for the papers, credit it on my Review.

I am perfectly well in body and in mind, just as active as ever. Have a beautiful home, worth \$10,000 or \$12,000. Everything I need and a lovely family of children. The Baptist church here, of which I have been pastor twice, always an active member, revere me as their father, and consult me on all important things. My decision on any doctrinal questions settles it. I Love them dearly and believe I shall see a lot of them in the Kingdom. I am 72 years old. My wife's sudden death has about upset me, and you brethren have about finished me. I can say from my heart "God bless you" just as far as you are right in your work, and that is all I dare ask for myself. Neither of us would be safe in risking our salvation on the infallibility of our doctrinal belief. I think you will agree with me in that.

Well, excuse this short letter and I will write you a fairsized letter next time.

Your brother striving for a better life,

D. M. Canright

As I transcribed this, I couldn't help contrasting his claims of prosperity with his actual condition.

1. Although working in Battle Creek, Mr. Canright maintained his Grand Rapids mailing address. It would have been poor policy to have done otherwise.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Canright Works on His Books

FROM DAY to day Mr. Canright labored on his books. He had only a little work to do to complete his book *The Lord's Day*. At the same time he was revising the introductory material for a new printing of *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*. Curiously he ended up using almost identical material in the opening pages of each book. But after his trip to Lincoln his main book work was the dictating of the chapters for the volume which he entitled *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*. This was not a biography, as the title might suggest, but an attack on Mrs. White and an attempt to "expose" her.

When he was dictating personal letters, I usually sat opposite his desk. At such times he was calm, composed, and had a note of assurance in his voice. Occasionally he would come to some point in his dictating in which he referred to Mrs. White. Strange as it may seem, his references, made almost inadvertently it seemed, were often favorable. But when he turned to his work on the *Life of Mrs. E. G. White* he would become agitated, pace the floor, and his words would be harsh, vindictive, belligerent, and unreasonable.

I have seen him on a number of occasions, when he would come, as it were, to a climax in his dictating on the life of Mrs. White, totally exhausted, tears flowing from his good eye as well as from the open socket while he wept bitterly. At such times I have seen him drop in his chair by his desk, and momentarily bury his face in his arms on the desk. Then as he swung his left arm in a gesture of utter despair, he would exclaim with three inflections, each more pathetic than the one before, "I'm a lost man! I'm a lost man! I'm a lost man!" Frequently he would add, "She was a good woman! I am gone! gone! gone!"

It was almost more than I could take. As a result I decided to take his dictation with my back turned to him, without having to witness his anguish. In this way I was able to proceed with my work.

The force of what seemed to me to be his repeated appeals for help weighed heavily upon my emotions, and I longed to go to the Tabernacle, and ask for help from the ministers in charge. But I felt I must not do this. I was bound by a pledge to secrecy and my loyalty to Mr. Cornell. I felt I could not reveal what I saw or heard to anyone in or out of the office.

I kept Mr. Canright informed in regard to Adventist meetings. Somehow he seemed to enjoy the prospect of attending Sabbath services, prayer meetings, and church functions. He made repeated attempts through me to secure invitations to church board meetings and other business meetings. His eagerness in this respect led some Adventists to believe he had returned to his former faith, or at least was in the process of doing so. But Mr. Canright's frequent remark when urged to do so was, "Oh, I want to, but I can't; it's too late!"

I often witnessed and heard the bitter lamentations he uttered at times. Then I would see his mood change. Sometimes this would take place within minutes, and the same old belligerent attitude would be manifested again.

He was a regular attendant at the Tabernacle church preaching service, but he never attended Sabbath school services there to my knowledge. Many noticed how punctual he was. If he arrived a little early he would linger in the vestibule, where some of the young people frequently waited, and as he would wait he would sometimes converse with the young men.

Mr. Canright seemed to know that Adventists were curious about him. Thus it was that as soon as he would come into the vestibule of the church some of the young men would gather around and ply him with questions. Somehow he seemed to enjoy this attention. I suppose it made him feel important.

As a rule, however, Mr. Canright chose to enter just as the first song was announced. He always seemed to come with his small brown satchel in hand and he would march clear down next to the front pew. On more than one occasion when prayer was announced and the congregation began to kneel, I have seen Mr. Canright make as if to kneel, but seemed unable to do so. Sometimes he would wave his right arm, and utter a distressed cry, "Don't let me fall, brethren, don't let me fall!" The deacons would then hurry to his aid, thinking he was ill, and would assist him outside. When he would reach the vestibule he would walk away on his own.

One Sabbath morning, thinking that perhaps he had left the Tabernacle in order to attend services in the Seventh Day Baptist church about four blocks away, I followed him to see. But his journey only led to the cottage behind the helpers' kitchen where he roomed.

Each Wednesday I informed him as to where the closest cottage prayer meeting was to be held. Frequently, just at meeting time, I have seen Mr. Canright, a pathetic figure, approaching in the distance, carrying his little satchel. I often heard him say that it contained early Adventist publications that had been suppressed. But though I often heard him refer to them, I never saw them. [Note 1](#)

He referred to these publications in a letter written March 1, 1914 to Elder J. H. Morrison (see pp. 164, 165).

At the cottage prayer meetings he would usually linger in the yard or on the porch until the first song was announced. Then he would enter with his little satchel.

Oftentimes Mr. Canright's attitude, his repudiations, his confessions, and the statements such as "I'm a lost man," or "She was a good woman," were freely discussed at these prayer meetings, and just as often heartfelt prayers were offered in his behalf.

But when reports of his confessions and statements leaked out, Mr. Canright would hasten to make public denial through the press.

One day he dictated the following statement to me, which eventually appeared in his book *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*:

MY PRESENT STANDING

Since I withdrew from the Adventists, over thirty years ago, they have continued to report that I have regretted leaving them, have tried to get back again, have repudiated my book which I wrote and have confessed that I am now a lost man.

There has never been a word of truth in any of these reports. I expect them to report that I recanted on my deathbed. All this is done to hinder the influence of

my books. I now reaffirm all that I have written in my books and tracts against that doctrine. . . .

D. M. Canright,

Pastor Emeritus of the Berean Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

He used this statement, with some additions, again and again.

It always seemed strange to me that he should write vehement denials for the press, when I daily witnessed in private the very things he publicly denied.

At times he seemed to realize that he was possessed by a power over which he had no control. An overwhelming desire for peace of mind seemed to dominate his subconsciousness. He yearned to be free from whatever power it was that controlled him. He longed for the warmth of companionship of his former Seventh-day Adventist associates. But he seemed unable to obtain relief.

When church board meetings or conference camp meetings were announced his mind seemed to whirl in anticipation that he would be invited to attend.

Somehow he appeared to take comfort from having his associates of Adventist days entreat him to return to his first love and devotion.

In his daily letter to Madge Goodrich, of the Detroit Baptist Herald-who, I concluded, was writing his biography-he painfully described his past years of existence and loneliness. He seemed to desperately want a way out of the fog. He seemed to sense that there were forces operating in his life that led him to do and say things at one time, which he felt grieved about at other times. The fact that he had seemingly lost his power of choice plagued him. Yet to my knowledge Mr. Canright never did admit even to his closest friends the fact that he had lost his power of personal choice or decision.

From day to day, but with some irregularities, the routine at the office continued. Mr. Canright almost seemed to ignore my existence, yet, in all fairness, I must say he always treated me with respect. There were many letters of inquiry to answer, enclosures to send out, and then, of course, the work on the books.

As the correspondence became more routine he left me to care for more of the details, such as selecting the tracts to be enclosed. One day while looking for tracts I had discovered a pigeonhole near the place where Mr. Canright kept leaflets, which contained a little pile of tracts entitled "Elihu on the Sabbath." Not being acquainted with their authorship or content at the time, I one day enclosed these with the form letter rather than the Canright tracts. Several days later two or three of these letters were returned marked "Insufficient Address." Mr. Canright opened them, and out dropped the Sabbath tracts-tracts I was later to learn were published by Seventh-day Adventists.

I expected to be rebuked for sending letters out without giving the full and proper address. But again something incredible happened. He looked at the tracts, recognized them as Seventh-day Adventist productions defending the seventh-day Sabbath, and said, "This is what I really wanted enclosed, but I couldn't say it that way." It left me puzzled.

Repeatedly while I was Mr. Canright's secretary, I heard him say one thing, as though under the control of some invisible power, while at other times I have heard him openly confess that he felt quite differently.

After the above-mentioned incident took place, and while receiving dictation adverse to Mrs. White, I sometimes would inquire, perhaps impertinently, whether that was really the way he wanted to say it. On such occasions he would sometimes reply, "What I want to say, I can't."

At that time I did not know enough to enable me to disentangle the intricacies of the issues that lay behind Mr. Canright's personal attack on Mrs. E. G. White, but I could see that they breathed the wrong spirit.

Many of the complimentary articles that appeared in newspapers, church organs, broadsides, and testimonials were written by Mr. Canright himself and prepared for the promotion of his literary productions. In his testimonials, a number of which I wrote at his dictation, he named many of the finer virtues and talents which he thought he possessed. These I sent at his behest to those whose signatures he believed would carry weight.

The careful reader may detect the characteristic Canright style in many of these testimonials and note the repetition of certain typical words and expressions. He may also observe that those who signed the testimonials could hardly have been in possession of all the points of information presented, such as details concerning Canright's work while a Seventh-day Adventist.

Canright seemed to derive some kind of satisfaction from being described in the press as "the ablest man in the Adventist denomination," or a "dumbfounder to the Adventists." With all of this I became well acquainted.

1. These, incidentally, have all been reprinted in facsimile form by this publisher.[\[back to text\]](#)

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

"Our People"

I MUST ADMIT that when I, a new member of the Adventist church, first began to work with Mr. Canright in Mr. Cornell's office and was so directly exposed to his constant criticism of Seventh-day Adventists that I sometimes wondered if Mr. Canright might not be right after all. It had been only a few months before, that I told the Methodist preacher in Minnesota that if I should ever meet the author of Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, that that would be time enough to decide whether he was right or whether he was wrong. Now I was hearing this author daily pouring forth in dictation what purported to be the deceptions of Seventh-day Adventism. Day after day I had to listen to Mr. Canright's bitterness against the Adventist ministry and particularly against Mrs. Ellen G. White.

I learned from his dictation, that it was only the uneducated who accepted and held the doctrines of Seventh-day Adventism, and that it was his purpose to put his erstwhile brethren, whom he professed to love, straight, and "liberate" them from their severe bondage by helping them to escape from all he had suffered. I

have often wondered how many Adventists Mr. Canright "rescued" and persuaded to leave the Adventist church.

During the time I was his secretary I also heard him state and restate many times that the denomination was going to pieces. He declared this would be the case because the leaders did not think for themselves. He predicted that within ten years the church would become extinct. I continued to imagine that he might, possibly, be right. Yet I also began to see that some things he said simply didn't ring true. Finally I came to the realization that I was listening to only one man, and felt I should hear from others.

One of the things that struck me as odd as I worked from day to day for Mr. Canright was his frequent use of the term "our people" as he referred to Seventh-day Adventists. It puzzled me that a man who despised Seventh-day Adventists as much as Mr. Canright did should refer to them in these terms. It seemed to me that if he had repudiated the doctrines of the church, denounced its ministers as ignoramuses and stooges, written a book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*, and was even now writing a book against Mrs. E. G. White, that he should hardly speak of them as "our people."

The letters he dictated to me also often spoke of "our people." One of them, which is typical, is his communication to E. G. Gates, dated September 4, 1913, in which he says:

"I regret exceedingly that my views compel me to separate from our people. I love them still, and the main doctrines of the Second Advent just the same as ever, but there are things in the faith which I do not believe as you know, if you have seen my book." (*Italics supplied.*)

In another letter he dictated, on May 15, to W. A. Colcord, he referred to "our Sabbath Schools." [*Italics supplied.*]

Later, in my research, I discovered that as far back as 1887 he had had an article published at his request in a *Review and Herald* a few weeks after he was dropped from membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in which he used the same expression.

"It will always give me pleasure to regard our people and speak of them as an honest and devout people."-D. M. Canright, in *Review and Herald*, March 1, 1887. (*Italics supplied.*)

I wondered, why should he, who had been liberated from the people who he asserted were in such bondage, repeatedly identified himself as one of "our people." Strange as it may seem, his former "deceived brethren" were still, to Mr. Canright, "our people."

As I have said before, Mr. Canright was deeply interested in the forthcoming session of the General conference of 1913. How much he wished that he might attend that General Conference session, I knew only too well, firsthand. All this made a deep impression upon my mind.

It soon became clear to me that he was studying some way to make contact with the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church. But I wondered what his purpose might be.

I remember that in one of his letters addressed to his old friend D. W. Reavis, to which I have referred earlier, he asked him, if possible, to arrange to have the

obituary of his wife published in the Review even though her death had occurred more than four months before. The wording of this communication was quite evidently prepared especially with a view to the coming General Conference.

While working as his secretary I noticed that Mr. Canright usually carried copies of the Review in his pocket. I also noticed that occasionally he would pull one out and read it. Frequently as he read tears would well up in his eye and he would groan audibly. Curiosity got the better of me, and when a favorable opportunity presented itself I read the items that seemed to affect him so much.

After I read these items my mental reservations concerning the church I had recently joined vanished. This is what I read:

"Enlarging the Border"

The month of May, 1913, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the organization of the General Conference. It is interesting indeed to contemplate the many changes that have taken place in our work in organization during this period, and it is not only interesting, but most encouraging as well.

Fifty years ago the movement had but a meager following. The work had reached that state that only several State conferences had been organized. Our system of institutions in printing houses, schools, and sanitariums which we possess today, had no existence. Our work had not extended outside of the American border. . . . We have now not only a General Conference in the sense in which that term was understood five decades ago, but a world conference with divisions one thousandfold more important in the interests they embrace than was the whole General Conference at the time of its organization. . . . These changes in our work are inevitable. They come as a result of the added volume and strength and widespread influence of this movement. It is the firm conviction of all that the important changes made at this meeting will greatly make for the strength of our work in coming years. The Lord is doing a great work in the earth. Let us be true and loyal to Him and to the part He gives to act.-Editorial, Review and Herald, June 5, 1913.

In another issue I found the following testimonials:

A. W. Anderson: From many nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples, from every continent on the globe, have flocked to the city of Washington representatives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to confer together upon that which is the greatest of all themes because it is the most momentous to mankind,-the preaching of the everlasting gospel to all the world in this generation. . . . The work is truly a stupendous one, but the reports brought to this conference from heathen, Mohammed, and Catholic countries show that all things are possible to those who will consent to be used by God in the furtherance and fulfillment of his plans.

C. H. Edwards: Taken all together, this Conference will prove, we believe, to be the most spiritual and blessed conference we have ever held. From this place will go out into every land a mighty impetus to our work such as we have never seen or known before.

J. N. Loughborough: [In] a few days more, it will be sixty-one years since I began preaching the third angel's message. It so happened that the first day that I ever saw Sister White-thirty minutes after I was introduced to her-I saw her in

heavenly vision, and that was the first I ever heard of it. As I have said many times, it was wonderful that God introduced me to this thing as he did, and there has not been a man among Seventh-day Adventists aside from Elder James White, who has had as many privileges along this line as I had in the earlier years of the message.

S. N. Haskell: I did not know before that Brother Loughborough began to keep the Sabbath a year before I did. . . . But . . . I have kept it for sixty [years]. I am very thankful for what we see here this morning. . . . Now the truth that began so small and was apparently so feeble, has encircled the earth, and it has been demonstrated that God can do something, that He has done something. The nations of the earth are to be lighted up with the glory of the third angel's message; and the end is not yet.

E. A. Curtis: Elder Loughborough preached this message to my father more than 50 years ago. About 40 years ago, I and the members of my family listened to Elder D. M. Canright, and we accepted the truth from his ministry. I have been connected with the work ever since. I have loved it as my life.

D. H. Kress: This meeting is certain to be a great blessing to those who have the privilege of attending. . . . I personally was greatly blessed in meeting men and women with whom I was acquainted twenty-five years ago, who are active workers today, bearing responsibilities in foreign fields. Years ago my wife and I had charge of the first French and German school opened by us as a people at Battle Creek. Among those in attendance were Brethren Vuilleumier, Oblander, Schuberth, Aushier, and Westphal. . . . A strange tie exists between old associates in the work, and a meeting of this character binds us all together a little closer.

R. C. Porter: This great gathering from all parts of the world now assembled at Takoma Park is a marvelous manifestation of God's ability to foresee the end from the beginning and to fulfill prophecy. . . . The spiritual services are seasons of refreshing, and the committees and business sessions are most harmonious.

E. E. Andross: This is certainly a great meeting. In point of delegation is by far the largest we have ever held. Almost every part of the world is represented by the delegates. . . . As the reports from the various mission fields have been read from day to day, it has seemed as if we were living over again the experiences of the apostles as recorded in the book of Acts.

A. C. Bordeaux: I thank the Lord that I embraced the truth nearly 58 years ago. I loved it then, I love it far more today than I did then. I would never separate from this people for anything in this world. This is my people.-Review and Herald, July 3, 1913, p. 644.

As Mr. Canright read these stirring testimonies from his former ministerial brethren he seemed to long to be at the conference with "our people."

And I, as I secretly read these thrilling words, decided firmly in my heart that Seventh-day Adventists would always be "my people."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Three Dimes' Tithe and My Break With Mr. Canright

AS I HAVE said before, during the time I worked for Mr. Canright I received no pay. I was working out an undetermined and indefinite school bill at the business college. An Adventist couple gave me a room and my board, for which I did some baby-sitting. My sister sent me a little money occasionally to help buy shoes. As mentioned earlier, there were some days when Mr. Canright did not come in, and at times I could work a few hours at other places, for which I received modest pay.

One very warm Thursday afternoon in July, as I walked from my room back to the office after an almost foodless "lunch," I found the sidewalks extremely hot. Even with the holes in the soles of my shoes padded with the leather from an old glove, the bottoms of my feet felt as if they were blistering.

I was thinking as I walked along how and when I could get some new shoes. I was also thinking of how and when I could extricate myself from the work with Mr. Canright. I felt sure of one thing, I would never betray Mr. Cornell. Yet, how could I free myself from the circumstances in which I had become involved? I longed for a way out.

As I passed the Battle Creek Tabernacle I happened to notice the jingling of three dimes I had in my dress pocket, which I had set aside for tithe. This was tithe on three dollars I had earned working at the Battle Creek Sanitarium library. I had earned some money before, but the tithe had always been taken out before it came to my hands. So, in a sense, this was the first money I myself would pay as tithe, and for which I would receive a receipt. It was a big moment for me.

In spite of my need for shoes and other things, I deliberately walked up the steps of the Tabernacle, and entered the treasurer's office without rapping. In so doing I startled two men who were in the room. I was more or less acquainted with both of the men. One of them, Mr. Minier, was the church treasurer and had been a pallbearer at my mother's funeral a few months before. The other, Mr. Israel, was the Missionary Volunteer leader of the church, and because I was the organist for the MV Society I was acquainted with him. Mr. Israel was also the manager of the Good Health Publishing Company.

Making known my mission, I handed over the three dimes for tithe to the treasurer. As I did so I noticed the two men exchange quizzical looks. I couldn't understand the meaning of their looks and felt that perhaps they thought my entrance without knocking was improper. But this thought was quickly dispelled.

Mr. Minier gave me a receipt for the thirty cents, and I felt a sense of relief and pride. The men asked me to be seated, and I accepted the invitation. They said they thought I looked tired. What they didn't know was that I was not only tired but hungry, and that four long blocks of hot sidewalks to the office loomed ahead of me.

The men quietly inquired where I worked, what I was doing, where I stayed. Both of them were officers of the church, and they showed sympathy and understanding. I answered simply and briefly. My replies increased their interest. Before I realized it, I had told them all I knew. The circumstances and the heavy burdens that rested on my youthful shoulders dispelled for the moment any thoughts of loyalty either to Mr. Canright or to Mr. Cornell.

The men told me not to be in a hurry. They counseled between themselves, and then in my hearing Mr. Israel said to Mr. Minier, "This girl is in danger. Can't you do something about it?"

Mr. Minier replied, "I think something can be done, but when? They seemed to think that if something was to be done, it must be at once. Mr. Israel then concluded the interview, stressing that I should act at once to terminate my services to Mr. Canright. He ended by saying, "I'll get you a job if I have to pay you out of my own pocket."

As he consulted the clock, Mr. Israel estimated there was enough time for me to get to the office and return before Mr. Canright arrived for the afternoon dictating session. He then instructed me to go to the office at once and clear my desk of everything in it. I accepted the counsel and hurried down the long, hot cement sidewalks toward the office.

I quickly assembled the materials in my desk and carried them to the treasurer's office at the Tabernacle, where they were temporarily stored. That accomplished, I suddenly realized what I had done, and I wondered, What shall I do next? One thing was certain, I was resolved never again to appear at the business college and hoped I would never again meet either Mr. Cornell or Mr. Canright.

At the time I quit as Mr. Canright's secretary, I was teaching a class of small boys in the primary division of the Sabbath school. The superintendent of that division was Clinton Lee, now Elder Lee, a retired minister after many years of mission service in Korea. The next day, Friday, I attended teachers' meeting in the evening.

After the meeting Clinton Lee approached me, saying, "Miss Shasky, as far as I am concerned, you are giving very satisfactory service in teaching your class, but I have been approached by the father of one of the little boys who is unhappy with what his son isn't learning. He will visit your class in the morning, so be sure you have the lesson well prepared. He is critical, and we don't want to dismiss you even though he requests it."

I thought I had already memorized the lesson and couldn't improve, but the challenge prompted me to put forth an extra effort, and besides doing that, I studied some other methods that I might employ. I did want to make good. I would do it as well as I possibly could. Then, if I were dismissed, it wouldn't matter; I would have the satisfaction of having done my best.

The next morning I saw the father coming in, hand in hand with his five-year-old son. The small chairs at the little table were not big enough for an adult, so the father stood. After class, while the father talked with Mr. Lee, I anxiously glanced at their countenances. I seemed to see dismissal written all over their faces and remembered thinking, Will I never make good at anything?

During the church service I kept thinking, Must I go back to wiping knives and forks in the helper's kitchen at the Sanitarium where Mr. Canright was still taking his meals, and perhaps again be required to serve and pick up some of his empty trays? There were those in the kitchen who still didn't know who he was, but I surely knew him, and I knew he knew me. Because I had unceremoniously left his work, I just couldn't face going back. Yet I must find work. I seemed to have hit a blank wall.

After church Mr. Lee approached me and said that the boy's father wished to have an interview with me at his office the next morning. He told me that the father was the personnel director of the Battle Creek Food Company. His name was William Covert. I've never been the crying type, but tears would have brought some degree of relief to my pent-up feelings and depressed thoughts at that moment.

Sunday morning as I approached the personnel director's office both my thoughts and my feet felt like chunks of lead. To my astonishment I found him friendly. He had been informed that I needed employment, and he had already made arrangements for me to come to work at the Battle Creek Food Company the next morning. He explained that in the multigraph department there was an employee who had headed that department for many years and needed a change. She would be retained for two weeks in order to acquaint me with the work.

It was an awkward situation-trying to replace a faithful employee with many years of experience. It wasn't my choice, neither was it hers. After three days of spasmodic training, she refused to cooperate. There was nothing the personnel manager could do but let her go and call the balance of her two weeks a vacation with pay.

Employees of the food company received pay every two weeks, but it was their policy to retain two weeks' salary. So I had to work four weeks before payday came around for me. Back in those days we were paid with coins in an envelope.

I was young and energetic and I hoped to make good on my first permanent job with pay, so I worked hard at it. It had been my habit to arrive at school at seven and to leave at seven, and I did the same at the factory. The only difference was that I now punched a time clock upon arrival and departure. However, I was soon advised that this office was not on an eleven-hour day. My rate was \$9 a week, and there was no pay for overtime.

I shall never forget my first pay envelope. Carefully I had listed the items it had to cover. The most needed ones were at the top, and the list had been revised many times to squeeze them and the tithe all out of \$18. Never to be forgotten was the blessing I had received after paying those three dimes of tithe at the Tabernacle. This time there would be \$1.80, and in addition, ten cents a week for Sabbath school offerings. But when I opened the envelope, out fell eight silver dollars and one cent. I was short \$9.99.

It took about as much courage as I could muster to go back and tell the cashier that there was a \$9.99 shortage in my envelope. He asked to see the coins I had found in the envelope. When I showed them to him, he explained that there was no shortage. What had looked to me like a shiny new penny was a \$10 gold piece!

Now everything was all right, and I knew I didn't owe any bills. In fact, my landlady, whose husband was a high-salaried machinist at \$50 a week, borrowed \$2 from me until his check would come in another week.

But before another payday and another \$18 was due I faced another unusual circumstance. The pastor of the Tabernacle, A. J. Clark, was elected president of the Southern Illinois Conference, whence he returned to get his family. A farewell gathering was planned, and had been announced for Saturday night at the Tabernacle.

While I was on my way to this gathering a friend joined me. As we walked along together she asked, "Are you going with Elder Clark to Southern Illinois?"

"Why, no; what are you talking about?" I queried.

"Haven't you been asked?" she inquired. "It is either you or I."

"Well," I said, "if you have been told, it must be you. I know nothing about it." Then I gave her several reasons why I couldn't think of accepting such a position. She also gave reasons why she shouldn't go, but mentioned how very much she would like to go.

Soon two other girls joined us, and as they did so, exclaimed, "Isn't it nice to be a celebrity?"

Both of these girls said that I had been chosen to go to the Southern Illinois Conference as secretary to the president. Before we reached the Tabernacle my sister joined our group. She saw that I was perplexed, and quietly told me that there was something to what they were saying, but she was sure that my friend would be chosen.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Secretary to the Conference President

AT THE farewell gathering for Elder A. J. Clark, newly elected president of the Southern Illinois Conference, I was asked to render several musical numbers.

Then I was invited to join a group in a quiet corner. In the group were Elder Clark himself, George Israel, Mr. Minier, Mr. Covert, and my older brother, Joe. These men were supposed to overcome any opposition I might raise to the invitation they knew Elder Clark was going to extend to me to go to Springfield, Illinois, to work as his secretary. I told them I just couldn't accept, for I had to give two weeks' notice to the food company, and I had just started work there. Mr. Covert said that he had already cared for that and he had already called back the woman whose place I had taken.

There I was without any excuse, except that I just wouldn't go through Chicago alone, since I would have to transfer from one railway station to another. My brother joined the men in urging me to go. On the Chicago matter, Mr. Israel

came to my rescue, saying that in a few days he would be making a business trip to Chicago and he would see me safely transferred.

Camp meeting had just begun when I took up my new duties. I had been instructed by telegram to go to Taylorville, Illinois, and I was required to be there on a specified day.

On the train en route to Taylorville I reflected on how nice it was to be away from Battle Creek. The unpleasant experiences I had passed through while there could be more easily forgotten.

I was met at the Taylorville station and welcomed on the campground by Mrs. Clark, who had made provision for me. She presented me with a meal ticket, which I could use at the dining tent. This was the first full camp meeting I had ever attended. Everything was new and strange to me. The weather was hot both day and night, and there wasn't even a breeze to cool things off. To this was added the chirping of insects. Sleep did not come easily that first night. My mind was in Battle Creek. My sister, my closest confidante, had undergone major surgery that day. I seemed to be so far away from her. All these thoughts seemed to crowd out the thought that I was glad to leave Battle Creek. For a time I fought a battle against homesickness.

The next day I was initiated into the routine of conference correspondence. Though I had to work under somewhat unfavorable conditions, at least I was fortunate in that my heavy work schedule allowed no time for reflection. That day I was groomed in what was expected of a secretary. I was informed, among other things, that no matters pertaining to office policy and procedure should pass to others from my lips. What those who thus instructed me didn't know was how very thorough my training in that line had been during the seven months I had worked for Mr. Canright!

I was then informed that there would be a combined union and local conference committee session that night to consider the case of a leading evangelist. I would be expected to take the minutes as well as all verbal discussions. I was appalled at my responsibilities, but I resolved to do my best. The meeting lasted almost all night. At four o'clock in the morning I was informed that the report of that meeting with a copy for each committee member was to be ready by nine o'clock. I can't seem to remember whether or not I made the deadline.

After camp meeting we made the trip to the conference office at 304 West Allen Street, Springfield, Illinois.

My period of initiation over, the girls accepted me as one of their number. In the course of time the office personnel changed. Edith McClellan was the only one who didn't marry. She, in turn, was transferred to the Hinsdale Sanitarium and later worked at the Review and Herald office. It was feared that no one would be left to take the publishing secretary's dictation. I was afraid I would be called upon to do this, and I was. But once again I managed to pull through by dint of effort.

While working for the president of the Southern Illinois Conference I received a letter from Mr. Cornell. I was glad I didn't have to meet him face to face, because I knew how small I would have felt. In substance, what he wrote was as follows: "I have just learned your address. How is it you left the school without paying

your bill? I took a chance on you, providing for your education on credit, but you left me in a lurch. This is all the thanks I get."

In reply I told him that if he would send me a statement of what I owed I would pay it in full. For my part, I said I felt that my seven months' work for Mr. Canright in his office surely should have compensated for the few months' tuition I owed at his school. His reply was brief and to the point:

"Send me \$1.00 and I will send your diploma. W. E. Cornell."

This I did, and the diploma came promptly. His signature "W. E. Cornell" was in Spencerian flourish embedded in a scroll of a bird of paradise. Sometimes he did this for those who especially admired his gift in writing. Apparently he considered me one of those. Because of this gesture I knew he meant to say, "You owe me nothing more, and I'm sorry."

I enjoyed my work at the Southern Illinois Conference office. There I became acquainted with a gallant young man, Frank Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the conference. On September 10, 1914, we were married.

Since conference policies limited salaries, one to a family, my marriage to the secretary-treasurer terminated my work as secretary to the president.

In Springfield, the capital of Illinois, secretaries were in demand. I found work as secretary to Junius B. Wood, reporter for the Chicago Tribune and the Illinois State Manufacturers Association, and

was soon heading his Springfield staff on association and State legislature work.

In 1916 Mr. Johnson was called to the Wisconsin conference to serve as secretary of the Tract Society.

I remember 1915, however, not so much because of our move, but because it marked the end of an era for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In midsummer the church's "special messenger," Ellen G. White, died. The funeral, we learned, would be held in the Battle Creek Tabernacle on July 24. We could not attend, but D. M. Canright did, as I have already related.

From Kentucky we went to Tennessee. The next year Mr. Johnson was called to the Wisconsin Conference, but he soon received his fourth draft notice. As a result we went to Louisville, Kentucky, where I worked in the Kentucky Conference office for Elder Keate, the president. Our son Junius B., was born in Louisville, March 3, 1919.

After the war, encouragement from Elder Carlyle B. Haynes, president of the Southern Union Conference, took us to Memphis, Tennessee, where we operated the Letter and Mail Shop, in the Dermon Building. While in Memphis we aided in the erection of a new church building, where Frank became elder. Finally we returned to Michigan, where we have lived for forty-four years, my husband being engaged in business enterprises.

With three exceptions, which I felt were justified, I honored faithfully my pledge to keep secret what I saw and knew of Mr. Canright as I worked for him, not only till his death but for more than forty years thereafter. One of these was my conversation with the two officers of the Battle Creek Tabernacle church in July, 1913, when I paid my three dimes tithe and received a receipt and much-needed counsel. There were also a few references to the experience in conversation with

Elder A. J. Clark, the former pastor of the Tabernacle church and later president of the Southern Illinois Conference. Finally, I told my husband the whole story. To others I said nothing, but I watched and I listened. Through the years we often entertained ministers at our home, and my husband and I held many church offices. Occasionally Mr. Canright's name was mentioned. I took mental note. For more than forty years we have resided in the State of Michigan, which was Mr. Canright's home State and principal field of his activities after leaving the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I have ever been alert to pick up information concerning him, watching especially for information concerning his character, his relationship with others, his influence, his connections both with Seventh-day Adventists and the Baptists whom he joined, and above all for information on the last two decades of his life.

My personal contacts with Mr. Canright lasted only seven months, but my interest in Mr. Canright, while I have been silent, has been lifelong, and my search for information has been tireless. The reader can well understand this. My search as time and opportunity permitted through four decades has taken me to public libraries, courthouses, churches, and conference office attics and barns, newspaper offices, cemeteries, and the home of not a few of Mr. Canright's close relatives, and more recently to the office and vault of the Ellen G. White Estate. In the succeeding chapters I relate some of the things that happened to Mr. Canright after I left his employ.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Hard and Trying Years

ON JULY 16, 1915, the woman who had counseled, prayed, and worked with D. M. Canright, the one who had predicted his downfall, and wept when it happened, died in California. Ellen G. White, messenger of the Lord, would no longer, in person, be with those for whom she had given a lifetime of devotion and hard work. Funeral services were held in both California and Michigan. On July 24, with his brother, Jasper, D. M. Canright attended the services at Battle Creek. Several eyewitnesses have described the touching experience of Mr. Canright's last parting from Ellen White. G. B. Thompson, who served as honor guard at the funeral, told me of Mr. Canright's uncontrollable grief, which marked him to people who did not know him as the chief mourner at the bier.

At the close of the funeral service, after the first visit to Mrs. White's casket as a part of the long line of mourners, Dudley Canright suggested a return to the front of the Tabernacle for one last farewell. Jasper wrote: "We joined the passing throng, and again stood by the bier. My brother rested his hand on the side of the casket, and with tears rolling down his cheek, he said brokenly, 'There's a noble Christian woman gone.'" Others also remembered these words.

In spite of these words he soon reverted to type and ere-long was again engaged in his tirade against Seventh-day Adventists and Mrs. White. It had been many years since he had served his Baptist friends, under whose flag he had chosen to sail his craft.

Canright had been an efficient evangelist, and earnest student of the Word of God, a minister with experience as an executive. It is reported that he had been received with open arms by the Baptists at the age of forty-six, and held-as affirmed by repeated published attestations and affidavits-in high esteem by them. Why they advanced him to no post beyond that of local pastor, and then for only forty-five months, is a question that all might well ponder. Why, when in reasonably good health and still active till his seventh-fifth year, he was not employed in remunerative ministerial work beyond the age of fifty-seven is still another significant question.

Even though Mr. Canright's books were bought and circulated widely, and even though the pastors of a number of Protestant churches invited him to fill their pulpits in attempts to "expose" Seventh-day Adventists, his crusade against the Adventists did not bring him the popularity he so sedulously sought. Of this, his Adventist friend D. W. Reavis wrote in a personal letter:

"Elder Canright soon found that instead of the public following him in greater numbers as he withdrew from the Adventists and their teachings, it seemed to lose confidence in him, and to give more careful consideration to the things previously taught by him."-D. W. Reavis letter to G. L. West, undated.

Somehow his preaching had grown stale. His evangelistic fire was gone. His financial support was irregular and uncertain.

The annual Baptist convention which met in Grand Rapids in October, 1896, conferred upon Mr. Canright the title Pastor Emeritus, in recognition of his two and one-half years as pastor of the Berean Baptist church of Grand Rapids, which he had helped to establish. The convention statement specified that the title carried with it no pastoral assignment and no salary. He was issued credentials and preached occasionally, but bore no other responsibilities.

Royalty income from his books fell far short of meeting the needs of his family. To gain a livelihood, Mr. Canright turned to door-to-door selling of religious books.

In 1897 he and his family lived in Toledo, Ohio and the following three years in Adrian and Kalamazoo, Michigan, and in South Bend, Indiana.

In 1900 Canright returned to Grand Rapids, not to pastor the church, but to engage in operating a garden and orchard. It appears that for a three-year period beginning with 1904, the Baptists allowed his credentials to lapse.

At this time Elder Butler, now president of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, referred to the man:

"Poor Canright, where is he? If ever I pitied a man, I do him. He looks to me like a poor, seedy, used up old man, and he thought he was going to do grand missionary work."-Letter to J. H. Kellogg, Aug. 12, 1904.

Alluding further to this experience Butler warned Kellogg:

"No man in the Cause, believing . . . as you have believed, can take your stand right against what the Testimonies say and maintain your spirituality."-Ibid.

As I have shown, Canright's heart seemed to be warmed as he met Adventist church members, and when he associated with his former brethren in the ministry. One such incident occurred shortly before Mrs. White's funeral. On that occasion, early in 1915, one of our denominational leaders, Elder L. H. Christian, called on Canright in his Grand Rapids home. Elder Christian was president of the Lake Union Conference at the time. Of this visit he wrote:

In 1915 I was urged to visit D. M. Canright, who at one time was prominent in our church. He lived then on a poor little farm near Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was eager to tell about his past experiences and seemed to regret that he had ever left the advent people. He talked like a discouraged, disappointed man. As we talked about old-time Adventists, he began to tell about Mrs. White.

He said, "I knew her very well,. For some time, as a young man, I lived in her home, and for eighteen years was intimately acquainted with the White family. I want to say to you that I never met a woman so godly and kind and at the same time so unselfish, helpful, and practical as Mrs. White. She was certainly a spiritual woman, a woman of prayer and deep faith in the Lord Jesus."

[underlining supplied]

I asked him what he thought would happen to people if they followed the Testimonies of Mrs. White.

He answered, "Anyone who follows her writing, the Testimonies, as you call them, in prayer and faith will certainly get to heaven. She always exalted Jesus, and she taught true conversation and genuine sanctification as few others have. I have known a great many men and women who claim to be extraordinary in their imagined divine calling and gifts. I have always found them more or less arrogant and proud, eager to be recognized and often arbitrary and harsh in judging others. With Mrs. White I found the exact opposite. She was reserved and modest and seemed to have no desire at all to call attention to herself as someone great, or to her authority."

Some months after these visits, at the funeral of Mrs. White in Battle Creek, I met D. M. Canright again. There were six of us men who stood as a guard of honor while the people passed through the tabernacle to view Mrs. White as she lay in her plain casket. I noticed Mr. Canright as he came down the aisle toward the rostrum. He stopped at the casket and looked at Mrs. White quite a while. He reached down and took hold of her right hand, which had done all that immense amount of writing.

Later I asked him, "Now that she is dead, what do you really think of Mrs. White?"

He replied, "She was a most godly woman. All her life she lived near to Jesus and taught the way of living faith. Anyone who follows her instructions will surely be saved in the kingdom of God."-Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts, pp. 51-53.

From time to time pastors and leaders of certain religious groups opposed to Adventists still occasionally invited Mr. Canright to fire his salvos at the church to which he had once belonged. His books presented what were supposed to be unanswerable arguments and revealing insights. Surely, it was thought, the author would be the man to silence the Sabbathkeepers.

I remember an animated conversation between Mr. Cornell and Mr. Canright over an invitation, with expenses to be paid, that came to him to speak at one such meeting to be held in Davenport, Iowa, some months in the future. He was to speak on "The Faults of Seventh-day Adventists." This brought animation and zeal to Mr. Canright to again be recognized as master in this field. I have knowledge of several occasions when he was invited to address those who were seeking means to hinder the work of Seventh-day Adventists. The circumstances were always similar to those of the Davenport meeting. This information came to me from Elder R. J. Sype, whose grandfather was well acquainted with D. M. Canright, and who, early in his ministry, had corresponded with Canright, and from Elder H. O. Olson who passes on a report of the local elder of the Davenport church.

Elder Sype writes:

Early Spring of 1914, there was a ministerial meeting held in Davenport, Iowa. I believe it was a Union meeting of all denominations who wished to attend. It continued for a few days and various guest speakers were there. Among them was D. M. Canright, who was to address the convention on how the meet Adventism.

Elder A. R. Ogden was then president of the Iowa conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He was somewhat acquainted with Brother Canright and since this was a well advertised meeting at which all denominations were welcome, he decided to attend and incidentally to meet Elder Canright.

Elder Canright met him and seemed absolutely delighted to see him. He clung to him as to a long lost brother and proposed that they stay together in the hotel, which they did. Elder Canright was to give his talk at the convention the following day. When it came his time to speak, his talk was exactly like that of Balaam when he went to curse Israel. It was a blessing instead of a curse. He told these ministers assembled that the Adventists were a wonderful Christian people, and that they would make a terrible mistake to approach the matter of Adventism in any other spirit than this. He then advised them that the best way to deal with the Adventists was to accept them as Christian brethren and to keep down all controversy with them. -R. J. Sype, in letter to Carrie Johnson, June 10, 1963.

In reporting the incident to Elder H. O. Olson, the elder of the Davenport church told of how he invited Elder Canright to speak in the Seventh-day Adventist church on the next Sabbath. He did so. Years before, he had labored in Iowa and was acquainted with the older believers. The Olson report continues:

When Canright stepped up to the pulpit and faced the audience, he began to cry. For some time he hid his face in his handkerchief and wept. After he composed himself, he said, "As I looked into the faces of my former brethren, I remembered former days. I remembered when Elder and Mrs. James White found me, a young man, a sinner, in the woods of New York State, and how they brought me to Christ and helped me to obtain preparation for the ministry. . . . I remember J. N. Andrews, Loughborough, Haskell, Uriah Smith, J. H. Waggoner, and others. Oh! Those were happy days! I wish those days could return again. You have the

truth. You are happier than any other people on earth. Remain true to your denomination."

After the service, he went to the door, and as he shook hands with the brethren he again appealed to them to be true to this message.

Elder W. E. Murray, long in executive work, remembers the Canright visit to the Davenport church when he was a young man, but thinks the visit took place a year or two earlier.

As long as D. M. Canright, with surrendered heart, fully accepted and preached God's Word, he was a man of power. But when he undertook to tear down what he, with God's help, had built up, his power was gone. The star of popularity he coveted was beyond his grasp.

It is small wonder that contradictory reports still persist, and there seems to be some confusion in the matter of what his true attitude toward the Adventists was. These are merely exhibits of the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Canright.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Fading Image of D. M. Canright

WHILE ASSOCIATING occasionally with his Adventist friends, attending their meetings when he could, and declaring to them that he would like to come back to the church but that it was too late, Mr. Canright at the same time kept up a bold front with the Baptists and with such members of his now scattered family as he saw from time to time.

Naturally he wanted to be thought well of.

Since rumors of his softening attitude toward the Adventists could be devastating to the sale of his books, Mr. Canright, in an endeavor to maintain a consistent image, kept affirming and reaffirming his position—that he never regretted withdrawing from the Adventist denomination.

His book, *The Lord's Day From Neither Catholics nor Pagans*, was published in late 1915. The title page states that this is "an Answer to Seventh-day Adventism on the subject." Canright sent a copy for critical reading to an old Adventist friend, Elder J. H. Morrison. Morrison was about to attend a session of the Lake Union Conference to be held in Battle Creek, March 7-12, 1916. He wrote Canright, inviting him to attend, and proposed that they could examine the book together there. Morrison was happy to receive the following reply:

Your hope to be at Battle Creek next week decides me to go there too. Be sure to come. It will be our last chance to see each other. You are seventy-five and I am seventy-six. I have read your criticisms with deep interest and profit. It is only this way that the real facts and truth can be found. I have eight of the very oldest publications of Seventh-day Adventists, from 1847-1851. So far as I know there are five of them which no one else has. [Note 1](#) Would like you to see them. Come if you can. Your old friend . . . same as forty years ago. D. M. C.

Mr. Canright's reunion with Elder J. H. Morrison was a happy one. The two attended the session of the Lake Union Conference held in the Tabernacle.

Of this Elder Morrison wrote in his privately published book, issued a few months after the visit^{Note 2}: "We met and visited as friends." He then described a very serious accident that happened to Canright: "A few minutes after our last interview a sad and it was feared a fatal accident befell him. He fell and broke an arm and a limb. After he was taken to the hospital, I visited him every day while I stayed in Battle Creek."-Pages 2, 3.

Seemingly, the incident was of no interest to the public press, for no report of the accident appeared. There are some discrepancies regarding details of the occurrence. All agree that there was such an accident, and as to its seriousness. The hospital records sustain this.

As I visited with Canright's niece, Marie Wright, a few years after his death, she told me that her uncle, Dudley Canright, carried a key to the basement door of the Baptist church in Battle Creek, where he had a desk, and was privileged to come and go at will. Mr. Cornell told me of this while I was working with Mr. Canright.

Not having been to the church for some time, he was unaware that extensive remodeling was under way and that the steps leading down from the basement door had been removed. That Friday evening, March 10, 1916, Canright stepped inside the door and fell to the basement, landing on top of a heap of rubbish. He lay there badly injured until the following Sunday morning, when he was found by the janitor, more dead than alive.

Sanitarium records specify that he was admitted for care on Monday, March 13. This would tend to substantiate his niece's memory that he was taken first to the city hospital, then transferred to the Battle Creek Sanitarium hospital at his own request.

Other reports indicate that he fell on the stairs of the Tabernacle. While the exact location of the accident may be disputed, the facts are that, in mid-March, 1916, D. M. Canright sustained a fall, was badly hurt, and some thought fatally injured. The contemporary Morrison publication and the Battle Creek Sanitarium records sustain this fact.

Several operations ensued during his stay of more than two months at the Sanitarium. His leg was amputated. Mr. Canright suffered intensely, but made gradual recovery.

Elder Morrison, who had intended to review with Canright criticisms made at the author's request of the Lord's Day book, informs us that because "he was suffering I thought I better withhold them and as he lingered and suffered so much I have never sent them to him." He proposed to place them in Canright's hand at a later time. It is obvious that this was done, for he printed his report in Oct., 1916.

In his criticism Morrison pointed out many weaknesses, inaccuracies, and misused historical quotations in Canright's book. He had occasion to comment on Mr. Canright's assertion that he felt the Lord had especially prepared him to write it, through his experience of twenty-eight years in the Seventh-day Adventist church. He asked what Canright had accomplished during his subsequent twenty-eight years spent in opposing the church. He dwelt on Canright's repeated prediction that the church would soon go to pieces.

Perhaps Morrison's language is a bit strong, but it makes his point clear. We quote again from his 1916 book as follows:

When you left us we had about 20,000 members, we have over 120,000 now. We had two or three advanced schools, now we have nearly one hundred. We had about twenty-five teachers, now we have about seven hundred. We had then two or three sanitariums, now we have over forty-five. We had only about twelve doctors, now we have about one hundred forty. We had in our advanced schools about five hundred enrolled, now we have about 9,000. . . . Elder, you must call for help if you expect to down us.

Now, I do not offer this as proof that we are right. I give it to you for your reflection when you are thinking how God has so signally prepared you for this work. First by making you a great and mighty man to build it up, so he could give you a special commission and work for the rest of your life to tear it down, as you say, "you are prepared to answer them (us) as no other man could."

Now, Elder, do you not think that the law of consistency would compel you to conclude, if God had any hand in it whatever, instead of allowing you to start off such a huge system of error the first half of your life, then authorize you to tear it down, that he would have set you to cultivating fruits instead. Surely God would have been further on in his work if your book is his work.

You firmly believe God has wonderfully preserved you for this work. What does this faith of yours say I was preserved for? I am only about one year behind you in age and I still have both eyes to see and both limbs to walk, for which I am thankful.

But how do you know, but God intended you to feel that in the loss of that eye that you should realize that you had lost half of your spiritual eyesight, and that you were in great danger of being dumped into the ditch? How do you know but he intended you to have more sober and deeper reflections, that you were treading in a dangerous path by allowing that accident to befall you, which occasioned the loss of your limb a few minutes after our very interesting visit and interview, the first after long years of separation?

-Some Correspondence with Elder Canright, pp. 115, 116.

Battle Creek Sanitarium records indicate that Mr. Canright was released from the institution early in June. His niece informed me that he was taken by ambulance to the home of his daughter Genevieve, in Hillsdale, Michigan. She was a Christian Scientist and did not favor the attendance of physicians or nurses. Therefore Mr. Canright could not always have enjoyed the care that one of his age and in his condition should have had.

For three years Canright lived on. His relatives report that he was confined to a wheel chair. He recovered sufficiently so that he could, at times, return to his home in Grand Rapids. With help of an ex-Seventh-day Adventist minister he was able to bring the work on his book *Life of Mrs. E. G. White* to completion. His manuscript was submitted to the Standard Publishing Company, and the records of that organization show that on July 15, 1918, D. M. Canright signed a contract for its publication. It was published July, 1919.

On May 12, 1919 Dudley M. Canright died of a paralytic stroke at Hillsdale, Michigan, in the home of his daughter Genevieve to which he had come the preceding December.

There are conflicting accounts concerning the funeral services held for Mr. Canright. His niece, Mrs. Marie Wright, nine years after his death, told me that no funeral service was held and that there was only a committal at the cemetery conducted by a Christian Science Reader, Mr. J. C. MacDonald. She further stated that the service was attended only by members of the family.

However, the Otsego Union of May 22, 1919, describes his funeral service in these words: "Six ministers were in attendance at the funeral, which was held at the Baptist church. . . . Five were present from Grand Rapids, where he labored successfully for many years."

Dudley M. Canright was buried in the Mountain Home Cemetery at Otsego, by the side of his second wife, Lucy. The grave is marked with a fairly modern stone. It reads:

ELDER D. M. CANRIGHT
SEPT. 22, 1840 - MAY 12, 1919
AN AUTHOR OF WORLD RENOWN
LUCY H. HIS WIFE
Dec. 22, 1855 - Jan. 2, 1913.
"A MOTHER TO US ALL."

The title "Elder" has for many years been baffling to Baptists and Adventists alike. Canright died a Baptist. The term Elder is an Adventist title, not the title employed by the Baptists when referring to their ministers. It may be observed that the nearby graves of his children who died shortly after he left the Adventist ministry carry markers indicating that they were the children of "Rev. D. M. Canright."

The last phrase "A Mother to Us All" is strongly reminiscent of the one Canright employed in his wife's obituary, which he dictated to me in May, 1913, some five months after her death (see pp. 130, 131). I heard him employ these words on several occasions as I took up work with him immediately after Lucy's death. The adulation "An author of World Renown" sounds strangely like a Canright composition. Some have wondered, Could it be that he himself chose the wording for the stone to mark his resting place? And if so, was it he-feeling closer to the Adventists than to the Baptists-who selected the Adventist title Elder rather than the Baptist title Reverend?

This is what, in 1968, I found to be the case. After many attempts that failed to yield the information, I found the widow of the undertaker who had taken care of Mr. Canright's funeral. She was an attendant at the funeral home at the time of his death, and clearly remembered the details. She related that Mr. Canright had, not long before his death, made appropriate arrangements with her husband. A sealed envelope with instructions concerning the tombstone, with the wording, was provided by Mr. Canright. This letter was left unopened till funds from the estate made possible its erection. As pointed out, other obligations of first priority

waited many, many years. The stone was erected in 1939, hence its modern appearance.

Be this as it may, Mr. Canright was buried with little immediate notice, and his grave stood unmarked for twenty years. I discovered that the Baptist church nearby, which he had pastored, knew nothing of his resting place. Nor was it known, even to his nephew, who lived in Otsego, not two miles from the cemetery.

As already observed, a note on the back page of the Review and Herald carried to Seventh-day Adventists the knowledge of his death.

A belated death and funeral notice also appeared on June 1, 1919, in the Grand Rapids Herald. Reference is made to his life and his work, to the esteem of his fellow church members, and to "a horrible fall downstairs." The readers are assured that "he died in the faith in which he had lived and labored."

Canright left a will drawn up April 3, 1916, soon after his accident. His children were remembered, and certain residue of the estate and accruing incomes from royalties of his books were willed to the Berean Baptist church. The estate, however, as I have pointed out, was not settled until some twenty years after his death. Court records indicate that there was a scarcity of means. The inventories list a few personal items totaling in value only \$75. Scaled-down hospital bills remained unpaid, and the Battle Creek Sanitarium did not receive its money until nine years after treating Mr. Canright.

This is difficult to understand, if we may credit the statements he published of his affluence and of the income reported from the sale of lots.

Back taxes on his property, the allotment of \$12.50 a week to his daughter Genevieve, which was remuneration for his care, besides two or three notes that were outstanding, added together with the scaled-down hospital bill, almost consumed the returns from the disposition of the real estate made by the court. There was left some \$3,000, which was divided among the heirs. The records of the court bear mute and embarrassing witness.

Thus at the age of seventy-eight the life of D. M. Canright came to a close.

We do not wish to seem unkind to a man who suffered much in his last years and died almost in obscurity, a man who spent the last half of his life attempting to tear down that which during the first half of his life he had built up. We feel, however, that it is not out of place to observe that Ellen G. White, whom he once accepted as a prophet of God, but whom he later bitterly opposed as a false prophet, had predicted in a letter of warning to him, "You have wanted to be too much, and make a show and noise in the world, and as the result your sun will surely set in obscurity." Every available record indicates that in spite of his earnest effort to prevent its fulfillment, the tragic prediction came true.

These chapters have been written with no animosity or ill will. They portray the sad story of a man who seemingly had sold his soul—a man who by his own testimony could not say what he want to say—a man who longed to return to his former ways and fellowship, but who realized that he had gone beyond the point of no return. The story is sustained by many witnesses and contemporary evidence. Yet, being a proud man, he did all he could to preserve the image of a happy, satisfied Baptist minister. The thoughtful reader may judge for himself

whether the circle in which he chose to cast his lot during the latter part of life ever really accepted him. Personally, I am convinced that the careful reader will be cautious about accepting the testimony of such a witness.

1. As to the exclusive ownership Canright was mistaken, and within recent decades all have been republished in facsimile form so all who wish copies may have them.[\[back to text\]](#)
2. Some Correspondence With Elder Canright, Concerning his Late Book, "The Lord's Day," With Some Criticisms (1916).[\[back to text\]](#)

APPENDIXES

Part A

Part B

In his books published in 1989 and 1919 D. M Canright attacks the doctrinal structure of Seventh-day Adventists. He also attacks Ellen G. White, who with her husband was closely connected with the development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

What Canright as an experienced and responsible Seventh-day Adventist leader wrote relative to the church and to Elder and Mrs. White makes interesting and profitable reading. His calm, logical presentation based on his personal knowledge stands in bold contrast to his erratic and at times irresponsible declarations made after severing his connections with the church. In 1877 he presented in the Review and Herald, between March 15 and June 14, a series of ten enlightening articles.

Under the title "A Plain Talk to the Murmurers-Some Facts for Those Who Are not in Harmony with the Body," he discusses at length the inception of the Seventh-day Adventist church and its early leadership and the value of the visions. He then reviews the experience of individuals and groups who, because of dissatisfaction with the organization of the church, its leaders, and the visions, had withdrawn and attempted to start paralleling religious groups. The reading is informative and profitable, and provides a mass of data not easily found elsewhere, but too extended to include in its entirety here. We have selected for publication portions relating to certain initial steps in church organizations and Canright's remarks concerning James and Ellen White. In this he presents his first hand knowledge, and this after having suffered certain setbacks in his own personal experience.

Then in 1885 Canright wrote again for the Review in somewhat the same vein, but with a deeper significance because of his own experience of questionings and doubts. The single 1885 article is reproduced in full under the original title, "To Those in Doubting Castle." Excerpts from the first ten-article series, and the full

article just referred to, follow.

-THE PUBLISHERS

PART A

A Plain Talk to the Murmurers- Some Facts for Those Who are not in Harmony with the Body

By D. M. CANRIGHT

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS: It is a sad, but well known fact, that during the whole history of this message from the first to the last, there have arisen here and there, now and then, among our own brethren and sisters, those who have taken occasion to murmur and complain, and find fault with various things in the work. Quite generally this murmuring has centered upon Bro. and Sr. White, or their labors in some way.

Several times even little parties of these disaffected ones have been formed in opposition to the body, and have drawn off by themselves. Others have not dared to go quite so far as that, but still they have not really felt satisfied, and now and then they show their dissatisfaction, though nominally remaining in harmony with the body. With such persons particularly, I now wish to have this plain talk. Come, let us reason together.

As you know, for the past dozen years or more, I have had an extensive acquaintance with every part of this work. I have traveled and labored in every State [sic] where we have churches, from Maine to California, from Texas to Minnesota. Have visited a large share of our churches, and known the most of our brethren personally. Especially have I been very familiarly acquainted with Bro. and Sr. White, both at home and in their labors. Furthermore, I am well acquainted with the most of those who have drawn off from us; have heard over and over, a thousand times, all the difficulties and objections and grievances which trouble these brethren so greatly.

Now I do not propose to start out by saying that there is no possible chance for such difficulties or objections to be raised. No; if this were so, it would be a new thing in the work of God. The Lord has never had a special work to do upon the earth, but that there was plenty of chance for men to doubt, and get into trial, and lose their faith in the work. Was it not so in the case of Moses? Of Nehemiah? Of Christ himself? Of Martin Luther? If men are disposed to give more weight to a grain of sand than they are to a mountain, then they will always have plenty of things about which to get into trouble. This has always been so. What reason have we to expect that it will be different now?

SOME ARE SINCERELY TROUBLED

We are willing to assume, then, for the present, that the objections and difficulties which trouble you so greatly are real to you, and that you hold them

honestly. Sometimes in the past, I myself have been troubled with these same things, and I have come near stumbling over them; but I am thankful to say, that after years of careful investigation, and a more thorough acquaintance with the work, these things are now all very clear and satisfactory to my own mind, so much so, that it seems to me that, with a fair chance, I can make any believer in the message see it.

Come, now, let us reason together. Certainly there are many great and fundamental pillars of our faith upon which we all agree. Let us name some of them.

1. We do all firmly believe, that we are now in the last days, even in the last generation. The fulfillment of numerous lines of prophecy and special signs of the second advent are so clear that we are compelled to believe this.
2. The Lord designs that the world shall have a solemn warning with regard to the second advent, the same as he has sent to the world on other and similar occasions, such as the flood, the fall of Sodom, the overthrow of Nineveh, and the first advent of our Saviour. Then, as Seventh-day Adventists, we all believe, and have good reasons for believing, that the time has come for the third angel's message to be given to the world. Rev. 14:9-16. This is the most awfully solemn message in the Bible. It is to be the last to a fallen world. It is to ripen the harvest of the earth. It is to prepare a people for translation. It is to prepare the wicked for the seven last plagues. It calls for a reformation.

God's people are now scattered hither and thither through a multitude of different sects, bred in error and breaking the commandments of God. 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 18:1-4. Just before the burning day of wrath, there will be a solemn message to gather God's scattered people, unite them in one faith, that they may be hid in the time of trouble. Zeph. 2:1-3. This last message is to be sounded to every nation, and even before kings. Rev. 10:11.

GOD'S PLAN CALLS FOR LEADERS

Now I call your special attention to the following propositions:

Whenever God has had a special work to do in the earth, he has always selected some one to begin that work, carry it on, and bring it to a successful termination. This proposition is based upon a well known and universally acknowledged fact; viz., that any important work, to be successful, must have a leader with recognized authority and proper ability. Even in the smallest affairs of life, where many persons are interested in the same thing, we all find it necessary to have some recognized authority and head, so that all may act in union.

Even in so small an affair as a district school, it has everywhere been found absolutely necessary to elect proper officers with authority to say what shall be done and how. Without this, our schools would be in utter confusion-would be a failure. Take the government of a city like Chicago. It would not be possible for it to exist without a head, a mayor, or some chief officer. The order and peace of the city absolutely demand this.

What would our nation do without a president, without some head? Were all men left every one to do what was right in his own eyes, confusion and anarchy would soon be the result. So generally is this fact felt that all nations without an exception, appoint themselves some head, either a king, emperor, president, or the

like. What could we do in a war without a commander-in-chief, a general who should have absolute command over all the army? If every soldier were allowed to go by himself, to fight as he pleased and when he pleased, any army would soon be defeated.

Now if order, union, and government, are so very necessary in human affairs, why not in the work of God? We believe that they are, and that the Lord has always recognized this fact in every great work he has done on earth.

SOME WHOM GOD CHOSE

Was the world to be warned of the deluge? God chose a fit man to give that warning, to prosecute the work. Evidently this was a greater work than it now appears to us at this great distance of time. . . .

Take another familiar case, the exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. This also required a leader peculiarly adapted to the circumstances. . . .

Just so again when the Jews were to be delivered from their Babylonish captivity, and Jerusalem was to be rebuilt, some man must be raised up who had influence with the Persian king, some one who had authority with the Jews. Ezra was the man qualified for this great work, a strong, energetic, benevolent, large-minded man. . . .

So at the first advent, when a message was to be sent before the Messiah. The Lord did not wait till the hour had arrived for the message to be given, and then select a man at chance. The Lord does not do his work in this manner. His plans were laid long beforehand. Gabriel was sent to Zechariah, even before John the Baptist was begotten, to inform his father what kind of a son he would be, and how he should be raised, what he should be named, &c. The Lord was not mistaken. John fulfilled the prediction in every particular.

Who does not believe that it was by a special providence of God that Martin Luther was raised up to do the mighty work which he did. . . .

What Adventist does not believe that father Miller was the special agent of God to arouse the world upon the great question of the second advent, and give the first angel's message. Rev. 14:6, 7. All who are familiar with his labors know that he was just the man for the place. . . .

THERE MUST BE A LEADING

We do not argue that any of these chosen servants of God were faultless and perfect in all their ways. In most cases it is very evident they were not. But in every case it will be seen that some things were absolutely necessary to the successful accomplishment of the work.

1. There must be a leading mind in the work. But is not Christ the leader of his people? Yes. And was not he the leader of his people in the days of Moses, Nehemiah, Luther, Wesley, Miller, etc.? Yes. Did those men usurp the place of Christ? No; and yet the Lord did place them in a leading position in his work on earth. This is what we claim for this message and nothing more.

2. This person must be a man of more than ordinary capacity, not a man of second or third rate ability. 3. He must be a man naturally constituted to be independent and to lead in his work. 4. He must be specially adapted to the peculiar work to be done. Hence as the nature of the Lord's work varies at different times, so men differently constituted are chosen by the Lord. John the

Baptist could scarcely have filled the place of Moses or of Luther, neither could they have filled the place of John the Baptist.

-REVIEW AND HERALD, March 15, 1887

APPLYING IT TO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Now let us apply these facts and principles to our work. Admitting that the time has come for the third angel's message to be given to the world, the question arises, Has the Lord forgotten to attend to it? Is he not able to find proper men to do the work? Or has this message actually begun, and has somebody been engaged in giving it? Or we might ask, What is present truth? . . .

Do we not all agree that the second advent is near, and the world is now to be warned concerning it? Do we not all agree that in the providence of God, special light is now being given upon the subjects of the second advent near, the kingdom, the new earth, the sleep of the dead, the destruction of the wicked, the doctrine of the trinity, the law of God, God's holy Sabbath etc.? All Seventh-day Adventists will agree in these things. The time has come that these truths must be preached to the world; and the third angel's message of Rev. 14:9-12 is a prophecy of this work.

To come a little closer, we ask, If these truths are now being published to the world, by whom are they heralded? . . .

We go back to the close of the first and second messages in 1844; in the following year our good Father Bates began to keep the Sabbath and teach this in connection with his Advent views. In a few months time Brother and Sister White also received the Sabbath, and united its observance with the Advent doctrine. They very soon received the light upon the subject of the Sanctuary, the sitting of the Judgment in Heaven, and all those kindred truths which explain the disappointment in 1844. Here they received light upon the third angel's message, and took the position there and then that the time had now come for the third angel's message to be given, after the close of the other two, and thus finish the last warning to the world.

Shortly, Eld. J. N. Andrews joined them in this work. So these brethren began to preach this message to the world; but they were without means, without position, without churches, without influence, and everything in the message was new, and it had to be searched out and defended. Yet their faith in the message was then as strong as it is now, and their confidence in its final triumph was expressed in very strong terms. To all human appearance, they had no hope of success; but still they went to work in the fear of God, studying, preaching, traveling, and meeting all kinds of objections and opposition. Elder Bates wrote the first little book in favor of the Sabbath, which was ever published by an Adventist Sabbath-keeper.

In 1849, Brother White, by a great exertion, published the first paper advocating the third angel's message, the Sabbath, and the Advent united. Of course I have not space to relate all the struggles, sacrifices, and arduous labor they put forth to advance the work of this message. Suffice it to say, that all the Sabbath-keeping

Adventists, from the start, looked to Brother White as the leading mind in the work. None were more hearty in this feeling than Father Bates.

THE WORK BEGINS TO MOVE

The first Conference ever held by Seventh-day Adventists was appointed and attended by Bro. White, Elder Bates, Elder Andrews, and other faithful men, co-operating with him, and Sister White also uniting her labors with his. They went everywhere, exhorting the brethren, encouraging the churches, counseling the ministers, and pushing on the work. They moved the paper from one place to another. While the REVIEW was published at Rochester, N.Y., Brother Uriah Smith embraced the truth.

In 1855 Brother White moved the REVIEW office to Battle Creek, Michigan. Here, by his advice, the first S. D. A. meeting house was built. To us now, it is rather amusing to know that some zealous brethren opposed that as a move in the wrong direction, as a denial of our Advent faith, as a long stride towards apostasy! But what would our work have amounted to now, had that fanatical view carried?

From first to last, a good share of the trials which the brethren have had with Brother White has been on such points as this. He has always been crying "broader plans," while others have pulled back, and felt great alarm at such moves. Time was too short, this was too much like the world and the nominal churches, &c. And because their fanatical, narrow-minded views were not heeded, they turned to fault-finding, and some of them have done nothing else for the last quarter of a century.

[Elder Canright then discusses the development of church organization, the publishing work, the medical work of the church, pointing out the foresight and leadership of Elder James White.]

-REVIEW AND

HERALD, April 12, 1877

OTHER STEPS IN ADVANCE

I believe I can truthfully say that there is not an institution among us, not an organization, no advance step has been taken in this cause, but that which has been accomplished through the counsel and earnest labors of Eld. White. Now that these institutions, these organizations, have been established, and are in working order, we all see the great importance and utility of them, and we thank God for them. We would not know how to carry on the work without them. In the work of this message, to all human appearance, if it had not been for the counsels, the enlarged plans, the earnest labors of Eld. White, and the continual warning of the testimonies through Sister White, . . . the third angel's message would not have accomplished to this day a hundredth part of what it has.

We have all been inclined to have too narrow views, too small plans, and to neglect the very means necessary to the prosecution of this work. . . .

ELLEN G. WHITE AND THE VISIONS

Thus far I have purposely omitted to say much about Sr. White and her visions and their influence upon the cause. I will now briefly refer to them as this is a great stone of stumbling with some.

Right here let me say that we do not throw away the Bible, and take Mrs. White's visions instead. No; if there is a class of people under heaven who believe the Bible strongly, who love it devotedly, who study it and go to it for everything, it is Seventh-day Adventists. Here is our store-house of doctrine and truth. We preach this everywhere and always. We have no other authority. We go to this to test and prove the genuineness of Sr. White's labors and visions. If they did not harmonize with this in every particular, we would reject them.

It is wicked for men to cry, "The Bible, the Bible, the Bible," and profess to follow that implicitly when they reject one of the plainest doctrines of the Bible,- the doctrine of spiritual gifts. Of course I have not time here to take up an argument on spiritual gifts, or enter into a lengthy statement of her labors, their nature, &c. We believe, however, that no doctrine of the Bible is plainer than that of the perpetuity of spiritual gifts, and particularly that these gifts are to be restored in the last days. Joel 2:28-32; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 1 Thess. 5:1-21; &c.

From the very start of this message, Sr. White has been intimately connected with it. Ever since 1845, she has had her visions frequently, and they have had an important bearing upon the work. Everywhere that Eld. White has gone preaching, advising, planning, and directing in the work, she has gone, and stood side by side with him.

She has always attended our large gatherings, our Conferences, and our camp-meetings, preaching, exhorting, and bearing her testimony, and her influence has been very great indeed. Not a move of any importance has ever been made in any department of the work but she has spoken in the testimonies supporting it, either before or after it was started, and as her testimonies have been generally believed and received by this people, they have necessarily had a great influence upon the action of our people. I am thoroughly satisfied that without the testimonies it would have been utterly impossible to sustain many movements of great importance which have now proved a complete success in this work. When the testimonies have spoken upon the subject, it has at once put an end to strife and division of sentiments and complaints among our people, and they have taken hold unitedly to prosecute the work.

To the very same source we are largely indebted for the union in faith and doctrine which prevails among us, and for our escape from the confusion, discord, wrangling, and bickering, which everywhere characterize the other bodies of Adventists. Shall we not thank God for such great benefits as these? Let others think as they please, we are thankful for this inestimable blessing, and we are not

ashamed to say so.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE TESTIMONIES

The point which I wish to make is to call the attention of our brethren to the important position and great influence which Sr. White and her testimonies have ever held in this work. There are no half dozen men in our ranks who have really influenced the faith, the practice, and the different important moves in this work so much as Sr. White and her testimonies.

As long as this is an undeniable fact, let us look at the inevitable conclusion which one must draw from it. Here is a special work to be done,-a special message to be given. The time has come for the Lord to move out a people to do the work. We see this very work commenced, and carried forward successfully. We look at the means which have been used to accomplish this work, and we find that from the very beginning, chief and very prominent among them are the labors of Br. and Sr. White.

She had traveled everywhere, and given her influence to the work with all her might as an able speaker. Many have been converted to this truth under her personal efforts. Her voice has been heard in our Conferences, and in the counsels of our people. Through her urgent appeals and strong entreaties, advance moves have been made, instructions for the prosecution of the work have been founded, and in every conceivable way her important labors for thirty years have been intimately connected with this work, and have done very much for its success.

Now, while all this proves nothing to men who do not believe the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine, or the third angel's message, yet to those who do believe these doctrines, it seems to me that one conclusion is inevitable, viz., that Bro. and Sr. White must be servants of God, and that her testimonies must be from the Lord.

Look at it a moment. Here are certain great truths-a definitely foretold message, in the success of which we are all deeply interested. We believe that it is not only truth, but the present truth. These truths have brought us from darkness to light, from the fables of men to the commandments of God. They have made the Bible to us a new book. In the belief and practice of them we have been greatly blessed by the Lord. They are the joy and rejoicing of our souls. We believe they are destined to test the world and prepare it for the harvest of the great day. We rejoice in the prosperity of this work, in the spread of this truth.

Now consider: What means have been used by the Lord to bring out, to maintain, and publish this work to the world? What agents did God use to bring these blessed truths to our attention? First, foremost, and prominent among them all, as we have shown, are the untiring, life-long labors of Br. and Sr. White. We appeal to the common sense of every believer: How can you consistently believe the work to be of God and the workmen of the devil? It is utterly inconsistent.

Every man in his own soul does and must admit this. He may try to dodge and fight it, and fix it up some other way, but it is of no use. We must either accept

Bro. and Sr. White as God's accredited servants, or we must reject the third angel's message; and the facts show that this is just about what every one does. Those who commence by finding fault with Bro. White, and by rejecting the testimonies, sooner or later end by giving up the third angel's message, and finally separating themselves from this people. This result is inevitable, and hence we warn our brethren before they start upon that path just where it will lead to. There has been no exception in the past, there will be none in the future.

-REVIEW AND HERALD, April 19, 1877

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

As to the Christian character of Sr. White, I beg leave to say that I think I know something about it. I have been acquainted with Sr. White for eighteen years, more than half the history of our people. I have been in their family time and again, sometimes weeks at a time. They have been in our house and family many times. I have traveled with them almost everywhere; have been with them in private and in public, in meeting and out of meeting, and have had the very best chances to know something of the life, character, and spirit of Bro. and Sr. White.

As a minister, I have had to deal with all kinds of persons, and all kinds of character, till I think I can judge something of what a person is, at least after years of intimate acquaintance.

I know Sr. White to be an unassuming, modest, kind-hearted, noble woman. These traits in her character are not simply put on and cultivated, but they spring gracefully and easily from her natural disposition. She is not self-conceited, self-righteous, and self-important, as fanatics always are.

I have frequently come in contact with fanatical persons, and I have always found them to be full of pretensions [sic], full of pride, ready to give their opinion, boastful of their holiness, etc. But I have ever found Sr. White the reverse of all this. Any one, the poorest and the humblest, can go to her freely for advice and comfort without being repulsed. She is ever looking after the needy, the destitute, and the suffering, providing for them, and pleading their cause. I have never formed an acquaintance with any persons who so constantly have the fear of God before them. Nothing is undertaken without earnest prayer to God. She studies God's word carefully and constantly.

I have heard Sr. White speak hundreds of times, have read all her testimonies through and through, most of them many times, and I have never been able to find one immoral sentence in the whole of them, or anything that is not strictly pure and Christian; nothing that leads away from the Bible, or from Christ; but there I find the most earnest appeals to obey God, to love Jesus, to believe the Scriptures, and to search them constantly. I have received great spiritual benefit times without number, from the testimonies. Indeed, I never read them without feeling reproved for my lack of faith in God, lack of devotion, and lack of earnestness in saving souls. If I have any judgment, any spiritual discernment, I pronounce the

testimonies to be of the same Spirit and of the same tenor as the Scriptures.

THE FRUITAGE

For thirty years these testimonies have been believed and read among our people. How has it affected them? Has it led them away from the law of God? Has it led them to give up faith in Christ? Has it led them to throw aside the Bible? Has it led them to be a corrupt, immoral people? I know that they will compare favorably with any other Christian denomination.

One thing I have remarked, and that is, that the most bitter opponents of the visions of Sr. White admit that she is a Christian. How they can make this admission is more than I know. They try to fix it up by saying that she is deceived. They are not able to put their finger upon a single stain in all her life, nor any immoral sentence in all her writings. They have to admit that much of her writings are excellent, and that whoever would live out all she says would be a good Christian, sure of Heaven. This is passing strange if she is a tool of the devil, inspired by Satan, or if her writings are immoral or the vagaries of her own mind.

Another fact should have great weight with our Sabbath keeping Adventists. All the leading men among us, those of the very strongest minds and the best talents, and who have had every facility for more than a quarter of a century to become thoroughly acquainted with Sr. White and her writing, have the strongest faith in her testimonies. This, with our people who kept the Sabbath and believe in the Advent doctrine, should have great weight.

I could name half a dozen men whose writings you read with great delight, whose talent and ability you all admire, whose piety and doctrine none of you question, who have all confidence in her gift. By a long and intimate acquaintance with Sr. White and her writings, they have had a hundred-fold better chance to decide upon this question than ninety-nine out of a hundred lay brethren. They have seen Sr. White in vision, they have read and studied her writings over and over thoroughly. They are conscientious, God-fearing men, -men, too, who are close Bible students. Do those persons doubt the testimonies? No, not one of them.

We do not ask others to believe upon their faith; but we do say that others who have not had the opportunity to investigate this question as these men have, should feel some modesty in giving a different decision upon, or taking up opposition against, the same question.

CONTRASTED WITH IMPOSTORS

Another fact I have noticed: Impostors are always anxious to build up themselves. Any one who will support them they will flatter and praise and sustain; but I know it be just the reverse in this case. Those who have been the most often, and, probably, the most severely, reproved through the testimonies, are those who have been the warmest supporters of Sr. White. This does not look like the policy of a deceiver.

But the special point which we wish our brethren to reconcile in their own minds is this: How they can believe the third angel's message, how they can believe that this is the special work of God, how they can believe that the time has come for these truths to be given to the world, and that in the providence of God they are being given, and still can believe that Sr. White is not the servant of God, and her testimonies are not from the Lord.

Consider the fact that for over thirty years these testimonies have been intimately connected with this work, that Sr. White has had a very prominent position in the work, and that her testimonies have had a good deal to do in shaping this work, and in sustaining and building it up,-consider all these facts, and then reconcile this if you can with the supposition that the work is of God and the workmen are of Satan! Would God allow a deceiver, an impostor, to stand in so prominent a place in his work for so long a time? If this be so, we fearlessly challenge any one to point to a single example of a similar case in all the history of God's work upon earth.

Where did the Lord ever have a special work to be done for this church where a corrupt man has taken hold in that work, and stood at its head all the way through? The very idea is absurd. Do you find it so in the case of Noah? Of Moses? Of Elijah? Of the forerunner of the first advent? Or at the time of the Reformation? In the work of Wesley? Or of Wm. Miller? There is no case. God has never suffered it to be, neither will he now. No, dear brethren, we must either renounce the third angel's message, or accept those whom God has raised up to give it. And this naturally brings me to consider another notable fact in our history.

-REVIEW AND HERALD, April 26, 1877

AN OBSERVATION

In all my acquaintance among the thousands of our people, and I have had a very extensive acquaintance with them, I have always noticed that those who have rejected the testimonies have largely lost their zeal in the cause, lost their faith in the work, their piety and devotion, and have become cold, unfeeling, and dark in their minds. . . . I now refer to those who have had a chance to become informed upon the question, and have taken their stand against the visions.

Of course there are a good many who know but little or nothing about them, and have taken no position one way or the other. I do not refer to them, but to those who have taken a decided stand against them. I know whereof I affirm, and I have yet to see one single exception.

Right in connection with this, I want to call your attention to that which has had a powerful influence upon my mind touching this question; viz., the failure and ruin which has every time overtaken those who have undertaken to hold on to the message and the present truth and still oppose the testimonies. Ever since the work began, persons have risen up here and there in opposition to the visions, or perhaps to the work of Bro. White, and have taken their stand against them. They said that they believed the Sabbath, the advent doctrine, the messages, indeed, all

parts of present truth except the testimonies. They claimed that the visions and the position of Br. White were a hindrance to the cause, and a stumbling block in the way of its advancement; that if these were removed, then the cause would progress finely. . . . They have generally begun by protesting that they were in harmony with all the truth except those points named. On several occasions not only individuals but even companies have started off on this track. [At this point Gamaliel's counsel to the Sanhedrin is presented.]

He says, Let these men alone; if this work or counsel be of God, it will stand, and you cannot overthrow it; but if it is of men, it will come to naught. Then he proves this by citing two cases. . . .

Now, says Gamaliel, this is the way it will always be. If the work is not of God, it will come to confusion; but if it is of God, all the powers of hell cannot arrest it.

Now apply this undoubted principle to the history of those who have drawn off from the body of Seventh-day Adventists. I have known of them, and have been more or less acquainted with their history from Maine to California. Six different papers have been started in the interest of that rebellious work, and all except one, have gone down.

-REVIEW AND HERALD, May 10, 1877

GOD'S PROSPERING HAND

But now in conclusion: The real point which I wish to make in the minds of our brethren and sisters is this: If the third angel's message, including the Sabbath, the second advent, the saints' inheritance, the nature of man, and these important points of faith, -if this work is of God, and the time has come that these truths are to be preached, and yet if the visions of Sr. White and the position of Eld. White are not correct, but are really displeasing to God, I ask you this one question: Why is it that God does not prosper and build up these opposers who have gone off from us upon this very issue?

Every time they have started out with simply leaving out the visions and opposing the work of Bro. White. Why does not God help them, and show that they are right and we are wrong? I maintain that the providence of God in the history of this work has settled the question that we must either accept the testimonies, and Bro. and Sr. White as God's servants, or give up the third angel's message entirely. We warn you who are inclined to find fault and murmur and draw off. Be careful what path you are entering upon. If you proceed in that direction, you will land just where all others have who have tried it before you. . . .

Brethren, you who believe these testimonies, do you read them and follow them as closely as you should? Do you love them and remember what they say? Do you try to drink in their spirit? Do you have them in your houses? Do you refer to them frequently? I know that nothing would be more profitable to you than these, next to the Bible.

-REVIEW AND HERALD, June 14, 1887

PART B**To Those in Doubting Castle**

BY ELDER D. M. CANRIGHT

Among the most dangerous of the places which pilgrims had to pass in the days of Bunyan was Doubting Castle. Many a poor pilgrim was caught on these grounds, shut up in this terrible old castle, and finally destroyed by the keeper, Giant Despair. But some were finally lucky enough to make their escape. That same old castle still stands by the way, as grim, and dark, and dreadful as ever. Every now and then some poor pilgrim, venturing too near, is caught. Some are rescued, but many are not. Hoping to help some of these, and to warn others, I write these lines.

Twenty-five years ago I embraced this message. The complete system of truth which it presented seemed to me something wonderful and very glorious. The study of the Bible was a continual feast to me. To preach it to others, and see them embrace it, filled my heart with gladness and peace. But at length things came up which threw me into doubt on some points, and finally were the occasion of my ceasing to preach the message. As the same things have affected others more or less, and will be liable to affect still others in the future, I wish to give a few of the reasons why I still think that the work is all right, that the Lord is in it, and that these doubts are not well founded.

EASY TO DOUBT

It is well for us to remember that it is always easier to doubt than to believe. Jesus commanded his disciples to preach the gospel. Those who should believe would be saved, but those who should not believe would be damned. He knew full well that only a few would believe, and such has been the case. The great mass of men from that day to this have rejected the gospel. They claim that the evidence is not sufficient to prove that the message is from God. Could not God have given more evidence, and clearer, to sustain the gospel had he thought best? He gave enough so that every one who really hungers and thirsts after light, who is willing to seek for it as for hid treasures, who is willing to humble his soul before God, and cry earnestly to him for direction, can find it to the complete satisfaction of his soul.

But even the gospel is not so plain that objections cannot be raised against it if men try hard to find them. Well informed infidels even raise many objections against the Bible itself, - objections which are difficult to answer, and which they claim never have been satisfactorily answered. And so they go on scoffing and disbelieving. But Christians don't give up their faith for all that. The evidence on the other hand is too clear and too abundant to be overbalanced by a few seeming objections.

We must remember that there are always two sides to every question. Whatever position may be taken on any question, some one can be found to dispute it and to raise arguments against it. So generally has this been the case that the main tenet of one sect of the old philosophers was that we could not know anything certainly, not even our own existence. And yet for all that, common men go right on

believing that they know some things.

THE PREPONDERANCE OF EVIDENCE

It is the accepted rule in all the affairs of this life to decide the questions, even where life or death is at stake, by the balance, or preponderance, of evidence. The existence of God, the inspiration of the Bible, the truth of Christianity etc., are accepted and firmly believed upon these grounds. I firmly believe that the truth of our message can be just as clearly proved in the same manner. It is by ignoring this rule of evidence that men become skeptical concerning God, the Holy Scriptures, and all religious faith. In just the same way some of our people come to be doubters concerning our message, the testimonies, etc. They let a few light objections on one side outweigh a mountain of truth on the other.

All the doubters and those troubled with unbelief have not been outside the church. Even some of the real children of God all along the ages have been troubled with unbelief. Jesus had to meet it in his disciples, till it saddened his heart. Thus he said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Luke 24:25. They had seen sufficient proof that Jesus was the Messiah; but when some things transpired which they had not expected, and could not understand, they let these outweigh the evidence which had been clear and satisfactory to them before.

Thomas belonged to this class of doubters; but it did not seem to profit himself, benefit the cause, or please his Master. All we ever hear of him is about his asking questions. When all his brethren positively assured him that they had actually seen Jesus, and had talked with him, Thomas refused to believe it. He must see for himself, and put his finger into the wounds in Jesus' hands, before he would be convinced. The Lord granted him the proof he demanded, and then said to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:29. Thomas thought he could not help his unbelief; for there were the stubborn facts, and what could he do with them? But the Lord thought differently; and evidently his reproof of the doubting apostle was designed also for all other of a like disposition in every age.

RESPONSE TO EVIDENCE

We must remember that we may demand too much evidence,-more than God sees best to give. Take one case as an illustration; John the Baptist came with a solemn warning from God. Jesus says that the Pharisees, in rejecting him, rejected the counsel of God against themselves; but that the publicans and common people "justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John." Luke 7:29, 30. How did these justify God? Let us pass over to the Judgment. These Pharisees will be surprised to find themselves rejected. They will plead that they

were honest, that they would have believed if John had only worked a miracle or had given sufficient evidence of his mission.

But the simple people who did believe John will rise up, and say, "We lived at the same time you did, and in the same town; we heard the same things that you heard, and we believed. The evidence was sufficient for us." Thus they will justify God, and condemn the unbelievers.

So will it be in every age. Those who have believed will rise up and testify that the evidence was sufficient if the heart had only been humble enough to submit to God's ways. Why is it that the word of God so often and so earnestly insists upon humility of heart and contrition of soul as necessary to a right understanding of his work? Let the boastful doubter think of this, and beware.

From the very beginning God's work has been doubted by some who have had a full knowledge of it and a close connection with it. Thus Abel by faith offered unto God an acceptable gift; but Cain's sacrifice was not accepted of God. For this Cain was angry, -angry with God and with his brother. He thought that Abel was a fool, and God was unjust. From that day to this there have been the same two classes,-the believing Abels and the doubting Cains. By faith Noah condemned the world. Heb. 11:7. He had the same evidence which the world had. He believed, they disbelieved. He was right, they were wrong.

ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCE

No man ever came from God with better evidences of his divine mission than Moses; and yet right among his own people and followers and co-workers doubters were constantly springing up. It now seems to us that one or two clearly wrought miracles would forever settle our doubts as to the divine mission of the person working them. But look at this case. Consider the wonderful miracles which the people saw Moses perform,-the river turned to blood, all the plagues in Egypt, the pillar of cloud constantly attending them day and night, the sea opened, etc. How strong their faith was then! How confident their song after their triumph at the Red Sea! But they start on, and for several days in a hot climate there is not a drop of water for man or beast. Soon they begin to murmur, then to question, and finally to doubt whether the Lord was leading them. Doubtless he reasoned, "Didn't God know we must have water? If he were leading, would he have made such a terrible blunder?" "Is the Lord among us, or not?" (Ex.17:7) was the all-absorbing question of debate in tents, by the camp-fires, and in little groups of earnest talkers. What about all the miracles they had witnessed, the faith they had expressed but a few days before? These were not quite as weighty and conclusive now as they had thought them to be.

The same spirit of fault-finding and of doubt was continually cropping out during the whole forty years. Yet at the same time there was the pillar of cloud always with them, the manna falling day after day for forty years, besides many other miracles. In the face of all this, a few objections which they could not, or would not, understand outweighed everything else.

Look at the remarkable occurrences related in Num. 16. Over two hundred and fifty leading men headed a rebellion against Moses. They said, "Moses, you promised to lead us right into a land flowing with milk and honey, and to give us possession; but you have done no such thing. Here you have led us round and round for twenty years. We are no nearer the promised land than when we started. Our brethren have died of hunger and thirst, and we are nearly worn out. You cannot deceive us any longer. We are going back to Egypt. Our mission is a failure." (See verses 12-14.) They thought they had a clear case.

But Moses proposed to appeal to God to decide who was right. They readily accepted his proposition, and boldly went out with their censers, and stood before God for him to answer. This showed that they were in earnest, and thoroughly believed that they were right. But when God did answer, they all went down into the earth in a moment, and perished. Just so now: fault-finders and doubters become so confident in their positions that they are willing to go up to God and to the Judgment with it. Take care! Korah and his sympathizers did that, and did it to their eternal ruin.

But what is more astonishing still, is that "on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Ver. 41. Was not that astonishing after all they had witnessed the day before? But such is the power of unbelief when once fortified in the heart. This should teach us great caution in rejecting manifest light and truth because of some seeming difficulties and objections connected with it.

ELIJAH, JOHN, AND THE DISCIPLES

The faith of even the best men has sometimes wavered when hard pressed. Elijah had a special work to do in reforming Israel in the days of Ahab. God wrought through him mightily. The priests of Baal were slain, and a great victory gained. Elijah was exultant. He thought that the king and queen and all the people were coming over to the Lord. But when it did not turn out so, and the queen threatened to kill him, he ran for his life, and went into the wilderness, and lay down requesting to die. 1 Kings 19:1-4. He thought his mission was a failure. And even when the Lord said to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" (ver.9) He was ready to argue his case, and defend his course, till the Lord convinced him that he was wrong.

So also even John the Baptist, after being left in prison for a long time, and being threatened with death, became shaken in faith in Jesus. If Jesus was the Messiah, why did he leave him there to perish? He sends two of his disciples to inquire if after all he is really the Messiah? Luke 7:19. What a sad exhibition of human weakness this was after his strong faith in Jesus when he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" 1 John 1:29. When such men as these falter and doubt for a moment, no wonder that weaker ones yield to temptations, and apostatize entirely when trials and discouragements come upon the cause. So it always has been, and so it always will be.

Even Christ's disciples went through the same process of doubting and sifting and apostatizing; and that, too, after they had seen many and wonderful miracles wrought by him. When Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the multitude with a few loaves and fishes, they were so moved that they proposed to take him by force and make him a king. John 6:9-15. The next day when Jesus rebuked them for seeking the things of this world, their faith suddenly cooled off, and they demanded of him another miracle that they might believe. Ver. 30. And when he rebuked them still more sharply, they said, "This is an hard saying: who can hear it?" Ver. 60. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Ver. 66.

We see them turning away with a sneer. They have been deceived and misled; but now their eyes are open, and they will be fooled no longer. Such is unbelief, such it always has been, and such it always will be. Luther's work developed hundreds of these doubters,-men who were at first warm believers. Wesley found the same class. If God's work now does not develop them, it will be a new thing under the sun.

GOD DOES NOT REMOVE OCCASION FOR DOUBT

The fact is that God has never at any time given so much light and evidence that man had to believe whether he wanted to or not. Nor has he been careful to remove all objections out of the way of those who have believed and embraced his truth. In fact, he has evidently placed objections right in their way on purpose to test their faith and try their devotion to him. This is just what Moses said God did do to the Israelites. Deut. 8:1-3. It is just what he has always done, and always will do.

The gift of an immortal life in glory, purchased at the infinite price of the death of God's own Son, is too precious a boon to be lightly bestowed. God is willing, nay, anxious, that all men should have it; but they must first show their appreciation of it by carefully, humbly, earnestly, and prayerfully seeking after it. It must be to them like the hid treasures and the pearl of great price for which they are willing to give all. Such seekers do not miss the truth. A few obstacles or difficulties do not turn them back.

But when men become proud and self-sufficient, then the Lord leaves them to be filled with their own ways. Behold the haughty Herod demanding proof of Christ that he was the Son of God! How much did Jesus give him? He answered him not one word. He had not a ray of light for him. But now see our Lord at the well in Samaria. To that humble woman he opens his whole soul, and tells her plainly that he is the Messiah. He purposely left the proud Pharisees to draw a wrong conclusion from his declaration that he could build the temple in three days, while he carefully explained all his parable to the humble fishermen.

Notice what God says of Christ: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offense." Rom. 9:23. Didn't God know that man would stumble over him? Yes, and so he knows that they will also stumble over other truths just as they always have done, and always will do. But those who seek God humbly and with tears will not be left to fall. God would send every angel from heaven before one

such should miss the way. All these facts apply with equal force to the cause of God in our day, to the third angel's message, and to all connected with it.

ELLEN G. WHITE AND THE TESTIMONIES

But I wish more especially to apply this to the testimonies. What evidence do we have that they are of God? Every argument in favor of the third angel's message is an argument in favor of the testimonies. Why? If it be a fact that the time has come for a special warning to the world on the advent near, the law of God, and other truths which we hold, then we may be sure that God would prepare the way for that message by raising up proper persons to give it.

God by his providence raised up Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. Before Jeremiah was born, God had set him apart to do the work before him. Jer. 1:5. So of John the Baptist, before his birth the angel announced his mission. Luke 1. Who does not believe that Luther was a man of God's providence, raised up to do that special work? So of Wesley. Shall, then, the last closing message to the world fall due and God provide no fit instruments to proclaim it, and push it through to the end? That is absurd, and contrary to all God's doing in the past, as we have already seen.

Now, admitting that ours is a special message from God designed to warn this generation, look at its history. Sr. White and her work have not only been connected with the message from the very first, but she has had a leading influence in that work, has stood front and foremost, and with voice and pen has done more to guide and mold the message than any other half dozen laborers now in the cause. From the beginning her teachings have been accepted by all the leading ministers and believers as light from God.

Now would it not be the very height of absurdity to accept the message and the work as the truth and God's work, and yet reject the very one who had done the work? A deceiver, an impostor, a false teacher stands at the head of God's special work for forty years! No, that will never do. We must either reject the message or receive the testimonies. They stand or fall together. So I repeat that every argument in favor of the main doctrine of our faith is an argument in favor of the testimonies.

Another argument in favor of the testimonies is the fact that all those parties who have drawn off from our people in opposition to the testimonies have come to naught, or at best have had only a feeble existence. Time and again this has been tried by different persons proposing to preach all the message except the testimonies. Now if that position is right, why don't [sic] God prosper them?

OTHER EVIDENCE

Another evidence in favor of the testimonies is the fact that those who have accepted them have always stood together, and have perfectly agreed in faith and practice; while those who have opposed them have disagreed in doctrine and discipline, and have split up into little factions.

And still another evidence is found in the fact that those who remain among us, and still oppose the testimonies, soon lost their love for the message, their spirituality, their devotion, their zeal for God and for the salvation of souls. I have seen many such cases, and have never yet known an exception to this rule. Why is this so? If they are right, why does it always have this effect? On the other hand, the most devoted and zealous members in all our churches are those who have the strongest faith in the testimonies.

Again, the tendency and influence of the testimonies is not, like the teachings of Spiritualist mediums, to lead away from the Bible, away from God and away from faith in Christ; nor, like Mormonism, to lead to sensuality, dishonesty, and crime; but they lead to faith in the Holy Scriptures, devotion to God, and a life of humility and holiness. Can a corrupt tree bear good fruit? Jesus said not. What is a tree known by?—Its fruit. Here is a tree which has been standing among us for forty years, and bearing fruit. What has been the nature of that fruit? What have been its effects upon those who have partaken the most of it?

It seems to me now that no one who has ever felt the power of the Spirit of God upon his own heart can candidly read through the four volumes of "Spirit of Prophecy" without being deeply convicted that the writer must live very near to God, and be thoroughly imbued with the same Spirit that inspired the Bible, and animated the apostles and prophets. Such lofty thought of God, of heaven, and of spiritual things cannot come from a carnal heart, nor from a mind deceived and led by Satan.

DIFFICULTIES NO OCCASION FOR REJECTION

But are there not difficulties in these writings hard to explain? Passages which seem to conflict one with another, or with some passage in the Bible, or with facts? I freely grant for myself that there are some passages which bother me, and which I do not know how to explain. But I believe them for all that just as I do the Bible. There are many passages in the Bible which I should have to admit I could not explain nor harmonize. If any man says that he can explain and reconcile all the statements of the Scriptures, he simply shows his self-conceit and ignorance. Yet I profoundly believe the Bible for all that.

I have not a shadow of a doubt about the sleep of the dead, the annihilation of the wicked, the Sonship of Christ, baptism by immersion, etc. and yet there are scriptures such for instance, as the rich man and Lazarus, which are as difficult for me to harmonize with these plain Bible doctrines as it is for me to explain the hardest passage in Sr. White's writings. Peter admitted that there were some things in the Scriptures hard to be understood. 2 Pet. 3:16. He says that some wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. And that is just what some are doing with the testimonies.

When we consider how extensive these writings are, extending over a period of nearly forty years, embracing ten bound volumes besides many smaller works, it would be a wonder indeed if in all these there should not be anything in the

wording, the sentiment, or the doctrine hard to understand and explain, or on which a sharp opponent could not make a plausible argument. We know that God's revelations in the past have not been given free from all obscurity and difficulties. Neither will they be now.

If a man reads the Bible on purpose to find objections, as Tom Paine did, and as Ingersoll does, he will find plenty of them to satisfy his unbelief, and confirm him in his infidelity. But if, like thousands of others equally learned and intelligent, he goes to the Scriptures to find light and God and salvation, he will find them full and clear, to the joy of his soul. I am profoundly convinced in the depths of my soul, after an experience of twenty-five years, that the same thing is true of the testimonies.

AN EARNEST PERSONAL APPEAL

And now I want to reason awhile with those among us who are holding off and living in doubt about the testimonies. I believe that your course is not only wrong, but that it is unsatisfactory to you here, and will be unsatisfactory at the Judgment. You take very little interest in the progress of the cause, you carry a very light burden in the work of the church, you take but little part, if any, in the Sabbath-school, you do next to nothing in the missionary work, you pay no tithes, you give nothing anywhere, you have no burden for the salvation of souls, or if you have you never show it; if you say anything at all it is mostly in raising queries and objections.

My brethren, my sisters, are you willing to let your short life slip by year after year, and finally come up to the searching test of the Judgment in this way? Beware! Many will land in perdition who do not intend to. Shut your eyes to it as you may, such a course must inevitably end in disaster.

But you say, "I would like to believe and have full confidence in the whole work if I only could; but I am afraid I shall believe an error." Well, let us see if there is really any danger in going this way.

You certainly know that our people hold all the cardinal doctrines of salvation, - faith in God, the Bible, Jesus Christ, repentance, a holy life, etc. Isn't this safe? You know that Sr. White and all our ministers not only so teach, but exert all their influence to have our people live lives of devotion, of honesty, of purity, of love, of plainness, of sacrifice, and of every Christian virtue. You know that every sin is condemned among our people, and the most solemn warnings are constantly given against even the appearance of evil. You know that in almost every church of our people there are at least some who are living blameless Christian lives. You know that there is not one immoral doctrine taught or practiced by our people. Bad men and poor examples there are, to be sure; but they are such in spite of all our efforts to make them better. You know that if any man will strictly live up to the teachings of the testimonies and our people, he will certainly be saved.

Now will it not be better for you, -better in this life and safer in the next, -to believe and labor heartily with this people than it is to believe with nobody, be in harmony with no church, and have no settled system of doctrine? Of all the miserable, unsatisfactory places to be in, that is the worst. There is no comfort in it, there is no strength in it, there is no usefulness in it. Better to believe something, better to run in somewhere, rather than to stand out there in the storm all alone. A hut, a hovel, is better than that. What a pitiable condition a man must be in at this day when there are so many churches and kinds of doctrine, who can neither believe nor work with any of them! Such a person must be badly befogged some way.

My friend, is this your condition? How long have you been there? One year? Five years? Ten years? Haven't you settled it yet? Then give it up, and come in with those who have settled it, where there is faith and hope and zeal and active work for God and man.

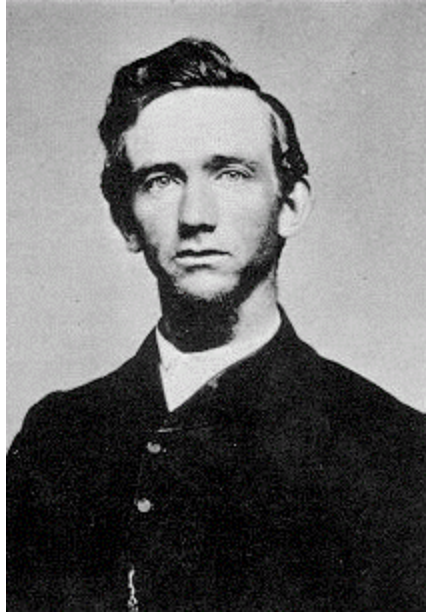
Look at the grand truths which our people hold, -the new earth, the beautiful city, the resurrection, the real life hereafter, the literal coming of Christ, the sleep of the dead, the destruction of sin and sinners, the law of God, all those grand lines of prophecy unmistakably pointing to the end near. Can you give these all up, forget them, and shut them from your heart? Can you once more have confidence in intangible spirits, eternal hell, sprinkling for baptism, Sunday-Sabbath, or the millennium? Pshaw! Strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel!

I find that there is peace and joy, hope and confidence, love for souls, and the blessing of God in giving full confidence to the whole message; and these I have never found in doubting it, nor have I ever seen any one who did find them that way. All admit that we have truth enough, if lived out, to save us. We know that all other churches have many errors. How shall we gain anything, then, by going there? Start a new church of our own? Well, the success of those who have left us and tried that has not been very encouraging.

No, the real trouble lies close at home, in a proud, unconverted heart, a lack of real humility, an unwillingness to submit to God's way of finding the truth.

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PHOTOS



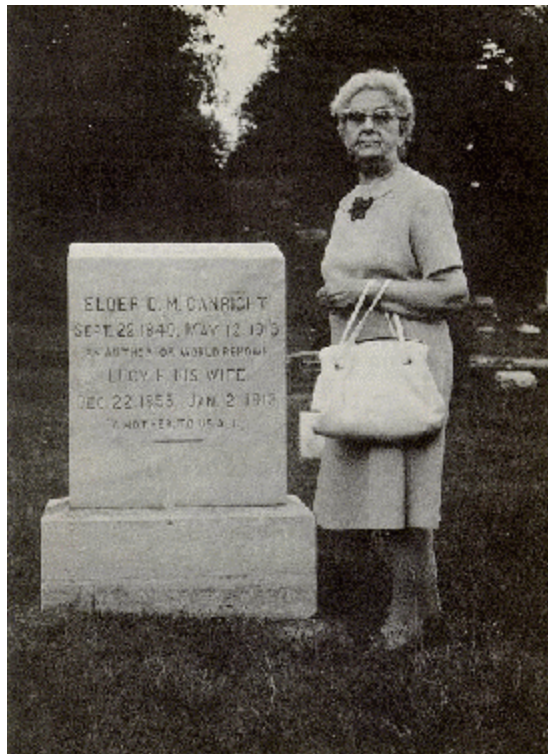
Elder Dudley M.Canright at the time he was an active Seventh-Day Adventist minister.



Lucy Hadden Canright, Elder's Canright second wife



Carrie Shasky in 1913, the year she was D.M.Canright's secretary



Mrs. Carrie Johnson standing by Rev. and Mrs. D.M. Canright tombstone

