

## **A THIRTY-FIVE PART DOCUMENTARY**

### **THE ADVENT AWAKENING**

Vance Ferrell

"But with so short a time to awake the slumbering virgins, and save souls, we must work; work night and day. God has thrust us out in haste, to give the last invitation, and we must labor in earnest, and compel them to come in, that His house may be filled.

Why, I expect that God will shake the world with a moral earthquake before the close of '43. Strong men in Israel are rallying to our help. The midnight cry must yet be made to ring, and ring through every valley and over every hilltop and plain. An awful trembling must yet seize upon sinners in Zion, a crisis must come, before the door of mercy is everlastingly shut against them. They must be made to feel that it is now or never. And they will."-L.C. Collins, letter dated May 23, 1842, to Joshua V Himes and Josiah Litch, printed in *Signs of the Times*, June 1, 1842.

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PART ONE

**Following the time of Christ and the death of the Apostles, what, down to our own time, were the major turning points in all human history? We would list these:**

**1 - The reign of Constantine I (A.D. 306-337)**—This cunning emperor decided to work closely with apostate liberal Christians at Rome and bring the pagans into the church. All future history was affected by the changes which his actions set in motion. (See our tract, *The Story of Constantine* [BS-271.]

**2 - The nailing of the 95 theses to the church door in Augsburg, Germany, by Martin Luther (October 30, 1517)**—Even secular historians recognize that this event was the major turning point between medieval and modern history. Luther's stubborn determination to stand for the right, though it may cost him his life—led to a moral uprising which freed the people from the shackles of Rome.

**3 - The Advent Awakening (primarily 1841-1844)**—The discovery of the meaning and ramifications of the prophecy in Daniel 8:14 produced a worldwide religious awakening, and led to the forming of the final remnant people predicted in Revelation 12:17 Seventh-day Adventist believers.

We should not underrate the importance of what happened back then. Even if humanity had not discovered the prophecy, the major event which occurred on October 22, 1844, was earth-shaking, nay, universe-shaking, in its significance. The final atonement in the great controversy between Christ and Satan had begun in that glorious building, the Sanctuary in heaven. From eternity past to eternity future, the single most startling development was this great controversy. A primary event in that vast time-line occurred on a Tuesday in 1844.

**4 - The divine call of Ellen White to the prophetic roll (December 1844)**—This event, quite appropriately coming immediately after the October transition, was of extreme importance. God knew it was time to call people to the final remnant faith, and they would need a prophet to guide them aright in their selection of doctrines and standards—in spite of the immense number of deceptions which Satan would let loose upon the world and hurl specifically at them in the last days. (See our several books on this subject: *Prophet of the End* [224 pp.], *The Editions of Great Controversy* [504 pp.], and *Ellen White Did Not Plagiarize* [84 pp.]

There you have it: the four major events following the first century and before the next major event, which will catapult the entire world, in the closing scenes of earth's history (as depicted in *Great Controversy*, chapter 25 and onward), into **the U.S. National Sunday Law**. (For the most complete and classified collection of Spirit of Prophecy statements on the last days, see our 18-books, *End Time Series*.)

With all this in mind, it is entirely appropriate that we should turn our attention to one of those four major turning points in human history.

**But what should we name it?** We could call it "*the great advent movement*," but that would apply to all that followed 1844 down to the present time.

We could call it "*the midnight cry*," but that title is historically applicable to a brief period of time in the early fall of 1844 (c. August 12-16 to October 22).

We could call it "*the Millerite movement*," but it was not Miller's movement; it was God's movement. It was worldwide in scope and involved far more leaders and preachers than William Miller.

So we will call it what it actually was: "*The Advent Awakening*." Throughout the world, men and women awakened to the fact that the second coming of Christ was near! That was its primary message; that is what it was all about: warning men and women that Christ's advent was near, and calling them to repent and prepare for that great event.

**We enter upon our treatment of this subject with reverent care;** for, despite the falling away of many others, there are those of us who fully believe in the divinely inspired nature of this grand set of events which ushered in the fulfillment of Revelation 11:19, 12:17, and 14:6-12. Rejoice, O people of God; for soon, very soon, we shall also see the fulfillment of yet another prophecy: Revelation 22:14.

## — SECTION ONE —

### RECOGNIZING THE NEARNESS OF THE END

#### EVENTS INDICATING THE END OF TIME

**For thousands of years, God has, through His prophets, predicted the second coming of Christ.**

A detailed overview of these predictions is to be found in *Great Controversy*, 299-302. In addition, in the past several hundred years, men of God have expressed their conviction that the second advent cannot be far off. (See *Great Controversy*, 303-304.)

**But then, two indicators of the nearness of His return occurred:** One was the fulfillment of certain

Biblically predicted signs. The other was the rise of men who declared that Christ's advent was extremely near.

## **SIGNS OF HIS COMING**

**The Lisbon Earthquake**—Great *Controversy*, 304-308, describes the Lisbon earthquake of 1755; the dark day and blood-like moon of May 19, 1780; and the great meteorite shower of November 13, 1833, predicted in Matthew 24:29-30 and Revelation 6:13. The God of heaven gave us these special signs to awaken the people.

In 1980, a prominent seismologist, G.A. Eiby, in chapter 11 of his book, *Earthquakes*, ranked the Lisbon earthquake as "the largest shock ever"—and reckoned that it may well have reached an almost incredible 9.0 on the Richter scale—seven times stronger than the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake.

In 1955, on the 200th anniversary of the Lisbon quake, Sir Thomas Kendrick, director of the British Museum, published his book, *The Lisbon Earthquake*, in which he showed that it affected the entire outlook of Europeans and began a period of gloom which led to the French Revolution. From a study of European literature, Dr. Daniel Augsburg, of Andrews University, has confirmed the relationship between those two events.

**The Dark Day**—Then there was the dark day of 1780. From the best that historians can tell, it has not been equaled in history before or since that time.

The Leonid shower of 1833 was so startling that it led to an intensified study of meteors and meteorites. From the mid-Atlantic to California, as many as 60,000 meteors were seen falling every hour, many exploding noiselessly into sub-showers of stars. Like the other two Biblically predicted events, nothing like it has occurred before or since.

It is significant that all three occurred in those parts of the world where people were primarily studying the Bible—Europe and America.

**End of the 1260-year prophecy**—But there was a fourth event which augured the nearness of the second advent: the end of the 1260-year prophecy. Beginning in A.D. 538 at the time of a major change in church and world history, this prophecy ended in 1798 during another major change in church and world history.

For, in that year, the pope was taken captive by Berthier, the general of Napoleon, and taken from Italy to a place in southern France, where he died the next year.

Other epochal events were occurring at about the same time: the Industrial Revolution and the global surge of European colonialism.

But two other very important events occurred close to 1798, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy:

**The French Revolution**—This remarkable crisis in European history fulfilled a prediction in Revelation 11. Great *Controversy*, 266-270, explains this in detail.

**The Rise of America**—The emergence of the United States, as a separate nation, was predicted in Revelation 13. See Great *Controversy*, 439-441, for the meaning of this marvelous fulfillment.

Both events have linkage to the 1260-year prophecy, as Great *Controversy* indicates. In view of the fact that the 1260 years pointed directly to the time of the end, it need come as no surprise that this prophecy is mentioned more frequently than any other predicted time span in Scripture. It is found seven times in Daniel and Revelation (Daniel 7:25; 12:4-7; Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; and 13:5).

For excellent discussions of this important time prophecy, turn to Great *Controversy*, 54, 266, 439.

**All these were so many evidences that mankind was nearing its end.** "When these things begin to come to pass," the Saviour said, "then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (*Luke 21:28*). The time had come when the signs were appearing and the people were led to look for the soon return of Jesus. In various places, all over the globe, men studied the Scriptures more intently—and what they found caused them to rise up and proclaim the nearness of Christ's coming.

Satan is the "prince of the power of the air" (*Ephesians 2:2*); and he is responsible for the earthquakes, famines, and pestilence which have become so prevalent in these last days.

**The year, 1798, seemed to be a focal point which brought mankind into the time of the end.** Bible students in the 19th century recognized that fact. As a result, many developed a strong interest in the time prophecies and the year 1798.

Not only did the Lisbon Earthquake arouse people in general to a sense that time was running out, but many Bible students were especially impressed by another significant event: In February of that year, Napoleon's general, Berthier, had marched into Rome and taken the Pope Pius

VI captive. The papacy was at an end, and none of the nations of Europe seemed to have the will to restore it! It was only because Napoleon afterward relented, that he permitted it to be reestablished. The capture of the pope was seen as the "deadly wound" of Revelation 13:3 and the fulfillment of the 1260-year prophecy.

**So 1798 became an anchor point by which secular history and certain Bible prophecies could be correlated.** It was believed that Daniel's prophecy had been unsealed and could now be understood in its fullness. The conclusion was also drawn that the prophecy of Daniel 12:4 had been fulfilled. Many concluded that they had arrived at the "time of the end."

**As they studied, these Bible students came across Daniel 8:14 and the 2300-year prophecy.** Between 1800 and 1844, more than 65 Bible scholars on four continents predicted that the 2300-year prophecy would be fulfilled at some point between 1843 and 1847.

However, there were widely different views of what would occur at that time. Just what was the "sanctuary," what was its "cleansing," and when would it occur? Throughout those years—indeed, all the way to October 23, 1844—God hid from their eyes the correlation between Daniel 8:14 and Leviticus 16. But more on that later.

**The nature and timing of the millennium was a crucial issue both in the studies and in the opposition to them.** That which Millerism especially challenged was the concept that, if any great event was about to occur soon, it would be the beginning of a great millennium of peace and happiness. It was generally speculated that Christ would not return until after that thousand years had elapsed.

Miller and his associates declared that Christ was about to return to the earth in judgment, and this message most people did not want to hear. The people back then, like those today, did not want to face the fact that they needed to put away their sins. The world was willing to accept a date which produced pleasurable results—but not a crisis which they did not want to prepare for.

So it was that William Miller and his associates gave the first angel's message: a call to prepare to meet God who was coming to begin the judgment. And that message was fulfilled. The "coming" was in heaven, not to the earth; and the judgment did begin at the predicted time. We are to continue giving that message today. The world must be warned of the impending crisis.

## — SECTION TWO —

### GIVING THE MESSAGE WORLDWIDE

#### ADVENT PREACHERS IN OTHER LANDS

"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell in the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."—Revelation 14:6-7.

**The proclamation of the first angel's message was but the beginning.** The first would be followed by a second and a third,—and then Christ would return (*Revelation 14:6-16*).

This first message, which preached the "ever-lasting gospel" of salvation through Christ, was given worldwide. It called upon men to reverence and worship the true God, and announced the coming of "the hour of His judgment."

It is an interesting fact that the message of these preachers in other lands, and William Miller and his associates in America, did just that. Yet they did it believing that the judgment occurred at the second advent, when in reality it would begin a little prior to that coming.

**This message of the imminent judgment could not have been proclaimed by the early Christ church,** for it was not until the last days that the judgment was to begin.

Paul warned against looking for the coming of Christ in his day. He told of the "mystery of iniquity," the papacy, which must be revealed before Christ should come. This power was to be prominent for a period of 1260 years until 1798. So Christ could not return until after 1798. Paul also reasoned of "judgment to come." But the first angel's message declares that "the hour of God's judgment IS come."

In many parts of the world, the first angel's message was proclaimed during the first half of the 19th century. Its proclamation laid the foundation for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

#### BEGINNINGS IN GERMANY

**Although a fulfillment of Revelation 14:6, this worldwide advent message was based on Daniel 8:14:** "Unto two thousand and three hundred days, and then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed."

**The key to dating the 2300-day prophecy had been provided in 1768 by Johann Petri**, a German Calvinist pastor. Apparently it was Petri who first ascertained the close relationship between the messianic 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9 and the 2300 days of Daniel 8. He began both time periods in 453 B.C., thus concluding that the 2300 days/ years would end in 1847. Similar conclusions were reached about the same time by **Hans Wood**, an Irish layman. Wood, however, began the two periods in 420 B.C., and so ended the 2300 years in 1880.

About 50 years before Petri, **Johann Bengel**, another German pastor-researcher, declared that all prophetic time periods point forward to Christ's second advent in glory. He reckoned that the 1260 years ended in 1836, and preached that Christ would return at that time. Interestingly enough, Bengel paid little attention to the 2300 day prophecy. His emphasis on the nearness of Christ's coming strongly affected many German pastors (called Pietists), as well as John Wesley in England.

### ITALY, SPAIN, AND SOUTH AMERICA

**A book which influenced many in the early 19th century, both in South America and through-out Europe, was written by an exiled Jesuit priest.** The book, *The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty* (*La Venida*, was the name by which it was known in Europe), was published in the 1790s. It was written by **Manuel de Lacunza**—after he had left South America and journeyed to Italy. He had been required to leave his native Chile in 1767 when Charles III expelled all Jesuits from his realm. Eventually resettling in a monastery near Bologna, Italy, he here found time to complete his study of the second advent, which had intrigued him for more than 20 years.

Fearful that his book would probably lead him to the Inquisition, he circulated his manuscript under the pseudonym, *Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra* [John Joseph, son of Ezra]—making it appear that the author was a converted Jew. It was printed in Latin and Italian, and later in other languages.

Over ten years after Lacunza's death (in 1812), his book was printed in Spain. This was because the power of the Inquisition had been broken in that country during the French occupation.

**The book spread rapidly all over Europe and throughout South America.** Convinced that the two advents of Christ were the focal points of history, Lacunza appealed to the reader to find, in the Bible, evidences of Christ's second coming and when it would take place.

**Unlike many in his time, Lacunza believed that Christ would return at the beginning of the millennium** rather than at its end.

As might be expected, Lacunza's book was condemned by the *Sacred Congregation of the Index*; and, in 1824, Pope Leo XII officially forbade its publication "in any language whatsoever." This ban, of course, was an incentive for Protestants to obtain a copy and read it.

### GREAT BRITAIN

**Lacunza's book, *The Coming of the Messiah*, greatly stimulated the advent awakening in Great Britain.** A leading Anglican journal, the *Christian Observer* (which began publication in 1810), carried letters and articles about the 1260-year prophecy; and, in 1810, **John A. Brown** introduced the 2300-year prophecy into the discussion. He dated it from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1843.

One of the *Observer's* correspondents was **William Cunninghame**, a Scottish layman. A prolific writer, Cunninghame published 21 different works on Biblical prophecy and chronology. **He was certain that he was living in the time of the first angel of Revelation 14:6-7**, and that the second and third angel's messages were still future.

The "cleansing of the Sanctuary" in Daniel 8:14, Cunninghame interpreted as applying to God's cleansing of the church and visiting judgments on apostasy. He began the 1260 years and 1335 years in A.D. 533 and figured that the millennium would occur at the end of the 1335 years, in 1867.

The British awakening was decidedly different than the one in America; in that, in England, it was believed that the Jews would return to Palestine.

Awakening meetings were held at Albury Park estate of a wealthy banker, **Henry Drummond**, who heavily funded the activities of the British awakeners. The first meeting was held for a full week in 1826. An intensive study of the prophecies was the focus of attention. This conference became an annual event for the next four years. These five conferences, running from 1826 to 1830, were very important in crystallizing decisions.

Among those who attended the Albury Park conferences were two young men in their early thirties: Joseph Wolff and Edward Irving. (We will mention Wolff below.)

**Edward Irving** became a leading figure in the British Advent Awakening. He grew up in Scotland and graduated from Edinburgh University at the age of 17. After an apprentice ministry in Glasgow, he pastored a small chapel in London. But his fervent spirituality and remarkable preaching soon brought him to the attention of the entire city. Moving to the larger Regent Square Presbyterian Church,

he attracted large audiences.

Irving initially paid little attention to the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation; but, when he came across Lacunza's book in 1826, he started a study group which met regularly to study "the speedy coming of our Lord." His research associates were **James Frere** and **Lewis Way**. They finally settled on 1847 as the probable date of the second advent.

### PART THREE

A thousand people at a time would attend Irving's Sunday services. On his tours of Scotland, he spoke in the open air to crowds of upwards of 12,000 at a time. During one of his Scottish tours, he converted 21-year-old **Horatius Bonar**, who became the "advent hymnist," writing scores of lyrics, such as "*I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say*."

Later in this study we will find the name of **Robert Winter** mentioned several times. He was converted to the advent message by Millerite preachers in America; and then, returning to England (his homeland), he witnessed to the truth.

Winter had emigrated to America and, while there, pastored a Baptist church in Vermont. Many of his members had heard Miller speak on the advent; and, to please them, he attended a meeting. Having accepted the truth, shortly afterward his entire congregation united with him in forming a Millerite church. Determining to return to Britain and spread the message, he met much opposition as he tried there to preach in the streets. Then a prominent couple, listening from their fine carriage, asked him to preach in their church, composed of wealthy people. From that time onward, he preached in halls, churches, and open-air meetings everywhere. Several thousand are said to have been baptized by him. After the Disappointment, he was forced to flee from place to place because of the mob spirit. Re-turning to America, he was discouraged for a time, and later joined the Sabbatarian Adventists.

### SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE

Because he was genuinely teaching the Bible, **Francois S.R.L. Gaussen** was driven from his pulpit in Geneva by the state clergy. Uniting with a group of faithful Christians, Gaussen began teaching the children of Geneva about the book of Daniel. This series attracted many adults, including visitors from foreign lands.

### NETHERLANDS

**Hentzepeter**, the keeper of the Royal Museum in Amsterdam, was led through a dream to begin studying the second advent. For some time he thought he was the only person who believed in the second coming of Christ. But, as he preached, he learned what was happening elsewhere in Europe and in America.

### SCANDINAVIA

In Scandinavia the laws forbade all, except Lutheran priests, to preach. When laymen began proclaiming the truth in private meetings and in the forests, they were arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. So **little children** began to preach. During the years of 1842 and 1843, especially, many children and youth, girls as well as boys, some as young as six years of age, gave talks on the second advent and called the people to repentance. This made a profound impact upon many, especially the common people. Most of these children were illiterate. When not preaching, they had the mentality and interests of other children their age. It was obvious that the Spirit of God was working.

### LATER ACTIVITY IN GERMANY

Three men were very influential in proclaiming the nearness of the second advent in Germany.

**Johann Richter** was well-educated, the head of the *Rhenish Missionary Society*, and editor of a six-volume *Family Bible Commentary*. Many others united in the work. **Leonard Kelber**, a Bavarian schoolteacher, published a book in 1835 called, *The End Comes*, in which he said Bengel's calculations were wrong, by seven years, and that the year, 1843, would mark the beginning of the reign of Christ. This book ran through several editions and was widely circulated. **Hengstenberg**, the most talented theologian in Germany, also preached the message. **Johann Lutz** was another important advent preacher.

### RUSSIA

When hundreds of **persecuted awakeners from Germany** fled to southern Russia, they spread the message among their own countrymen who had earlier moved there. Because the clergy closed the churches to them, they held Stunden, or "hours" of meetings in private homes, at which hundreds were

converted to the faith. The Sabbath was also discussed; but, because no one dared lead out in that reform, the interest died out.

### AUSTRALIA

In Adelaide, Australia, **Thomas Playford** preached powerful sermons on the second advent. No church could contain the crowds, so a large building was erected for him to preach in.

### INDIA

The Episcopal bishop of Calcutta, **Daniel Wilson**, had earlier been a participant in one of the Albury Park conferences in England. In India, he published a book in 1836 on the prophecies of Daniel, and said the 2300 years would end in 1847, at which time Christ would return.

### JOSEPH WOLFF

**Joseph Wolff** was unique, in that he could not be categorized by any particular nation. He went everywhere with the message! Although the son of a German Jewish rabbi, Wolff became interested in Christianity while still a teenager. He left home at the age of eleven. But, not liking the secular rationalism in 19th-century Germany, he turned to Catholicism. Traveling to Rome, he was recognized as valuable by the pope and cardinals. It was not often that a Jew converted to Catholicism; and, in addition, Wolff had a gift for learning languages. That, combined with his evangelistic zeal, gained for him an entrance to the College of Missionary *Propaganda* in Rome.

But, when he cited the sixth commandment and spoke in opposition to the Vatican's position on burning heretics, he was severely reprovved. It was at this time, that he met Henry Drummond from England, who was visiting Rome at the time. Drummond appealed to Wolff to "come out of Babylon." Not long after, Wolff was banished from Rome because of his independent thinking.

Separating from Catholicism, he journeyed to England and joined the Anglican Church. Soon he was convinced that Christ was going to return to the earth in 1847.

In addition to preaching in England, Wolff became "*the missionary to the world*"—carrying the advent message to Africa, Egypt, Abyssinia, Asia, Palestine, Syria, Persia, Bokhara, and India. He also visited the United States. No other advent believer heralded the good news of Christ's coming to so many different localities. An expert in six languages and able to converse freely in another eight, he preached to Jews, Moslems, Hindus, and Parsees.

Traversing most of the Near East, he went into central Asia, and from thence crossed the Himalayas to India. On a visit to the United States in 1837, he was invited to address Congress. He spoke in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington.

Thus we find that, in response to the call of the Holy Spirit, brave souls proclaimed the first angel's message in the far corners of the globe.

**However, the message of the second advent did not receive the intense focus elsewhere that it did in America.** This was because the advent preachers in the United States were more unified in their positions. In Europe, **no consensus developed over the dating of the 2300-year prophecy**, whether it ended in 1843, 1844, or 1847. In addition, **there was a failure to focus on one time period.** Some urged the 1290- and 1335-year periods, in addition to the 2300-year period. Lastly, **the European awakeners did not develop any popular journals**, as was done in America. As a result, no massive following occurred. Some say the Old World was too conservative to become overly excited about the second advent of Christ, but the lack of missionary literature was a significant flaw.

### UNITED STATES

**The interest in the prophecies of the nearness of Christ's coming stirred many in Europe and elsewhere before such widespread interest occurred in the United States.** The Albury Park Conferences, in England, were held from 1826 to 1830. Yet, during that time in America, few were studying those same prophecies.

**We have briefly surveyed the widespread giving of the first angel's message throughout the world. Yet we only know a small part of how wide-spread it actually was in other lands.**

**We shall now turn our attention to that one place where the message was given the most strongly, by the most people—the United States between 1831 and 1844.**

As early as 1811, **William C. Davis**, a Presbyterian pastor living in South Carolina, had calculated the ends of both the 2300- and 1260-year prophecies to occur in 1847. Davis recognized that the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24 marked the beginning of the 2300-year prophecy. He thought that Christ would purify the church on that date and a millennium of peace would begin.

**Joshua L. Wilson**, who lived in Cincinnati, independently arrived at a similar date.

**Alexander Campbell**, founder of the Disciples of Christ Church, also discovered the cleansing of



the Sanctuary and the 2300-day prophecy—and interpreted it in much the same manner that Davis had. In 1830, one of his church members, **Samuel McCorckle** of Tennessee, decided that 1847 would be the literal second advent of Christ.

There were others who investigated the subject, but most serious Bible students had accepted the speculation, widely taught by Whitby, that Jesus would not return until after a thousand years of **peace**.

**Yet in the early part of the 19th century, God was raising up two people whom He would use in His work in very special ways. One was Ellen White; the other was William Miller.**

### — SECTION THREE —

#### MILLER

#### BEFORE HE BEGAN PREACHING

February 15, 1782 - August 14, 1816

#### MILLER'S EARLY LIFE

February 15, 1782 - May 1816

Grandfather William had settled in Pittsfield, Massachusetts about 1747, shortly after he married Hannah Leonard. They had three sons and a daughter. One of them he named William.

When he grew up, this second William became a captain in the Colonial army and served during part of the Revolutionary War. In 1781, on his re-turn to civilian life, he married Paulina Phelps, daughter of a Baptist minister. They settled near the bride's home in Pittsfield. They had 16 children (five sons and 11 daughters), and decided to name the oldest William. This is the William Miller of this biography:

**William Miller was born on February 15, 1782**, four months after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown. **In 1786, when William was 4 years old, the family moved to a farm at Low Hampton, New York, close to the Vermont border. Young William grew up there.** At the time, it was part of the Western frontier.

William's mother was very religious and he had a Christian upbringing. In fact, on the first page of his diary (which he began to keep early in his teens), he wrote, "I was early educated and taught to pray to the Lord." Being the only descriptive statement about himself in the diary's introduction, it must have seemed important to him as a distinguishing characteristic. Yet, as we shall learn, he lost all this devotional spirit within a few years.

Living conditions were difficult, and educational opportunities were limited. William only had three months of formal education in a schoolhouse each winter; however, especially between the age of 14 and 21, **he read whatever books he could get his hands on.**

Like Lincoln, William would sit at night on the floor by the fireplace, reading by the light of blazing pine knots. He would find them out in the woods and keep a supply on hand. Then, at night when all the duties were done, he would light a pine knot and read a borrowed book. The long winter evenings helped make up for the short school terms. During this time, his mother taught him the Bible, The Psalter, and the prayer book.

One night, his father awoke and saw a flickering glow under the door. Frightened, he ran out into the living room—and found William reading by the light of a pine knot or two. Upset, the father ordered his son to go to bed.

On one occasion when William wanted a certain book badly enough, he offered to chop wood so his father would buy it for him. Yet, for the most part, there was little extra money. The mortgage payments must be made, and everyone had to work hard to care for the chores and keep food on the table.

**Local folk in the area became interested in William's interest in books, and they lent him whatever he asked for. They found him to be a bright, conscientious boy whom they could trust.** Among them was Judge James Witherspoon; Congressman Matthew Lyon; and a wealthy man from Scotland, Alexander Cruikshanks; all of whom offered him free access to their libraries. Lyon's, especially, had amassed a large personal library. Commenting on it in 1842, Joshua Himes wrote:

"By the kindness of these gentlemen, he was enabled to store his mind with a vast collection of historical facts, which have since been of so much service to him in the illustration of the prophecies."—Himes, *Midnight Cry*, November 17, 1842.

William Miller had a strong body, a powerful mind, and a willingness to work hard to achieve what he wanted to do.

On July 10, 1792, when he was 10, he began keeping a diary, which provides us with some information on those early years. **It is of interest that he soon became the community scribe.** If anyone wanted anything written, young William knew how to say it well and write it in a nice script. He could

even compose poetry for special occasions.

Aware that a local physician, Dr. Smith, was wealthy, young Miller hesitated, then sat down one day and wrote him a letter. In it, he expressed his inner longing for an education, explained the family's financial situation, and asked the physician for help. Just then, his father entered the room and read the letter. **At this both the father and son broke down and wept. Deeply affected and recognizing that he could never give him the education he needed, his father tried to comfort him.** The father now saw his son's aspirations in a new light, and henceforth they both became better friends. No longer was the son's craving to learn an exasperation to his father.

**In his later teens, the family moved to Poultney, Vermont, about 6 miles west of Low Hampton. There he met a young lady, Lucy P. Smith, whom he married** on June 29, 1803. William was 21 years old. They remained together for the next 50 years, until death separated them.

Since Poultney had a public library, William Miller made use of it when he was not working. Soon after they were married, he joined the Masons and eventually advanced to the highest rank. In 1809, he became a deputy sheriff, later a constable, and finally a justice of the peace.

**Miller was the kind of solid citizen that people relied on. He had a good mind and a sterling character.**

In his childhood, Miller had a Christian mother and the influence of two godly uncles who were Baptist ministers. **Yet his deist friends became his undoing. Making acquaintances among these men who did not believe in Jesus Christ, they succeeded in instilling in him their skeptical doubts.**

They also led Miller to the writings of Voltaire, Volney, Hume, and Paine. Confused by what he read, Miller renounced most everything religious; yet he still believed there must be a God somewhere.

Miller later commented that, when he took these apparent inconsistencies in the Bible to the ministers, they offered little help, other than referring him to commentaries which, he said, were as contradictory as the preachers themselves. He concluded that "the Bible was only the work of designing men; and I discarded it accordingly" (*Miller, Apology and Defense, 2-3*). Miller remained a deist for 12 years.

**After joining the Vermont militia, he rose to the rank of sergeant. In 1810 the governor appointed him a lieutenant.** The next year, war was again declared between the United States and Great Britain. On November 7, 1812, he was made a captain. He had personally recruited 47 young men who had volunteered to fight under his command. The next spring, he was appointed a lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

Recalling the experience, Miller later wrote that he had joined the military because he was so religiously disheartened.

"I could discern no bright spot in the history of the past. Those conquerors of the world, and heroes of history, were apparently but demons in human form. All the sorrow, suffering, and misery in the world, seemed to be increased in proportion to the power they obtained over their fellows. I began to feel very distrustful of all men. In this state of mind I entered the service of my country; I fondly cherished the idea, that I should find one bright spot at least in the human character, as a star of hope, a love of country—patriotism."—Miller, *letter dated April 27, 1814*.

Miller was hoping that, somehow, the world was not as bad as it seemed to him. Everything in life seemed futile. Skepticism had placed a cloud over his mind, which he could not shake.

**In August 1814, Miller was with his regiment, the 30th Infantry, at an important army camp at Plattsburg** on the west bank of Lake Champlain. Just ahead lay seeming disaster.

The decisive *Battle of Plattsburg* was about to be fought, and the U.S. forces were outnumbered on land and sea. Utter annihilation by the British seemed inevitable.

The battle began on September 11, as opposing naval forces began fighting. Miller later wrote:

"At the commencement of the battle, we looked upon our own defeat as almost certain, and yet we were victorious."—*Apology and Defense, 4*.

Standing there on the shore, Miller with his men watched as the U.S. naval vessels won an overwhelming victory. On land, the Americans also had victory. That evening, he recalled the events of the day. In hurried phrases, he wrote the following brief letter:

"Sir, it is over; it is done! The British fleet has struck [surrendered] to the American flag. Great slaughter on both sides—they are in plain view where I am now writing . . . The sight was majestic, it was noble, it was grand. This morning at 10 o'clock the British opened a very heavy and destructive fire upon us, both by water and land. Their congreve rockets flow like hailstones about us, and round shot and grape from every quarter. You have no idea of the battle. Our force was small, but how bravely they fought." *Miller, letter dated September 11, 1814, to John Stanley, Poultney, Vermont.* [A similar letter was written the same night to William's wife.]

The Americans, with 1,500 regulars and about 4,000 volunteers, had defeated a crack British army of 15,000 men—many of whom had helped bring victory to Britain over Napoleon.

**The war years made Miller face death in a way he had never had to before. He contemplated his own mortality and its meaning.**

"But a short time, and, like Spencer [an army friend], I shall be no more. It is a solemn thought. Yet, could I be sure of one other life, there would be nothing terrific; but to go out like an extinguished taper, is insupportable—the thought is doleful. No! rather let me cling to that hope which warrants a never-ending existence; a future spring, where troubles shall cease, and tears find no conveyance; where never-ending springs shall flourish, and love, pure as the driven snow, [shall] rest in every breast."—William Miller, *letter to L. Miller, November 11, 1814*.

Yet that was but a vain hope at this time, for William had no idea whether such a reality existed anywhere.

**In spite of his professed skepticism, William Miller was deeply impressed that divine providence had protected America and given it the victory** in this critical battle, which essentially ended the War of 1812. What he did not know was that, 1900 years earlier, the God of heaven had predicted that, close to 1798, this nation would successfully rise out of the earth and become great (see *Great Controversy*, 439-440).

"It seemed to me that the Supreme Being must have watched over the interests of this country in an especial manner, and delivered us from the hands of our enemies . . . So surprising a result against such odds, did seem to me like the work of a mightier power."—*Apology and Defense*, 4.

Although the war came to a close officially with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent on December 24, 1814, the American army at Plattsburg remained there until February 6, 1815.

**Finally discharged from the army, Miller returned to private life.**

One incident reveals the respect in which others held William Miller: Soon after the close of the war, two of his fellow soldiers, both members of his company, found themselves in serious disagreement with one another. Nothing they could do seemed to settle the matter, and their strife only became more bitter. Then, one day, they decided to take the matter to their friend and neighbor, William Miller. They agreed that each would tell his side and that both would abide by his decision in the matter.

Arriving at his home at about the same time, they explained the matter to Miller—who then made a decision. The two men shook hands, visited with their former captain briefly, and then returned to their homes as friends and neighbors.

Following his father's death, **in 1815, William Miller moved his family from Poultney, Vermont, back to Low Hampton, New York, where he built a two-story frame house** by a grove of maple trees, on a 200-acre farm which he bought. Continuing his work as a farmer, he never again moved. He cared for his widowed mother until her death. That is another indication of the kind of man he was.

**The next year marked a major turning point in William Miller's life.**

#### MILLER'S CONVERSION MAY - OCTOBER 1816

In 1803, the year of his marriage, Miller (21 at the time) composed these lines:

"Come, blest Religion, with thy angel's face,  
"Dispel this gloom, and brighten all the place;  
"Drive this destructive passion from my breast;  
"Compose my sorrows, and restore my rest;  
"Show me the path that Christian heroes trod,  
"Wean me from earth, and raise my soul to God!"

**William Miller desperately wanted to find God and make his peace with Him, yet knew not how to do it.** In later years, he wrote:

"Thus, from 1804 to 1816, I was a firm, and, as I then thought, a consistent opposer of the Christian faith."

Under the influence of his deist friends, Miller became adept at mimicking the words and tones of Christians in the community. Yet, when he had gathered his company together, before shipping out for the coming battle with the British, he surprised his men at their farewell by asking someone to offer a prayer that God would protect them.

At one point, Grandfather Phelps, a Baptist minister, consoled Miller's mother with the words,

"Don't afflict your soul too deeply about William. There is something for him to do yet, in the cause of God."—*Sylvester Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller*, 29.

On November 11, 1814, he wrote his family from the army camp, and told his children that their

"first study" ought to lead them to look up to the Supreme Being as the Author of all things, that they should ever keep in mind that "He sees every action of your life, knows every thought, and hears every word." Then, to his eldest son, William, the father wrote that he should "set so good an example to your brothers and sisters, as that, if they should follow it, shall insure them peace, love, and friendship here, and happiness in the world to come."

**But now that Miller was settled in his new home in Low Hampton, he had time to study and reflect about that for which he so much longed.** He believed that God existed somewhere, and he believed in divine providence,—but he did not believe in the Bible or in Christianity.

While still searching, Miller began attending the local Baptist church whenever his uncle, Elisha Miller, preached.

**Conviction of sin began in May 1816.** One day, just after he had taken God's name in an oath, he felt convicted that he had done wrong. That small act precipitated an important crisis in his life.

"In the month of May, 1816, I was brought under conviction; and O, what horror filled my soul! I forgot to eat. The heavens appeared like brass, and the earth like iron. Thus I continued until October, when God opened my eyes."—*Miller, Advent Shield, May, 1849.*

From May onward, he began wondering how God could save anyone—considering how very terrible everyone was. Nothing around him provided an answer. **Only in the Bible were there solutions. But how could he know it was true?**

September of that year (1816) brought two new developments. The first was a victory celebration that the local Plattsburg veterans planned for the evening of September 11. Sylvester Bliss, Miller's first biographer, tells us that they were planning a riotous party "in high glee," but, for some reason, decided to attend a special memorial service at church the night before. They returned from the sermon deeply thoughtful. The glee was gone. Mirth and thoughts of dance had been replaced by prayer and praise to God by some of the veterans, as they realized how much Divine Power had protected them at Plattsburg.

Months before that date, Miller's mother had noticed that her son only attended the local church when the pastor was not out of town, preaching somewhere else. When he was gone, one of the deacons was assigned the task of reading a spiritual sermon from a book (Proudfoot's *Practical Sermons*).

When Paulina, William's mother, asked him about this, he replied that he did not think the men read the sermon well enough. But, when he intimated that he might be willing to attend if he could read the sermon, she immediately contacted the pastor. So the local elders wisely gave him the job. Henceforth he attended every week; and, on the podium, he read the sermon to the audience. There was no doubt that William was a good reader, and we can know that many in the audience were silently praying that what he read would move on his own heart.

**On Sunday morning, September 15, 1816, Miller stood up to read the morning sermon.** It was a sermon on Isaiah 53; and, partway through the presentation, he was overwhelmed by the sense of God's goodness and His living provision for lost sinners. The redemptive character of the Saviour as an atonement for sin was vividly impressed upon him. He could not go on. Overpowered with emotion, he literally choked up and sat down weeping. The congregation sensed what was happening, and wept with him. They were also praying.

But once again doubt swept over him. He then went through the agonizing experience related below.

Thirty-three years later, in 1845, Miller recalled the experience and wrote:

"I was then led to inquire how a just Being could consistently save those who should violate the laws of justice. The works of Nature or of Providence, could give no answer to this question; and I was almost led to despair. In this state of mind, I continued for some months."—*Miller, Apology and Defense, 5.*

"Annihilation was a cold and chilling thought, and accountability was sure destruction to all. The heavens were as brass over my head, and the earth as iron under my feet. *Eternity!—what was it? And death—why was it?* The more I reasoned, the further I was from demonstration. The more I thought, the more scattered were my conclusions.

"I tried to stop thinking, but my thoughts would not be controlled. I was truly wretched, but did not understand *the cause*. I murmured and complained, but knew not of whom. I knew there was a wrong, but knew not how or where to find the right. I mourned, but without hope."—*Ibid.*

'At length, when brought almost to despair, God by His Holy Spirit opened my eyes. I saw Jesus as a friend, and my only help, and the Word of God as the perfect rule of duty.

"Suddenly the character of a Saviour was vividly impressed upon my mind. It seemed that there

might be a Being so good and compassion-ate as to Himself atone for our transgressions, and thereby save us from suffering the penalty of sin. I immediately felt how lovely such a Being must be; and imagined that I could cast myself into the arms of, and trust in, the mercy of such an One.

'Aside from the Bible, I found that I could get no evidence of the existence of such a Saviour, or even of a future state.

"I felt that to believe in such a Saviour, with-out evidence, would be visionary in the extreme. I saw that the Bible did bring to view just such a Saviour as I needed; and I was perplexed to find how an uninspired book should develop principles so perfectly adapted to the wants of a fallen world. I was constrained to admit that the Scriptures must be a revelation from God; they be-came my delight and in Jesus I found a Friend."—*Ibid.* [*Special note: Throughout this entire study, emphasis and occasional full-caps within quotations are theirs. We never add emphasis to quotations in this study, unless so stated at the time.*]

As he later wrote: "God opened my eyes; and O, my soul, what a Saviour I discovered Jesus to be!"

**William Miller was soundly converted and accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. His mind was now satisfied and his heart found rest.** He at once erected the family altar and publicly professed the Christian faith, joining the Hampton Baptist Church.

The man who so frequently ridiculed Christians, that, in the presence of his deist friends, he would mimick the devotional peculiarities of his grandfather Phelps (a Baptist minister) and his uncle Elihu Miller, of the Low Hampton Church,—had been transformed into a humble, sincere child of God.

### **THE FIRST TWO BIBLE STUDY YEARS**

**October 1816 - Fall 1818**

**But soon his deist friends derided him. They challenged him to disprove all their specious, fine-spun arguments.** The very arguments which he himself had employed against the Bible were now turned against him.

"Soon after this, in the fall of 1816, I was conversing with a friend respecting my hope of a glorious eternity through the merits and intercessions of the Saviour, and he asked me how I knew there was a Saviour? I rejoiced that He was revealed in the Bible. He then asked me how I knew the Bible was true? and advanced my former deistical arguments on the inconsistencies, the contradictions, and the mysticisms in which I had claimed it was shrouded. I replied that if the Bible was the Word of God, everything contained therein might be understood, and all its parts be made to harmonize; and I said to him that if he would give me time, I would harmonize all those apparent contradictions, to my own satisfaction."—*Apology and Defense*, 5-6.

William Miller was as solid as the maple trees around his home. When he set his mind to do something, he did it carefully and thoroughly. Sitting down in the northeast room of the first floor of his home, which contained only his bed, a table, a chair, his Bible, and a concordance, **he set himself to work. He was going to understand the Bible. Miller was 34 years old.**

Fortunately, we are told, he had a faithful Christian wife who encouraged him in his studies and organized the family so that William should have as much time as possible to carry on his research. She was thrilled that her husband was now a Christian, and no longer a skeptic.

"I then devoted myself to prayer and to the reading of the Word. I determined to lay aside all my presuppositions, to thoroughly compare Scripture with Scripture, and to pursue its study in a regular and methodical manner. I commenced with Genesis, and read verse by verse, proceeding no faster than the meaning of the several passages should be so unfolded, as to leave me free from embarrassment respecting any mysticism or contradictions.

### **PART FIVE**

"Whenever I found anything obscure, my practice was to compare it with all collateral passages; and by the help of *Cruden*, I examined all the texts of Scripture in which were found any of the prominent words contained in any obscure portion. Then by letting every word have its proper bearing on the subject of the text, if my view of it harmonized with every collateral passage in the Bible, it ceased to be a difficulty."—*Op. cit.*, 6.

**William Miller began this study of the Bible in 1816. He was 34 years old. It was 28 years to 1844.**

For two full years he continued this study with his Bible, his *Cruden's Concordance*, the marginal notes in his Bible, and his well-worn history books. The result was that he was "satisfied that the Bible is its own interpreter."

**In conducting his study of the Bible, Millet formulated 13 "Rules of Interpretation."**

Recognizing that we now have a divinely inspired guide to Bible study—which the God of heaven expects advent believers today to use—we find several of Miller's rules of special interest:

"I. All Scripture is necessary, and may be understood by diligent application and study. *2 Tim. 3:15-17.*

"II. Every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented. *Matt. 5:18.*

"III. Scripture must be its own expositor, since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a teacher to expound it to me, and he should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of his sectarian creed, or to be thought wise, then his *guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom, is my rule, not the Bible.* *Ps. 19:7-11; 119:97-105; Matt. 23:8-10; 1 Cor. 2:12-16; Eze. 34:18-19; Luke 11:52; Mal. 2:7-8.*

"IV. To understand doctrine, bring all the Scriptures together on the subject you wish to know; then let every word have its proper influence; and if you can form your theory without a contradiction, you cannot be in error. *Isa. 28:7-29; 35:8; Prov. 19:27; Luke 24:27, 44-45; Rom. 16:26; James 5:19; 2 Peter 1:19-20.*

"V. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables; and in this way the same things are oftentimes revealed again and again, by different visions, or in different figures and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. *Ps. 89:19; Hos. 12:10; flab. 2:2; Acts 2:17; 1 Cor. 10:6; Neb. 9:9, 24; Ps. 58:2; Matt 13:13, 34; Gen. 41:1-32; Dan. 12, 7, and 8; Acts 10:9-16.*

"VI. Visions are always mentioned as such. *2 Cor 12:1.*

"VII. How to know when a word is used figuratively. If it makes good sense as it stands, and does no violence to the simple laws of nature, then it must be understood literally; if not, figuratively. *Rev. 12:1-2; 17:3-7.*

"VIII. Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy to represent future things, times, and events; such as *mountains, meaning governments; beasts, meaning kingdoms; waters, meaning people; Lamp, meaning the Word of God; day, meaning year.* *Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:8, 17; Rev. 17:1, 15; Ps. 119:105; Eze. 4:6.*

"IX. To learn the true meaning of figures, trace your figurative word through your Bible; and, where you find it explained, put it on your figure. And if it makes good sense, you need look no further; if not, look again.

"X. Figures sometimes have two or more different significations; as day is used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time: 1. Indefinite. 2. Definite, a day for a year. 3. Day for a thousand years. *Eccl. 7:14; Eze. 4:6:2; 2 Peter 3:8.*

"XI. Parables are used as comparisons to illustrate subjects, and must be explained in the same way as figures, by the subject and Bible. *Mark 4:13.*

"XII. To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfillment of a prophecy: If you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event; but if one word lacks a fulfillment, then you must look for another event, or await its future development; for God takes care that history and prophecy shall agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed. *Ps. 21:5; Isa. 14:17-19; 1 Peter 2:6; Rev. 17:17; Acts 3:18.*

"XIII. The most important rule of all is, that you must have *faith*. It must be a faith that requires a sacrifice, and, if tried, would give up the dearest object on earth, the world and all its desires, character, living, occupation, friends, home, comforts, and worldly honors. If any of these should hinder our believing any part of God's word, it would show our faith to be vain. Nor can we ever believe, so long as one of these motives lies lurking in our hearts. We must believe that God will never forfeit His Word. And we can have confidence that He that takes notice of the sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our head, will guard the translation of His own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in His Word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek."—Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller, 70-71; cf. P. Gerard Damsteegt, Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission, 299-300.*

It was his thorough Bible study that enabled Miller to develop such mature theological positions. **He continued this intense study of God's Word for two years.**

"In this way I pursued the study of the Bible, in my first perusal of it, for about two years, and was fully satisfied that it is its own interpreter. I found that, by a comparison of Scripture with history, all the prophecies, as far as they have been fulfilled, had been fulfilled literally; that all the various figures, metaphors, parables, similitudes, etc. of the Bible, were either explained in their immediate connection, or the terms in which they were expressed were defined in other portions of the word; and,

when thus explained, are to be literally understood in accordance with such explanation. I was thus satisfied that the Bible is a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given that the 'wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.' " Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*, 69-70.

**Finally, in 1818, at the close of these two years of intensive study, he came to the belief that there were a dozen points on which he was compelled to differ radically from the popular religious views of the day.**

Here were the twelve points:

"1. That the popular view of a temporal millennium before the second advent, and the end of the age, was a fallacy.

"2. That the theory of the return of the Jews was not sustained by the Word.

"3. That Jesus will come again personally, with all the holy angels with Him.

"4. That the kingdom of God will be established at that coming.

"5. That the earth will perish in a deluge of fire.

"6. That the new earth will spring forth out of its ashes.

"7. That the righteous dead will be resurrected at the advent.

"8. That the wicked dead will not come forth until the close of the thousand years.

"9. That the Papal Little Horn will be destroyed at the advent.

"10. That we are living in the last phase of the outline prophecies—such as, in Daniel 2, in the period of the 'feet and toes.'

"11. That all prophetic time periods—such as the 70 weeks, the 1260 days, and the rest—are to be computed on the year-day principle.

"12. That the 2300 year-days, extending from 457 B.C. to about A.D. 1843, will bring the climax of prophecy and of human history; and that Jesus will come 'on or before' the Jewish year '1843.'"—*Miller, Apology and Defense*, 11-12. **Miller's major conclusion, as stated in his own**

**words, was this:**

"I was thus brought, in 1818, at the close of my two years' study of the Scriptures, to the solemn conclusion, that in about twenty-five years from that time [1818] all the affairs of our present state would be wound up."—*Ibid.*

**Miller was intrigued by the divine use of numbers in the Bible:**

"Another kind of evidence that vitally affected my mind was the chronology of the Scriptures. I found, on pursuing the study of the Bible, various chronological periods extending, according to my understanding of them, to the coming of the Saviour. I found that predicted events, which had been fulfilled in the past, often occurred within a given time. The one hundred and twenty years to the flood, Gen. 6:3; the seven days that were to precede it, with forty days of predicted rain, Gen. 7:4; the four hundred years of the sojourn of Abraham's seed, Gen. 15:13; the three days of the butler's and baker's dreams, Gen. 40:12-20; the seven years of Pharaoh's, Gen. 41:28-54; the forty years in the wilderness, Num. 14:34; the three and a half years of famine, 1 Kings 17:1; the sixty-five years to the breaking of Ephraim, Isa. 7:8; the seventy years' captivity, Jer. 25:11; Nebuchadnezzar's seven times, Dan. 4:13-16; and the seven weeks, three score and two weeks, and the one week, making seventy weeks, determined upon the Jews, Dan. 9:24-27. The events limited by these times were all once only a matter of prophecy, and were fulfilled in accordance with the predictions.

"I saw that, as the events predicted to be fulfilled in prophetic days had been extended over about as many literal years; as God, in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:4-6, had appointed each day for a year; as the seventy weeks to the Messiah were fulfilled in 490 years, and the 1260 prophetic days of the Papal supremacy in 1260 years; and as these prophetic days extending to the advent were given in connection with symbolic prophecy, I could only regard the time as symbolical, and as standing each day for a year, in accordance with the opinions of all the standard Protestant commentators. If, then, we could obtain any clue to the time of their commencement, I conceived we should be guided to the probable time of their termination; and, as God would not bestow upon us a useless revelation, I regarded them as conducting us to the time when we might confidently look for the coming of the Chiefest of ten thousand, One altogether lovely."—*Miller, Apology and Defense*, 9-11.

**As Miller studied, his earlier years of careful reading of history greatly helped him.** He noticed that, **although the prophets frequently spoke in figurative language, their predictions were fulfilled by literal events.** This was noticeably true in reference to the first advent of Christ and the great outline prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7. From this conclusion it was a logical step to assume that the second advent would also take place literally.

**William Miller especially zeroed in on the prophecy in Daniel 8:14:** "*Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.*"

He defined "sanctuary" as our planet, and the "cleansing" as a purging of it by fire. The "days" he interpreted as years, in agreement with other Scriptural passages. He also concluded that this time span began about 457 B.C.

"From a further study of the Scriptures, I concluded that the seven times of Gentile supremacy must commence when the Jews ceased to be an independent nation, at the captivity of Manasseh, which the best *chronologers* assigned to B.C. 677; that the 2300 days commenced with the seventy weeks, which the best chronologers dated from B.C. 457; and that the 1335 days, commencing with the taking away of the daily, and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, Dan. 12:11, were to be dated from the setting up of the Papal supremacy, after the taking away of Pagan abominations, and which, according to the best historians I could consult, should be dated from about A.D. 508. Reckoning all these prophetic periods from the several dates assigned by the best chronologers for the events from which they should evidently be reckoned, they would all terminate together, about A.D. 1843." *Miller, Apology and Defense, 11.*

**For all these reasons, William Miller concluded:**

"Finding all the signs of the times and the present condition of the world, to compare harmoniously with the prophetic descriptions of the last days, I was compelled to believe that this world had about reached the limits of the period allotted for its continuance. As I regarded the evidence, I could arrive at no other conclusion."—*Miller, Apology and Defense, 9.*

William Miller was thrilled at his discovery. Jesus Christ, his beloved Lord, was soon to return!

"I need not speak of the joy that filled my heart in view of the delightful prospect, nor of the ardent longings of my soul, for a participation in the joys of the redeemed. The Bible was now to me a new book. It was indeed a feast of reason: all that was dark, mystical or obscure to me in its teachings, had been dissipated from my mind, before the clear light that now dawned from its sacred pages; and O how bright and glorious the truth appeared . . . I became nearly settled in my conclusions, and began to wait, and watch and pray for my Saviour's coming."—*Op. cit., 12-13.*

**William Miller had come to the conclusion that Jesus Christ was going to return to the earth in 1843—in about 25 years!**

**THE NEXT FIVE YEARS OF BIBLE STUDY  
Fall 1818 - September 1823**

**But, before mentioning his view to anyone, Miller determined to put his conclusions to the test of further Bible study. As a result, between the autumn of 1818 and September 1823, he studied every objection that came to his mind** regarding the soon coming of the Lord. He was becoming a research expert on the subject. Years later, in 1845, he wrote:

"Various difficulties and objections would arise in my mind from time to time; certain texts would occur to me, which seemed to weigh against my conclusions;—and I would not present a view to others, while any difficulty appeared to militate against it. I therefore continued the study of the Bible, to see if I could sustain any of these objections. My object was not merely to remove them, but I wished to see if they were valid."—*Miller, Apology and Defense, 13.*

"During that time, more objections arose in my mind than have been advanced by my opponents since; and I know of no objection that has been since advanced, which did not then occur to me."—*Ibid.*

The future would reveal that this extra five years of study was not wasted time. When he later began lecturing, none of his opponents could cite objections which Miller could not answer.

But he was in error on one point. William Miller really thought everyone would be thrilled to hear the wonderful truth he had discovered.

"With the solemn conviction that such momentous events were predicted in the Scriptures to be fulfilled in so short a space of time, the question came home to me with mighty power regarding my duty to the world in view of the evidence that had affected my own mind. If the end was so near, it was important that the world should know it. I supposed that it would call forth the opposition of the ungodly; but it never came into my mind that any Christian would oppose it. I supposed that all such would be so rejoiced in view of the glorious prospect, that it would only be necessary to present it, lest by some possibility I should be in error, and be the means of misleading *any.*"—*Miller, Apology and Defense, 13.*

**So it was that, after five additional years of study, in the fall of 1823, Miller concluded:**

"I believe that the second coming of Jesus Christ is near, even at the door, even within 21 years,—on or before 1843."—*Op. cit., 15.*

Miller was deeply apprehensive at the thought of personally going out and proclaiming this truth.



So it had been with relief that he had spent this five years, from 1818 to 1823, checking over his conclusions.

**By the year 1823, Miller was 41 years old.**

### WHAT WAS MILLER'S MESSAGE?

**At this juncture, let us pause and consider more closely this set of beliefs which Miller had arrived at. Here are the major points on which he was right,** and many religious writers and speakers of his day were wrong:

**1 - Jesus is coming again—and at the *beginning* of the millennium,** not at its end.

**2 - The second coming will be literal and personal.** It will not be a "spiritual" something which can be felt but not seen.

**3 - The second coming is very near.**

**4 - We should prepare for this** great event.

**5 - A day represents a year** in symbolic prophecy.

**6 - The 2300 "evening-mornings" in Daniel 8:14 represents 2300 symbolic days, or literal years.**

**7 - They began in 457 B.C. and "will end about the year 1843" (actually in 1844).**

**8 - The judgment would begin or occur in that year.**

**9 - Therefore, it was time for the first angel's message of Revelation 14:6 to be proclaimed.** "The hour of His judgment has come."

***No one else had all these correct positions.***

Most of the clergy and Bible teachers were teaching that Christ would have a spiritual coming, at which time the world would be converted, the kingdom of God would be set up on earth, and a thousand years of peace would follow. But the Bible was clear about the truth of the second advent, for those willing to candidly study it.

In opposing him, men said that if William Miller had known Hebrew, he would not have interpreted Daniel 8:14 as he did. However, other men who did know the Hebrew Old Testament very well—had arrived at the conclusion that the 2300 evenings and mornings equaled 2300 symbolic days or literal years. Research studies have identified many such scholars (*see L.E. Froom, Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, Vol. 1, 713; and Vol. 2, 194-240*).

In the early 1960s, the present writer discovered, in his Bible study, that which other men before his time had found: "*evening and morning*"

### PART SIX

in the Old Testament meant a full day; that is, from sunset to sunset. It is because of this sunset-to-sunset pattern for beginning and ending the span of a day in Genesis 1 and Leviticus 23:32, that we observe the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Sabbath instead of from midnight to midnight in accordance with secular time.

In contrast, the present writer found that "*morning and evening*" in the Bible means something done twice a day (ie. the morning and evening burnt offering).

In Miller's own time, Professor George Bush, a Hebrew teacher at New York University, opposed him because Miller taught that Christ would return at the beginning of the millennium. But Bush was quick to admit that Miller was right in identifying the Daniel 8:14 prophecy as consisting of "2300 years," and that they would end rather soon. (He also admitted that Miller had the support of Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Thomas Newton, Joseph Mede, Alexander Keith, "and a host of others, who have long since come to substantially" the same conclusions as Miller did.

**What then was William Miller's mistake? Let us consider this in some detail:**

Miller was absolutely correct on placing the starting date of the 2300 years in 457 B.C. In the 1950s and 1960s, our leading archaeologist was Siegfried H. Horn, and our leading Hebrew scholar was Lynn H. Wood (Kenneth Wood's father). In the 1960s, they teamed up and did in-depth research, to determine the beginning date of the 2300-year and 70-week (490-year) prophecy. Their book, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, was published in 1970. (If you are able to acquire a copy today, consider yourself fortunate.) They reevaluated the evidence that 457 B.C. is the "seventh year of Artaxerxes," the king of Persia (*Ezra 7:7*), the date Miller took for beginning the 2300 years. They analyzed Persian clay tablets, Egyptian papyri, and other ancient writings,—and concluded that **457 B.C. was indeed the seventh year of King Artaxerxes! William Miller was right on that crucial point: the starting date for the 2300 years.**

In the year 457 B.C., Artaxerxes, king of Persia, in fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 9:20-27,

issued a decree, recorded in Ezra 7:7, authorizing the Jews to "restore and rebuild Jerusalem."

**Then there is the matter of the correctness of the year-for-a-day concept.** William H. Shea, a distinguished Old Testament and Hebrew scholar wrote a lengthy book in the 1980s, entitled *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation, Vol. 1*. One of the chapters deals with the day/year concept in time prophecies. He discovered over 20 different lines of evidence supporting the position just as Miller and we view it.

#### **What then was Miller's error?**

"Unto two thousand and three hundred days, and then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed." *Daniel 8:14*. **Miller assumed that "the sanctuary" referred to the planet, although there was not one iota of Biblical support for this conclusion.** Based on this error, he concluded that the world would be purged by fire when Jesus returned. That idea required that Jesus had to literally return at the termination of the 2300 years.

**In reality, the Bible clearly reveals that the "sanctuary" is the great Sanctuary in heaven.** The present writer discusses this in his in-depth book, *The Biblical Sanctuary*, which proves our historic Sanctuary belief entirely from the Bible.

#### **Why did William Miller err in thinking that Jesus would return to earth in judgment at the end of the 2300 years?**

First, he interpreted "sanctuary" as the planet rather than as the great temple in heaven.

Second, he misapplied certain other prophecies in the book of Daniel. Consider this:

There are four prophetic sequences in Daniel. Miller was essentially right on when one of these ended:

*The first—In Daniel 2, the Stone hits the great image.* Miller concluded that this climax occurred at the end; that is, when Jesus returns the second time.

With some clarification, that would be fairly correct. (Christ abolishes the rule of the metal image at His coming, but He does not annihilate it as chaff until His third advent.)

He was correct on this.

But Miller was not correct on the terminal point of the other three sequences:

*The second—In Daniel 7, the climax comes when the judgment sits.* Miller thought this occurred at the end; that is, at Christ's second coming.

But, in reality, the judgment began in the heavenly Sanctuary on October 22, 1844—and the end would come later. Miller thought that "with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man" to the earth. But the Bible says He came to the Ancient of Days.

*The third—In Daniel 8 and 9, the Sanctuary is cleansed.* Miller assumed that this occurred at the end.

*The fourth—In Daniel 10-12, the Prince, Michael, stands up.* Miller said this occurred at the second advent; but it occurs earlier, at the close of probation.

But, it was actually concurrent with the judgment in the Sanctuary, and would not end until later. He assumed the earth was the sanctuary, when the Bible never so applied it thus; while, repeatedly discussing the earthly tabernacle and its antitype, the Sanctuary in heaven.

**Then there is the matter of how to calculate the 2300-year prophecy.** Many of us fear to even try to do this, yet it is not complicated.

We agree that it takes some research to ascertain the starting date; but, once that is determined, rather simple mathematics leads us to the terminus of this, the longest time period in the Bible.

1 - Subtract 2300 from 457 B.C.

2 - The result is 1843.

What went wrong? It should total A.D. 1844.

The error here is the same that the Millerites encountered, the reason they first dated the end of the prophecy in 1843 and later changed it to 1844.

**1843 would be correct, if there was a "zero year" between B.C. and A.D. But there is not. 1 B.C. is followed by A.D. 1. Therefore to carry out the arithmetic problem correctly, we must add one to our A.D. years.** Doing this brings us to A.D. 1844.

This lack of a zero year is why Jesus was born in 4 B.C. and was baptized at the age of 30 in A.D. 27,—when a simple subtraction of 30 from 4 B.C. will yield A.D. 26—one year off!

### **THE EIGHT YEARS OF PROCRASTINATION**

**September 1823 - August 14, 1831**

By 1823, upon satisfying himself on the correctness of his original conclusions, Miller's reasons for delay were exhausted.

"I was then fully settled in the conclusions which seven years previously had begun to bear with

such impressive force upon my mind; and the duty of presenting the evidence of the nearness of the advent to others—which I had managed to evade while I could find the shadow of an objection remaining against its truth—again came home to me with great force."—Miller, *Apology and Defense*, 15.

**In carrying out this study, Miller had used only the Inspired Writings (the Bible) and Cruden's Concordance.** He had earlier acquired a distrust of commentaries. God's people today would do well to only use the Inspired Writings (the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy) to understand correct doctrine and their duty toward their Maker.

But later, after he had completed his own study, Miller discovered that earlier Bible students had also come to similar conclusions, such as the application of the day-year principle to the 2300-day and 70-week prophecies. 'All commentaries agree that these *days* are to be understood *as years*.' By the early 1840s, either Miller or his associates had compared his positions with those of Newton and earlier expositors.

Miller never had a commentary in his home, and could not remember having read any book on Bible prophecy except a little in Newton and Faber when he first became a Christian. An old family Bible had cost \$18.50, and his copy of *Cruden's Concordance* had cost \$8.00. He read almost nothing but those two books. The exception, of course, would be some history books to verify certain ancient events and dates.

Years later, when Miller was frequently gone on lecture tours, a minister stopped by his farmhouse in Low Hampton to meet with the remarkable preacher. Disappointed that Miller was not home, he asked if he might at least view his library.

"His daughter conducted the visitor into the northeast room, where he has sat so many hours at his . . . desk. Only two books—the Bible and Cruden's—lay upon the table. 'This is his library,' said she. The clergyman was amazed."—*Midnight Cry*, October 26, 1844.

**By this time, William Miller had no more excuse for not going out and proclaiming this great discovery. But, frightened at the thought, he supposed he could find someone else to go out and give the message.** So, for the first time, he began quietly sharing his discoveries with "neighbors, to ministers, and others." But he was very surprised to find "very few who listened with any interest." Occasionally someone would appreciate what he had to say, but most "passed it by as an idle tale."

What was he to do? He had no formal education beyond a few years of grade schooling. He had no "theological training" and no degrees.

Miller continued to study the Scriptures—and waited. Time passed. One year rolled into the next.

**But the burden on his heart continually deepened.** An ever-increasing conviction settled upon him that he had "a personal duty to perform respecting this matter." He wrote that when he was about his business there was continually ringing in his ears the command, "Go and tell the world of their danger" He could not free his mind from that impelling sense of duty. He thought to himself that, if he remained silent, the blood of the lost would be on his garments.

"I tried to excuse myself to the Lord for not going and proclaiming it to the world. I told the Lord that I was not used to public speaking, that I had not the necessary qualifications to gain the attention of an audience, that I was very diffident and feared to go before the world."—Miller, *Apology and Defense*, 16.

Miller was no fanatic or egotist. He was a concerned man who had arrived at truth and knew not how to share it with the world. Keenly aware of the limitations of the mind, of the dangers of error in reasoning, he gave to all these dangers great weight.

He told the Lord that he was not a speaker, that he was not qualified to hold the attention of an audience. But all his excuses brought no relief.

**During these years, Miller was busy with many tasks on the farm while also holding the office of justice of peace,** the equivalent of a local judge. (Interestingly enough, the latest legal document signed by him in this capacity was February 13, 1834.) He was also a prominent citizen in the community, a Sunday school teacher and superintendent, church clerk, and lay reader and exhorter in the public services of the Hampton Baptist Church.

**William Miller was constantly on the lookout for an opportunity to share the message privately with another.** On one occasion, he learned that a certain medical doctor in the area had remarked that Mr. Miller was a "fine man," but that he was a monomaniac on the subject of the second coming of Christ.

Miller, who had a sense of humor, decided to have the doctor take his case.

Awhile later, one of Miller's children became ill, so he sent for the doctor. All the time the physician was treating the child, William sat silently in the corner, not uttering a word. As he had planned, eventually the doctor became curious and inquired what was wrong. This was the opportunity that

Miller was waiting for.

"Well, I hardly know," he replied. "I want you to see what the trouble is and prescribe for me also."

The doctor superficially checked Miller over, and, finding no problems, asked Miller what he thought was wrong.

"I don't know," Miller answered, "but perhaps I am a monomaniac. I want you to examine me and see if I am; and if so, cure me. Can you tell when a man is a monomaniac?"

The physician blushed, and stammered that he thought he could.

"How can you tell?" Miller asked.

"Why," the doctor said slowly, "a monomaniac is rational on all subjects but one; and when you talk about that subject, he will react violently."

"In that case," said Miller, "I insist that you see whether or not I am a monomaniac; and if I am, you must cure me. You shall therefore sit down with me for two hours while I present the subject of the Advent to you, and if I am a monomaniac, you will be able to tell it by that time."

At this, the physician hesitated, but Miller pressed his point home, declaring that this was a matter of mental health and the doctor could charge his usual fee for the two-hour session.

For the next two hours, Miller would ask a question—and then have the physician read the answer from the Bible. Gradually, the man was led, step by step, to the conclusion that Christ was coming to the earth in 1843.

When the Bible study was ended, the doctor sat back in his chair, wordless. He tried to speak, but didn't; then arose without saying a word, picked up his hat and left the room.

The next morning, William Miller heard him knocking hard on his farmhouse door. Looking anxious and harried, the physician burst in and told Miller of his problem.

"Mr. Miller, I feel that I am going to be lost! I have not slept a wink since I was here yesterday. I have looked at the question from every side, and I cannot see but that the vision will end about 1843, and I am not prepared!"

Throughout the following week, the two of them studied God's Word together, and the conviction in the doctor's heart became a settled belief.

A friendship was formed at this time which was to become important in later years.

**Truman Hendryx was a young Baptist preacher in the area** who, learning from his sister that Miller had unusual notions about Bible prophecy, decided to visit him one day.

Arriving, Miller courteously asked him his views on the millennium, and Hendryx advanced the customary post-millennial theory.

"Well," said Miller, "prove it; remember, I only accept the Bible as evidence." Hendryx turned to Revelation 20 and tried to find the supporting text, but could not get his eye on it.

Thoroughly taken aback by this time, the young preacher said, "I'll go home—and next Monday I'll return and give you all the passages when I come."

But the following week he returned with the news that, as a result of his studies, he had switched over to the pre-millennial position, the one Miller had.

This was the beginning of an extremely close friendship, which lasted for 28 years. According to Miller, Hendryx became his "dearest friend on earth."

**When William Miller later began preaching and traveling from place to place, he maintained an ongoing correspondence with Hendryx.** Those letters, along with all the other Miller correspondence, are in the Aurora College Library *Adventual Collection*, Aurora, Illinois. Copies are in several other source collections, including the Adventist Seminary and the University of Chicago.

**One letter in the Aurora College collection is dated February 15, 1831, and consists of a lengthy appeal** to a nearby preacher, Elder Andrus, to accept the truth about the nearness of Christ's return. The presentation is very organized under several categories.

This letter is of special value since it is the only complete presentation of Miller's views at this time—six months before he began speaking publicly in the pulpits of the land. As such, it provides us with a glimpse of his positions. However, it should be understood that, in his public presentations, he focused far more on the 2300-year prophecy than all the points listed below. Here is a brief overview of some of the high points in this letter:

The four empires of Daniel 7 are successive world empires (Babylonia, Persia, Grecia, and Rome). The little horn is the antichrist, and he reigns 1260 years. This chapter culminates in the second advent.

Next follows a brief discussion of Daniel 8 (Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome) and the 2300 years extending to the end of the prophecy. Daniel 9 is the key unlocking the vision of Daniel 8.

Miller notes in Revelation that the idea of a temporal millennium here on earth is totally incorrect, and then reviews New Testament evidence about Christ's coming.

Christ will return when His "mediatorial" work is finished. He will come when antichrist is destroyed after his 1260-year reign ends; when the earth is under the third woe; when the seventh trumpet sounds and the seventh vial is poured out; when the last great battle between the kings of the earth takes place; and after Daniel's 1290 year span has ended.

"Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to 1335 days, which is 45 years more [than the 1290 years] and it will bring us down to 1843—the same time of Daniel's 2300 days." *Miller, letter to Andrus.*

Thus Miller ended the 1335 years with the 2300 in 1843. He also ended the 1260 years in 1798; and the 391 years (of Revelation 9:15) in 1843 also.

The slaying of the two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments, occurred between 1793 and 1796, thus closely related to the pope's loss of power in 1798. Since then the Bible Societies and missionary organizations have arisen, giving the Bible greater power. Mankind had entered the time of the last woe, and that the 391 years of the sixth trumpet spanned from the fall of Constantinople in 1453 to 1843. It was also now the time of Revelation 10:12, when prophetic "time" should be no more.

"The last woe, the 7th trumpet, and the 7th vial closes the scene of this world. Then Christ comes with His saints, and destroys the wicked, burns up the world, and lives and reigns with His people a 1000 years in the new earth and new heavens."—*Ibid.*

For the most part, Miller's views agreed with those of scores of other Bible scholars in recent centuries. Of course, he had some unusual aspects.

## PART SEVEN

**Hoping that a series of articles in a newspaper might avert the need to go out and preach publicly, Miller sent several articles** over the signature W.M. to the editor of the *Vermont Telegraph*, a Baptist paper. The editor wrote back that he needed a name, not just initials.

Thinking that the editor merely wanted his name for a private file, Miller gave him his name.

The articles appeared in sixteen numbers, beginning May 15, 1832—with Miller's name attached. But their publication in May 1832 was about nine months after he began publicly preaching. Although a small circulation paper, it provided the largest exposure to date of Miller's views; and, as a result, it brought him a number of contacts.

## — SECTION FOUR —

### THE SOLO PREACHING YEARS August 14, 1831 - October 1839

#### 1831

**Fifteen years had passed since William Miller had become convinced that Christ was going return in 1843. Now it was 1831. Miller had been 36 years old back then. Now he was 49. It was 13 years to 1844.**

How much longer would he wait? The drumming in his mind seemed louder everyday. "*Go and warn the world of their danger!*"

Miller had not the slightest doubt that he had the right message, and it was one that the entire world needed to hear. Yet he did not know what to do, how to start. The burden resting on him was indeed awful. Even though but few appeared to receive his message, he could not remove the responsibility. ***He must go out! He must tell them! And yet he feared to make the start.***

#### **And then it happened.**

It was a bright, sunny summer morning, **the second Saturday in August, August 13.** Miller was at home in his farmhouse in Low Hampton. He had finished breakfast and spent a little time at his old-fashioned desk in the east room, checking on "some point" in his books.

But it was time to go out and do some chores, **when—suddenly, before he could arise from his chair, an overwhelming conviction came over him. Stronger, stronger than ever before!**

"*Go and tell the world of their danger,*" rang the words. It was as if God had directly spoken the words. The impact was so powerful, that he sank back in his chair, and cried out, "I can't go, Lord." He said, "*Why not?*" seemed to come back the answer.

This went on for several minutes, **but there seemed to be no let up. The powerful conviction just would not recede.**

Miller's distress of soul became so great that, right then and there, he entered upon a compact with God. If He would open the way, William would go out and perform his duty to the world.

"*What do you mean by opening the way?*" seemed to come back.

**"Why, if I should have an invitation to speak publicly in any place, I will go and tell them what I have found."**

"My distress became so great, I entered into a solemn covenant with God, that if He would open the way, I would go and perform my duty to the world. 'What do you mean by opening the way?' seemed to come to me. 'Why,' said I, 'if I should have an invitation to speak publicly in any place, I will go and tell them what I find in the Bible about the Lord's coming.' Instantly all my burden was gone; and I rejoiced that I should not probably be thus called upon; for I had never had such an invitation: my trials were not known, and I had but little expectation of being invited to any field of labor."—Miller, *Apology and Defense*, 17-18.

As soon as he made that promise, instantly the weight lifted and William felt relieved. **He knew he was safe. No one had ever asked him to speak anywhere on this subject. The burden was lifted; and, in all probability, nothing would come of the matter.**

Man cannot out-bargain God. William Miller did not know that, even before he struck his bargain with the Lord, God had worked out the arrangements for his first speaking appointment. The invitation was already on its way.

For, **in about half an hour—before Miller had left the room—16-year-old Irving Guilford knocked on the door of the two-story house. "Is Mr. Miller in?"**

Irving was Miller's nephew, the son of his sister Sylvia, and lived in Dresden, about 16 miles away.

"Uncle William," Irving told the astonished man, "Father sent me over to tell you that our preacher is away, *and Father wants you to come and talk to the people on the subject of the Lord's coming.*"

Overwhelmed by the whole situation, and well-aware of the compact he had just made with God, Miller excused himself and—while the young man awaited his return—went through the house and out the backdoor.

"I was angry with myself for having made the covenant I had; I rebelled at once against the Lord, and determined not to go." *Miller, Apology and Defense*, 18.

As he hurried out the backdoor, six-year-old Lucy Ann followed close after him. She was William's favorite child. When he started out of the house in the morning, it was her custom to run along with him. But she did not realize the inner conflict in his soul. He was headed, not to the barn, but in a different direction—and it was clear from his walk and the look on his face that something was wrong. Frightened, the little girl ran back to the house and said to her mother, "*Something's the matter with Daddy!*"

**Rushing off to a nearby grove of maple trees, William knew he must be alone. Falling to the ground, he struggled with his conscience for some time. But, try as he might, he could not rid himself of the sense of responsibility.** It seemed as if the Voice was saying, "*Will you make a covenant with God and break it so soon?*" Miller was a man ingrained with utmost reliability, and what was this he was doing?

**At last, William Miller surrendered.**

**He promised the Lord that he would go to Dresden, if He would give him the grace and strength that the task required.**

Although he had read many readings in the podium of the local church, Miller, now 49, had never preached a sermon in his life.

**There went into that grove a farmer, and there came out a preacher. It was the great turning point in William Miller's life.**

Wiping away the tears, and trying to compose himself, he returned to the house with the peace of God in his heart. Young Irving was patiently waiting for him to return.

Inviting Irving to lunch, they all ate together, and then William Miller went with the boy to Dresden. He had a lot to think about during that 16-mile journey.

The next day, Sunday morning, dawned bright and early. Miller, up early, looked over his Bible, which he already knew so well, and at meeting time found the church well-filled with people.

The "church" was right there in the Silas Guilford home (he was the husband of William's sister, Sylvia); the group could not afford any other worship building. Many sat on quilt-covered planks stretched from stool to chair, and chair to wood box or chopping block. Miller sat in the big armchair. After prayer and a hymn, Miller began.

"As soon as I commenced speaking, all my diffidence and embarrassment were gone, and I felt impressed only with the greatness of the subject, which, by the providence of God, I was enabled to present."—*Ibid.*

**This first message, given in Dresden, New York, made a powerful impact on the people; so much so, that they pled with Miller to remain there for a time. He stayed there a week, holding lectures, meeting with families and individuals, here and there. Of the 13 families all but two**

**were converted. During this time, people arrived from nearby towns. Miller found himself in the middle of a revival.**

The preaching of the soon coming of Christ led the people to want to prepare their lives for the solemn event. As the weeks and months passed, this experience would be repeated over and over.

**Returning home from Dresden, William found a letter awaiting him** from Elder Fuller, pastor in Miller's previous home town, Poultney. Would he please come there and speak? *Fuller had not yet heard what had happened at Dresden!* Instead, the thought had just come forcefully to him that he must invite William Miller to speak at his church on the second advent.

**Miller traveled the six miles to the little town and delivered a series there, with outstanding results.** Miller later wrote that Elder Fuller was the first person from the ranks of the ministry who accepted his prophetic views.

Miller was intelligent, well-acquainted with his message, and a persuasive speaker. But it was the power of the Holy Spirit which transformed his meetings.

The work did not stop with Dresden and Poultney. He went on, by request, to Pawlet and other towns in the vicinity.

**Soon he was flooded with an increasing crescendo of requests. Literally hundreds and hundreds of times, his experience in Dresden was repeated, as he journeyed to churches throughout New England, eastern Canada, and finally as far west as Ohio and as far south as Maryland. At Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, and other churches, backsliders were reclaimed and worldlings converted.**

Commenting later on those earliest years of preaching, he wrote:

"The most pressing invitations from the ministry, and the leading members of the churches poured in continually, from that time, during the whole period of my public labors, and with more than one half of which I was unable to comply. Churches were thrown open everywhere, and I lectured to crowded houses, through the western part of Vermont, the northern part of New York, and in Canada East."—Miller, *Apology and Defense*, 19.

Miller had met Truman Hendryx on July 6, 1831, and convinced him of the correctness of his views. As **mentioned earlier, Miller's frequent letters to Hendryx in the years which followed provide us with much information on developments as Miller traveled from place to place.** The first letter was penned on August 9, 1831, only a few days before his first sermon at Dresden.

**In Miller's first letter to Hendryx, he clarified somewhat his positions.** It is interesting to read, and reveals the intricacy of the foundations his views were based on. We will reprint it exactly as he wrote it:

"You say, Bro. Hendryx, you want '*more light.*' I wish that you might receive it, and I shall be willing to assist you with what little I have at every convenient opportunity. Do not be discouraged, when you have studied 14 years, if you do not find '*more light,*' then you may complain. But you say in 12 years the mystery of God will be finished. Agreed. You know I proved this 4 ways—1st by the length of Daniel's vision, 2d by Daniel's reign of Antichrist & 45 years beyond [the 1290], 3d by the two days or 2000 years, & 4th by the sounding of the sixth trumpet.

"1st. Then, Daniel's vision is 2300 years (see Daniel 8:13, 14), which vision began when the Persian Kingdom was pushing its conquests. See Daniel 8:4 & 20. It also began in the reign of Artaxerxes when the Decree went out to restore & build Jerusalem in troublous times. See Dan. 9:25; Ezra 7:2. It also began in the reign of the 5th King of Persia, or the 4th from Daniel, Cyrus under whose reign Daniel lived. See Daniel 10: 1st. Cambyses, Darius, Xerxes (or Ahasuerus) and Artaxerxes. See Daniel 11:2, 3. Now these 3 events happened at one and the same time, and were 457 years before Christ's birth & 70 weeks or 490 [years] before Christ's crucifixion, thus taking 457 out of 2300 leaves 1843."—Miller, *letter to Hendryx, August 9, 1831.*

## 1832

**Once he started to publicly preach, never again during his lifetime was Miller without an invitation to speak.**

"I have somebody to labor with almost daily. I have been into Poultney [a return visit], and some other places to lecture on the coming of Christ. And in every case I have had large assemblies. There is an increasing anxiety on the subject in this quarter."—Miller, *letter to Hendryx, March 26, 1832.*

William Miller was not a man to only preach to the crowds; he was always willing to work with a one-soul audience.

In another letter to Hendryx that spring, Miller told of a young minister who visited his home "on purpose to learn those strange notions of '*crazy Miller's,*' or at least to save Brother Miller, if possible, from going down to the grave with such errors." Although the two men had never met before, the

young man remained several days in Miller's home, studying the Bible 'night and day' while Miller 'held the concordance.'

After Miller began his public meetings, **those newspaper articles he had written the year before began to appear** in the newspaper, the *Vermont Telegraph*. The first article appeared on May 15, 1832. Their publication only added to the slowly increasing tide of interest in the messages which Miller was carrying everywhere. The articles continued until March 12, 1833.

In the fall of this year, Miller wrote:

"The light is continually breaking in, and I am more and more confirmed in those things of which I told you, when you were here; to wit, redemption by grace, the efficacy of Christ's blood, justification by His righteousness imputed to us, sanctification through the operation of the Divine Spirit, and glorification by our gathering together unto Him at His coming and His appearing."—*Miller, letter dated October 1, 1832.*

### 1833

**There were now 11 years to 1844, and this year Miller turned 51.**

**By February 1833, there were at least nine ministers who, within their local congregations, were preaching Miller's belief** about the second advent, "more or less," as Miller said. Some accepted his basic premise while differing with him on the details.

One was Henry Jones, who wrote Miller at the end of 1832, declaring that he had memorized the book of Revelation and wanted to know more about it.

"I am aware, that most of our Bible men, would consider you very visionary or fanatical, were they to be informed of your views, & tho' I know not, but you are truly so, & running wild, I should be very glad to see you, & talk with you, several hours, as I was told, that you had made the subject your great study for many years, & now stand ready to talk upon it, & to defend it against all plausible objections."—*Henry Jones, letter to Miller, December 27, 1832.*

Jones was to become a leading figure in the Millerite movement, and was one, with Miller, Himes, and others, who signed the official call for the holding of the first General Conference of Adventists in 1840.

**In February 1833, a week before his 51st birthday, the Hampton Baptist Church considered giving Miller a license to preach.** The license was granted on September 14. That original piece of paper is still in existence, and is well-worn, showing that Miller carried it around with him wherever he went.

When Hendryx learned about that license, in his next letter he addressed him as "Rev. William Miller," but Miller would have none of it. He well-knew that, when applied to men, it was a blasphemous term. Only God is to be revered. In his reply, William said to **take your Bible and "see if you can find the word 'Rev' applied to a sinful mortal as myself;** and govern yourself accordingly. Otherwise, I received your friendly epistle and hasten to answer."

By this time, Miller was traveling continually. One day on a steamboat on the Hudson River he began conversing with a group of men, who had expressed their wonder at the increasing technology of the times. Having spoken a short time, he withdrew to the other end of the boat. But the whole group followed, and requested him to continue. So he led them through the prophecies, and then handed them copies of **his newly printed 64-page booklet.**

This booklet, printed in 1833 in Brandon, had a very explanatory title: *Evidences from Scripture & History of the Second Coming of Christ about the Year A.D. 1843, and of His Personal Reign of 1,000 Years*, by William Miller. Underneath the title was printed, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:21. This was the first of a wide variety of publications upholding Miller's positions.

Shortly after that steamboat trip, Miller wrote these lines to Hendryx:

"I wish I had the tongue of an Apollo and the powers of mind of a Paul, what might I not explore, & what powerful arguments might not be brought to prove the authenticity of the Scriptures, but I want one thing, more than either, the spirit of Christ and of God, for He is able to take *worms* and thrash *mountains*."—*Miller, letter to Hendryx, April 10, 1833.*

William Miller could really hold the attention of audiences. His lectures frequently ran to one and a half to two hours in length. He had tremendous drive and thoughtful intensity. His words were colorful, full of adjectives and adverbs. Later in this study, we shall quote several powerful passages from his sermons.

By the fall of 1833, one of Miller's friends wrote that "the name of William Miller is a household word throughout the world."

**Two astronomical events occurred during the 1830s and 1840s which caught the attention of**



**thousands. The first occurred in the early morning hours of November 13, 1833. It was an unusually large meteoric shower,** covering a large part of North America. Commonly referred to as "the falling of the stars," it was especially heavy in north-eastern states. Generally regarded as the most extensive and wonderful display of "falling stars" ever recorded, it was a direct fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and a sign of the nearness of the coming of Christ (Genesis 1:14; Matthew 24:6, 9; Revelation 6:13).

**(The second phenomenon, in 1843, was a brilliant comet;** more on that later.)

1834

By 1834, in his letters Miller often told of more than enough openings for a full year's preaching schedule. He generally held an entire week of lectures at every place he visited.

"Spend about a week in a place, have very crowded assemblies, generally more last day, than preceding. Many say it looks rational and go to reading, some scoff and ridicule, others believe it is true. Ministers generally are the hardest to be convinced, yet they say "They can bring no argument but what the old man will remove.' You know Ester; he happened in one evening where I was lecturing (tho' he laughed & jeered before) next day sent me an invitation. Case of Cornwall; laughed and ridiculed. I went & lectured four nights. 5 ministers present. Case was first to believe."-Miller, letter to Hendryx, November **28, 1834.**

Miller was busily traveling, yet he still held his position as local justice of the peace. He still managed the family farm. In the summer of 1834, he was busy at home.

"After haying and harvesting are over, I shall go again."-Miller, letter to Hendryx, August **17.**

**1834.**

Though not poor, Miller was not rich either and he had to provide for himself by his own labors. Throughout most of those early years, no one funded his travel expenses; he paid them all himself. Thus, for years he traveled extensively, at his own expense, and enduring hardship and scoffing- and all the while having his family to support. Miller never received any profit from the sale of his books. But it was in this year (1834) that Miller became a full-time preacher; for he turned the family farm over to his eight children, and reserved \$100 a year toward his own expenses. This totally freed him for his work in far places. All of northeastern U.S. became his parish, along with the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Prior to October 1834, Miller kept no record of the places he visited. But, beginning of October of that year, he began listing each preaching appointment in small notebooks. He called them his "text books." The first one covers a period of "four years, six months, and nine days," spanning from October 1, 1834, to September 14, 1839. It listed 318 separate lecture series, each one generally lasting from four days to two weeks, often with two or three speaking appointments per day. The second book ended on September 20, 1844.

The two books list some 4,000 sermons in nine years. Many of these were given in the largest auditoriums, churches, halls, tents, and tabernacles available. At times they included immense outdoor audiences of 8,000 to 10,000 people-and all without the aid of public-address systems.

At times, Miller, who was gifted in the use of words, would write in poetry. Here is one sample, from a letter he wrote to Hendryx in October 1834:

"When from the east we see the cloud arise (Acts 1 :9, 1 1 ). And bring to view a Saviour long despised (Rev. 1 :7).

"When we shall hear the trump's portentous roll (Isa. 27:13). that shakes the earth from center to the pole (Ps. 18:7).

"When from the great white throne indignant ire (Rev. 20: 1 l), shoots forth its blaze and sets the world on fire (Mal. 4:1).

"Then all the wicked, all that pride could boast [Mal. 4:1), shall be as stubble, saith the Lord of hosts (Mal. 4: 1).

"When Kings, and Captains, tyrants, mighty men (Rev 19: 18), are the last supper, for the fowls of heaven (Rev. 19: 17).

"And kingdoms, thrones, powers, dominions riven (Dan. 2), like chaff before the angry whirlwind driven (Dan 2:25),

"Shall sink to endless night eternal woe (Rev. 20:10): The orb of day, his face, be hid in gloom (Isa. 24:23), and the old reeling earth in nature's tomb (Isa. 24:20)."-Miller, letter to Hendryx, August **17, 1834.**

Two months later, he wrote this:

"The evidence is so clear, the testimony is so strong, that we live on the eve of the present dispensation toward the close of the glorious day, that I wonder why minister and people do not wake up and trim their lamps . .

"In every church where I have lectured on this important subject, many, very many, seem to awake, rub open their eyes, and then fall back to sleep again.

"Some ministers try to persuade their people not to hear me: but the people will go, and every additional lecture will bring an additional multitude, until their meetinghouses cannot hold them. Depend upon it, my br., God is in this thing."-Miller, letter to Hendryx, October **23, 1834.**

The 1833 license to preach, which the Hampton Church had given Miller, was unsolicited. In 1835, he received a far broader preaching certificate, transcending denominational borders. It was signed by over a score of Baptist ministers, as well as nearly a score of clergymen from other denominations in New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Canada. The paper declared that Miller was fully qualified to preach.

**MILLER'S "TEXT BOOK"-Two sample entries from his traveling lecture diary of dates, places, opening Bible texts, and occasional interesting comments.**

"These lectures and sermons of Mr. Miller met the approval of a large number of the ministers of his denomination, with whose approbation, from this time, he went forth as a public laborer, endorsed and sanctioned by the following certificate."-Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*, **120**.

Miller was now a licensed minister with an interdenominational certificate.

By this time, the print run of the 1833 edition of his 64-page booklet was exhausted, and a second edition was printed.

Miller was now 53 years old, yet he was anxious to keep working.

"I am yet engaged in my occupation in warning the inhabitants to be prepared for the great day of God Almighty, and am endeavoring to prove by the Scriptures that that day is near 'even at the door' . . . Then I pray God to direct the arrow to the heart, the seat of life. But in the first place I ask God through Jesus Christ to nerve the arm that pulls the bow, to sharpen the arrow that twangs from it."-Miller, letter dated August **27, 1835**.

After eight weeks in St. Lawrence County, he tells of "82 lectures," and was about to leave on another tour. The letter concludes with these words, "Shall be under the necessity of starting in a few minutes. I shall be absent until about the first of October."

Spells of illness broke the continuity of his preaching; but still he drove on, week after week and month after month. For example, in one place the meeting hall was "filled to overflowing for eight days in succession," with clergymen of over six denominations in attendance.

It was not until he took a short trip to Canada in this year that William Miller received his first donation, to help defray his trip: A woman pressed two half-dollars coins into his hand, as he stood at the door following the sermon.

Returning from that trip to Canada, Miller was strongly impressed that he must return home. Canceling his next lecture, he hurriedly journeyed to his farm in Low Hampton-but found everything all right. Relieved, he decided to visit his mother and spent the day with her. A few days later, she suffered a stroke, and he immediately went to her bedside. She passed away before the end of the 4 week. Miller often expressed his appreciation that he could be with his mother at this time, which would not have happened if he had not been impressed to return home at once.

In the spring of 1836, Miller told friends he was busily preparing "a 200-page book for publication. Entitled, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1843: Exhibited in a Course of Lectures*, it was printed in 1836, contained 223 pages, had 16 of his lectures, and sold for 50 cents.

By April, he could name eight Baptist ministers who were openly preaching his views; and, in a letter to Hendryx, he added, "Many others believe but dare not preach it."

By 1836, Miller was having sick spells more frequently. These increased as the decade ended and the next one began.

In one letter, he expressed his astonishment that he was being so used of God that large numbers would come to hear and accept what he had to say.

"I can only account for it by supposing that God is supporting the old man, weak, wicked, imperfect, and ignorant as he is, to confound the wise and mighty . . . It makes me feel like a worm, a poor feeble creature, for it is God only that could produce such an effect on such audiences."-Miller, letter dated December **23, 1836**.

Such statements as these are included in this history for two reasons: First, they tell us so much about the character of Miller himself. Second, from 1840 onward there were so many more advent workers and Miller's part became less prominent.

By the close of the year, William Miller could report that his second book of lectures, which had been published by this time, was already experiencing wide sales.

**1837**

On January 23, 1837, Miller began a series of 16 lectures in Shaftsbury, Vermont. As one of them ended, someone in the audience stood up and asked to speak. Miller invited him to the podium. He was a minister,

named Elder Mattison; and he said he had come to the meetings with the objective of exposing Miller's foolishness, but that he had been "convicted, confounded, and converted."

He said that, earlier in the hearing of others, he had derided Miller as a "dreamer" and "fanatic"-and that he now wanted to apologize publicly. The sincerity of the man produced a solemn atmosphere in the audience.

Writing about the experience later, Miller said, "If you will believe me, brother, this honest confession was like a thunderbolt in the assembly" (Miller, letter, dated February **21, 1837**).

Miller could never know in advance which lectures he was invited to would, in later years, produce outstanding results. On March 5, 1838, a pastor in Boston wrote William Miller and asked him to come and give a series of lectures at his church, the Marlboro Chapel.

The man's name was Charles Fitch. This man would eventually become one of the three most prominent leaders in the Millerite movement.

An unusually sincere man, Fitch wrote this to Miller in his letter:

"My Dear Brother: I am the pastor of an Orthodox Congregational Church in this city. A few weeks since [ i.e., ago] your lectures on the second coming of Christ were put into my hands. I sat down to read the work, knowing nothing of the views which it contained. I have studied it with an overwhelming interest, such as I never felt in any other book except the Bible. I have compared it with Scripture and history, and I find nothing on which to rest a single doubt respecting the correctness of your views. Though a miserable, guilty sinner, I trust that, through the Lord's abounding grace, I shall be among those that 'love His appearing.' I preached to my people two discourses yesterday on the coming of our Lord, and I believe a deep and permanent interest will be awakened thereby, in God's testimonies.

"Yours in the faith of Jesus Christ. "Charles Fitch."-Fitch, letter to Miller, from Boston, March 5, 1838.

Fitch, who had studied at Brown University, was one of those who had "read his way" into the advent awakening. After the meetings were held, Fitch began preaching the message in the early months of 1838, but was so discouraged by the ridicule and contempt of fellow ministers, that he abandoned it for about three years-until Josiah Litch encouraged him to take hold of it again. From that time onward, Fitch was one of the movement's most enthusiastic and aggressive leaders. More on him later in this historical sketch.

In October, Miller wrote of spending 10 days in Morick, where he "gave two or three lectures a day. People were very much interested. Five hundred and more attended the meetings, night and day" (Miller, letter to Hendryx, October 26, 1837).

At the beginning of 1838, while preaching again at Lansingburgh, New York, during a nine-day series with large, attentive audiences, over a hundred infidels, holding strong opinions, were brought to believe in the Bible. Miller turned 56 this year. It was six years to 1844.

By midsummer 1838, Miller wrote to Hendryx, "I have been absent from home more than three fourths of my time." Hendryx had written, urging him to come to his church. Miller replied:

"You speak of my coming there, and the house being crammed. I need not go there to see a house, not only crammed, but jammed. Last Sabbath I preached in Benson and saw the house jammed full, lobby and all. But, my brother, there is no pleasure to me particularly in that. The multitude may today cry Hosanna, and tomorrow 'Crucify Him.' Lord, what is man?"-Miller, letter, dated July 27, **1838**.

He then mentioned an Elder West who had written him, charging that he was an apostate, holding an erroneous view of salvation; and of an elder Elder Claflin, who wrote, denouncing him for preaching an opposite error. Commented Miller: "They both quote Bible."

In this same year, a copy of Miller's book, **Lectures**, was handed to Josiah Litch, a well-known Methodist minister, with a request for his opinion of its positions. Upon opening it, Litch did not like it! Certain he could overthrow it in five minutes, he began reading-and found it "so clear, so simple, and withal so scriptural, that it was impossible to disprove the position which Mr. Miller had endeavored to establish (Josiah Litch, "Rise and Progress of Adventism, "Advent Shield, May **1844, 54-55**).

In a letter written in November to his first-born son, Miller wrote this:

"Oh may God help me to give the truth! I think God has helped me thus far. I am more and more convinced that God is speaking through me. I know my own weakness, and I do know that I have neither power of body or mind to do what the Lord is doing by me as an instrument. It is the Lord's doings and marvelous in our eyes. The world do not know how weak I am. They think more, much more, of the old man than I think of him. Therefore I know it is God that is warning men of their danger."-Miller, letter to his first-born son, William S. Miller, November 17, 1838.

**1839**

**The series which Miller gave at Timothy Cole's church in Massachusetts would prove to have important consequences.**

Cole was a pastor of the Christian Connexion congregation in Lowell, Massachusetts. Having heard of Miller's outstanding success as a revivalist, Cole invited him to hold a series of meetings in his church, and a date in May

was set for the meetings.

Cole went to the train depot, confident that he would meet a dynamic public evangelist. But, as the people embarked from the train, he did not see anyone fitting that description. Eventually, an unimpressive old man, who had a slight shake of palsy, alighted from the car. Cole's heart dropped into his stomach when he discovered the old man was Miller.

Why had he ever invited him to his church? Well, it was too late now. The people were already gathering for the meeting. Arriving at the church, Cole led him through the backdoor and showed him the pulpit. Then Cole went into the audience and sat down.

It was pretty lonesome up on the rostrum; but, as Cole watched, the old man managed to get to the podium.

At that point, everyone in the audience became entranced as a master Biblical scholar began speaking. Cole was thunderstruck, and soon walked up to the podium and sat down.

Miller remained there a week, lecturing daily. He came back a month later for a second series to another packed audience. A successful revival followed, and Cole baptized 40 precious souls. Eventually 60 joined as a result. Cole himself became a solid convert to the nearness of the second coming, sold Miller's books as fast as he could get them, and preached the message earnestly for the next six years.

It was at the time of these meetings in Lowell that Miller first met Josiah Litch, who had read himself into the message with Miller's book, and was soon to join him in a greatly enlarged work of preaching. But results would be even greater later, because of certain individuals whom Cole contacted.

By June 9, 1839, William Miller's lecture-list book noted 800 lectures, or lecture series, since October 1, 1834.

## PART NINE

In view of Pastor Cole's initial impression of William Miller, what was this itinerant preacher like?

The Maine Wesleyan Journal referred to him as a "plain farmer." According to the New York Herald, Miller was about five feet seven inches in height, very thick set, [with] broad shoulders; lightish brown hair, a little bald, a benevolent countenance, full of wrinkles, and his head shakes a though he was slightly afflicted with the palsy. But, continuing, the Herald added, "His manners are very much in his favor. Although he is not a very well-educated man [in the schools], he has read and studied history and prophecy very closely; has much common sense, and is evidently sincere in his belief."

## SECTION FIVE

### **YEARS OF WIDESPREAD PROCLAMATION October 1839 -August 1844**

#### **MILLER MEETS HIMES -OCTOBER 1839**

It was by now the latter part of 1839 and what do we find? An old man traveling from town to town with a message that Christ was going to return in a few years. Astounding news, and equally amazing that he was spreading the word pretty much by himself.

William Miller was now 57 years old, an age when most people are about ready to retire. He was an earnest preacher, but not a good promoter. The idea of renting a large hall in a great city and drawing large crowds never occurred to him.

There were only four years to his 1843 date, and five to the corrected 1844 date. And Miller was still plodding along. Five years to October 22, 1844, only five years.

But an explosion of activity was about to begin, and here is how it came about:

**The year, 1839, had marked Miller's entrance into Massachusetts. This was largely through that invitation which Timothy Cole** (who was initially so ashamed of him) extended in May. Cole, pastor of the Christian Connexion in Lowell, Massachusetts, was an enthusiastic supporter. As he told other ministers about Miller, he began receiving invitations from other churches in the area.

(The "**Christian Connexion**" was a loose federation of a number of independent congregations in New England which did not want to link with any existing denomination. They wanted to be free to believe and teach any doctrines they individually considered Biblical.)

That fall, Miller was in Exeter, New Hampshire; and, during his meetings, a conference of the Christian Connexion was held in the same city. Some of the participants took the opportunity to stop in to visit Miller. It was at this time that William Miller first met Joshua V. Himes, pastor of the Chardon Street Church in Boston. Through Cole's influence, Himes had previously written Miller to hold meetings at his church, but Miller had so many appointments he forgot about it. Now at Exeter, the invitation was renewed, with the result that Miller went to Boston on December **7**, and lectured in Himes' church from the 8th to the 16th. Throughout this time, Miller was a guest in Himes' home.

Miller had not progressed far in his lecture series, when Himes accepted most of his positions. By the time Miller was finished, Himes was enthusiastic about the entire message.

In later years, Himes wrote down the conversation that ensued; and Bliss, Miller's biographer, included it in

his book, *Memoirs of William Miller*.

"When Mr. Miller had closed his lectures, I found myself in a new position. I could not believe or preach as I had done. Light on this subject was blazing on my conscience day and night. A long conversation with Mr. Miller then took place, on our duties and responsibilities. I said to Bro. Miller, 'Do you really believe this doctrine?'

"He replied, 'I certainly do, or I would not preach it.'

" 'What are you doing to spread or diffuse it through the world?'

" 'I have done and am still doing all I can.'

" 'Well, the whole thing is kept in a corner yet. There is but little knowledge on the subject, after all you have done. If Christ is to come in a few years, as you believe, no time should be lost in giving the church and world warning, in thunder-tones, to arouse them to prepare.'

" 'I know it, I know it, Bro. Himes,' said he; 'but what can an old farmer do? I was never used to public speaking; I stand quite alone; and, though I have labored much, and seen many converted to God and the truth, yet no one, as yet, seems to enter into the object and spirit of my mission so as to render me much aid. They like to have me preach, and build up their churches; and there it ends, with most of the ministers, as yet. I have been looking for help—I want help.'

"It was at this time that I laid myself, family, society, reputation, all upon the altar of God, to help him [William Miller], to the extent of my power, to the end. I then inquired of him what parts of the country he had visited, and whether he had visited any of our principal cities."- Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*. At this point in their conversation in Himes' home, Miller reviewed his labors which, as we have seen, had so far been limited largely to the towns and smaller cities of relatively small areas.

" 'But why,' I [Himes] said, 'have you not gone into the large cities?'

"He replied that his rule was to visit those places, where invited, and that he had not been invited into any of the large cities.

" 'Well,' said I, 'will you go with me where doors are opened?'

" 'Yes, I am ready to go anywhere, and labor to the extent of my ability to the end.'

"I then told him he might prepare for the campaign; for doors should be opened in every city in the Union, and the warning should go to the ends of the earth. Here I began to help Father Miller."-Ibid.

William Miller did not realize that this pastor was unlike any other preacher he had visited. Here was a man of action, a born promoter, a man whose name was soon to be linked with his in every discussion of Millerism throughout the country. So far as Himes was concerned, Miller's message was either true or fake. If it was true, then it should go to the whole world! Every energy must be pressed into action. Action, and on a large scale, this was the spirit of Joshua V. Himes.

Who was this man? Joshua Vaughan Himes was only 35 years old at the time of the above conversation. He was born in 1805 in Wickford, Rhode Island, to a prosperous West India merchant. It had been his father's plan that he should be trained at Brown University for the ministry in the Episcopal Church. But these plans came to a halt when dishonest business associates brought the family business to ruin.

As a result, Joshua's formal education ended when he was eight. His father decided he should become a tradesman, and arranged for him to become a cabinet-making apprentice in New Bedford. While there, he began attending the First Christian Church in 1823, which belonged to an association called "the Christian Connexion." It was the objective of the Connexionists to avoid human creeds and get back to the Bible. "When the Bible speaks, we speak; when the Bible is silent, we are silent."

Young Himes soon felt it was his duty to preach the gospel; and so, entirely on his own, he began holding religious meetings. He had remarkable speaking ability, and revivals followed. In 1827, at the age of 22, he gave up his secular calling and entered the full-time ministry.

Between 1827 and 1830, Himes raised up churches and served as a revivalist in a broad area of Massachusetts. In 1830, he became pastor of the First Christian Church in Boston, and gained a leading role in the Connexionist movement. By 1831, he was secretary of their annual meeting of leaders in the movement.

Throughout those years, Himes became involved in a number of reformist activities. In 1835, he initialed the establishment of a manual-labor training school where boys could receive a book education and, at the same time, learn a trade-which immediately paid the costs involved. (An extremely worthwhile project. In later years, Ellen White advocated industrial and technical training in our schools.)

Himes also became involved in world peace, women's rights, temperance, educational reform, and health reform movements. He was one of the founders of the New England Non-Resistance Society (a pacifist organization), and a member of its executive committee. But his special area of social involvement in those days was the abolition of slavery-at a time when it was feared and hated even in the northern states. Himes was an earnest activist who did not sit on the sidelines.

"[Himes] made speeches upon every occasion, facing mobs, defying them to do their worst and pouring hot shots into their ranks in his peculiar and emphatic style of denunciation of the nation's disgrace and burning shame."-Union County Courier, May **24, 1895**.

The leading champion of the anti-slavery movement, William Lloyd Garrison, lamenting the fact that Himes had switched to giving his full support to the Millerite movement, noted this about Joshua Himes:

'At a very early period, he avowed himself an abolitionist, and has been a faithful supporter of the anti-slavery movement, never ashamed to show his colors, never faltering in the darkest hour of its history. He is a remarkably active and zealous man in whatever he undertakes, doing with all his might whatsoever his hands find to do."-The Liberator, February 10, 1843.

Himes' vigorous abolitionist involvement of- fended many of his church members, and the board of elders asked him to leave. In 1837, he withdrew with many progressive members--and founded the Second Christian Church. The next year, they built the Chardon Street Chapel, which became a center of progressivist activity. Himes "made his congregation the virtual center in New England of every variety of enthusiastic reform" (WP and FJ. Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. 2, 327).

Uniting with Miller, Himes worked resolutely to advance this new cause. What, in the strength of God, he was able to do we shall learn in forth- coming pages. He combined the abilities of a preacher, editor, businessman, advertising executive, and zealous promoter. Add to this the fact that he was an experienced veteran at it. He had personal and business contacts all over New England.

Miller was a product of the frontier country; and now, working with Himes, the message moved into the large cities. Miller remained the center of the work, but Himes became its chief promoter.

"We are not insensible of the fact that much obloquy will be cast upon us in consequence of our association with the author of this work [Miller]. This, however, gives us no pain. We had rather be associated with such a man as William Miller, and stand with him in gloom or glory, in the cause of the living God, than to be associated with his enemies, and enjoy all the honors of this world."Joshua V Himes, quoted in Brief History of William Miller, 148.

These two men complemented one another.

Miller was a thinker and preacher; Himes was an organizer and promoter. Himes accepted Miller's positions, and Miller accepted Himes' promotional strategies.

Aside from general promotion, Himes' leading contributions to the movement was the publishing work, the camp meetings, and the holding of general conferences.

With Miller, Litch, and Fitch, Himes became one of Millerism's four leading figures.

Miller was now 57 years old and, already suffering with a touch of palsy, had prolonged sessions of illness in the years ahead. Himes was 35 and blessed with remarkable drive and promotional experience.

"Miller was no longer simply a pleasant but moderately effective revivalist, saving sinners and building up churches. He and his movement became independent forces, more capable of disrupting and dividing the churches. With Himes leading the way, Millerism became . . . a major religious movement with which the churches would have to reckon."-David Arthur, Come Out of Babylon, 15.

1843 was only four years distant; 1844 only five. There was much to be done.

## **PUBLICATIONS -'THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

Shortly after the beginning of 1840, Miller decided to return to Boston for another lecture series, and this gave him and Himes additional opportunity for discussion and planning.

As a result, under Himes' direction, a prominent Boston publisher brought out a 5,000 print run of a second edition of Miller's book.

But he also did something else:

During their discussions at the time of this second Boston lecture series (in February 1840), Miller mentioned that he had long wished that a periodical of some kind could be published but, as he later wrote, "we had never been able to find a man who was willing to run the risk of his reputation and pecuniary expense, in such a publication."

In addition, "for a long time previous to this, the papers had been filled with abusive stories respecting my labors, and they had refused to publish anything from me in reply" (Miller, Apology and Defense, 21).

Counterattacks did not bother Himes. As soon as he heard of the idea, he immediately set to work. Within one week he brought out the first issue of the new periodical, which he called the Signs of the Times. Himes did this without a single subscriber or the promise of financial assistance from anyone!

[The **Signs**, as it was called, was in the spring of 1844 changed by Himes to the **Advent Herald**. Thirty years later, James White adopted the name that Himes had discarded, and called his paper the **Signs of the Times**. But there was no connection between the two, other than the name.)

Himes' paper, which began publication in early 1840, continued uninterrupted throughout the history of the movement. It was issued twice a month for the first two years, but in April 1842 became a weekly.

Himes' biographer noted that his, Himes, motto became "**what we do must be done quickly.**" This phrase is repeatedly found in Himes' writings; for he was convinced that the world would come to an end in a few short years.

Yet, interestingly enough, Himes' primary help was in the publishing field. That which many did not realize, Himes knew: Books and tracts are powerful. A leading historian of American religion, described Himes' publishing efforts as "an unprecedented media blitz" and "an unprecedented communications crusade" (**Nathan Hatch, Democratization of American Christianity, 142, 145**). One of Himes' detractors in the 1840s gave him the title, "Napoleon of the press" (**Advent Christian Times, February 6, 1872**).

(It was this same discovery of the power of the press that caused the present writer to abandon radio broadcasting in favor of publishing work in 1979.)

Himes wisely recognized that his twice-a-month publication should help bring the faithful together, solidify their faith in the message, encourage them to persevere to the end and not be afraid to defend those beliefs before others. The flock were widely scattered, and they needed such a lift. So many of their fellow Christians, at the local churches they attended, were opposed to their emphasis on obedience to God's Written Word.

Himes recognized the power of the press in encouraging believers and providing them with materials to share with those in the churches and the world.

The problem among believers was not a dearth of interest, but the lack of a network of publications and support institutions to keep the interest alive after the lectures were over.

Life holds so many distractions. What was needed was encouragement that like-minded believers were out there elsewhere. They needed journal articles, missionary tracts, booklets, and books which they could read and share. This Himes promoted vigorously. In fact, it has been said that his primary help to Millerism was through publications he founded or encouraged.

After starting the Signs of the Times in February 1840, others were later founded. The one which became their second most important periodical, the Midnight Cry, edited by Himes with Nathaniel Southard as his associate, was started in New York City on November 17, 1842. The copies were distributed free on a donation basis.

Himes believed in the power of the press. In the first issue of the **Midnight Cry**, he wrote:

"OUR WORK-is one of unutterable magnitude. It is a mission and an enterprise, unlike, in some respects, anything that has ever awakened the energies of man . . . It is an alarm, and a CRY, uttered by those who, from among all Protestant sects, as Watchmen standing upon the walls of the moral world, believe the WORLD'S CRISIS IS COME."-*Midnight Cry, November 17, 1842, 2.*

As with the **Signs of the Times**, copies of this journal were eagerly obtained by the believers-and 0 widely distributed. If historic Adventists in our own time were as preoccupied with sharing the special truths with nominal Adventists and the world beyond, what a great work would be done. We cannot, in this life, realize the full effect of our actions.

Those two publications, and all the others, greatly deepened and extended the impact of the giving of the message. Thus it could be today.

Soon Josiah Litch started Trumpet of Alarm in Philadelphia; Charles Fitch published Second Advent of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio; R. Hutchinson began Voice of Elijah in Montreal; and George Storrs and Enoch Jacobs produced Western Midnight Cry in Cincinnati.

In addition, for women, **The Advent Message to the Daughters of Zion** was published by Clorinda Minor and Emily Clemons; and, as a more scholarly journal, **The Advent Shield** was regularly printed by Himes, Sylvester Bliss, and Apollos Hale.

Great Britain had its **Midnight Cry** and **The Second Advent Harbinger**.

These are but a few of the total number. **It is a remarkable fact that the advent awakening spawned over 40 journals prior to October 1844.**

**Recognizing the extreme value of publications, Himes produced the Second Advent Library**, which eventually included nearly 50 volumes. Made available on a sale basis, page counts varied from a few pages to several hundred.

**Then there was the Words of Warning Series of tracts**, another of Himes' productions. Each one was a single 5x 8-inch sheet, printed on both sides. There were 36 tracts in the series. These little sheets were circulated in vast quantities.

**Himes also compiled and published an Adventist songbook in 1842**, entitled *Millennial Harp, or Second Advent Hymns: Designed for Meetings on the Second Coming of Christ*.

**Himes and his associates also established Second Advent Libraries in every town and village they could**



**penetrate. These were lending libraries.** "free for all who will take, read, and return the books." Each library could be established for \$5 or \$10.

### **Those folk recognized the value of literature evangelism!**

Keep in mind that the situation of the Millerites, back then, was remarkably similar to that of many historic Adventists today. Both found it difficult sharing their faith, in the face of opposition from the world and nominal advent believers. Publications could do that which human preachers could not: yet, even for missionary literature, they had to turn to independent sources. Suitable publications simply were not available elsewhere.

Himes and others arranged for some of the books to be translated into foreign languages (notably French and German).

He also devised Advent Seals to seal envelopes with. Each small stamp had a Bible verse about the second advent on it. They were somewhat like our Sabbath Seals, although less colorful.

Advent believers would write letters to the editors of the local newspapers, and these carried the message still farther.

Another method which could be used back then, was the mailing of bundles of small tracts to local post offices, with instructions to the postmasters to hand them out when patrons came to check their boxes or mail something.

The *Midnight Cry*, for May 25, 1843, included a letter from the postmaster at Canton, Ohio:

"The papers which you forwarded, viz.. *"The Midnight Cry"* and *"The Trumpet of Alarm,"* came to hand last evening. In half an hour from the time of their arrival at this office, they were distributed in every part of this town. A general rush was made to the office to obtain the papers. Many country people, who were in town, as soon as they learned that papers could be had, came and received. I was forced to discontinue giving to the town's people any more of the papers, having reserved half a dozen copies to send into the country. Some came to the office and begged for a copy only to read, if I would not let them have it by paying postage. I could not, of course, refuse, and by this means I gave out all I had, except a few copies, as before stated. Can you not send me another such roll of papers? You have no idea of the good which is accomplished by these papers. Many persons that would not receive the glad tidings of the near approach of our Saviour by other means are thus put in possession of the facts."--*Postmaster, letter, dated May 12, 1843, in Midnight Cry, May 25, 1843.*

Another approach was to package a bundle of tracts and journals, and give them to ship captains with the request that they drop them off in ports overseas. Protestant missionary outposts were especially targeted.

"Within the last few years, there has been a continuous effort by the believers in the speedy coming of the Lord, to send light on this subject to the whole world. And so far as the opportunity has offered, publications have been sent to every English and American Mission in the world. These publications have gone to the various parts of the four quarters of the earth and various islands of the sea."--*Signs of the Times, November 15, 1843.*

"Advent publications have been sent by the hundred thousand and broadcast all over the world." "Sailors who come into port testify that the coming of Christ is a subject of conversation all over the world."--*Signs of the Times, July 19, 1843.*

By May 1844, the Advent leaders estimated that five million pieces of Advent literature had been issued. That would be equivalent to one for every four men, women, and child in the United States.

Just as today, not everyone could preach, -but they knew where they could contact a publisher who carried the kind of worthwhile literature needed by mankind in their time in history.

Keeping in mind that Himes primarily focused on literature publication, in evaluating Himes' work in 1845, William Miller said he "has been more instrumental in the spread of these views than any other ten men who have embarked in the cause" (Miller, *Apology and Defense*, 22).

As we shall notice later in this study, it is significant that the second Millerite General Conference was occupied with devising more efficient and wide-spread ways to extend the message by the printed page-The reader needs to understand that, at that time, there were no ministers or evangelists in the field who were financially supported by the awakening movement (Miller was supported by his leased farm). As a result, they were limited in their ability to share the message. But they recognized that literature was something everyone could have a part in sharing! Wherever Millerite writings were circulated they stimulated the sale and study of the Bible. It was known as pre-eminently a Bible movement, and Litch asserted that "a course of lectures in a village would open a door for the sale of more Bibles in a week than would have been sold before in years" (Litch, "Rise and Progress of Adventism," in *Advent Shield*, May 1844).

It was, above all else, the flood of literature which was the means of reaching so many people with the message and bringing them into the faith. The advent preachers only went to a few areas, but the books and tracts were scattered by the believers everywhere. They were handed out, mailed out—to other parts of America and overseas as well. More on this flood of Advent awakening literature later in this study.

On January 21, William Miller began a series in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Among those who attended was the pastor of the local Methodist Church, D. I. Robinson. Determining to visit Miller privately, he came armed with a list of strong objections. But, as he presented them, one by one, Miller quickly and satisfactorily answered each one. Robinson went home "used up, convicted, humbled, and resolved to examine the question" again. After doing so, he began preaching the message also.

Miller decided to return to Boston for yet another lecture series, and this gave him and Himes additional opportunity for discussion. In the previous section, we discussed their plans for publications, which, as we noted, Himes immediately began setting in motion.

After concluding this second series of meetings in Himes' church, Miller lectured in Westford, Massachusetts-where he was refused the use of the Congregational Church, and so had to speak in a different one. This was significant: the first time a church had closed to him.

The public press was becoming increasingly negative toward the advent awakening. This was another bad indicator, yet Miller kept pressing on.

The pastor of the Lockport Methodist Church attended some of his lectures-and then decided to visit with him privately. That meeting with William Miller would have been an interesting one to listen in on:

"I heard him all I could the first week, and thought I could stop his wheels and confound him; but, as the revival had commenced in the vast congregation assembled to hear, I would not do it publicly, lest evil should follow. I, therefore, visited him at his room, with a formidable list of objections. To my surprise, scarcely any of them were new to him, and he could answer them as fast as I could present them. And then he presented objections and questions which confounded me, and the commentaries on which I had relied. I went home used up, convicted, humbled, and resolved to examine the question."-Quoted in Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*, 143.

## **IMPACT ON PORTLAND, MAINE**

Upon leaving Watertown, **Miller journeyed on up to Portland, Maine, for a series.**

"We are now in this town on our way to Portland, Maine. I closed my course of lectures in Watertown last evening. I have never seen so great an effect in one place as there. I preached from Gen. 19:17, last lecture. Between 1,500 and 1,800 present. More than 100 under conviction."-Miller, letter to his son, William S., March 9, 1840.

For 13 days, Miller lectured at the Casco Street Christian Church. What he had to say created an immense interest in the city and surrounding communities.

Of course, we today, would have a special interest in Miller's trip to Portland, Maine. A young lady, named Ellen Harmon, lived with her parents in that city. She was only twelve at the time. It was only three years earlier that she had that dreadful accident when an older girl threw a rock which hit nine-year-old Ellen in the face.

Although in poor health, Ellen had been able to regularly attend Methodist church meetings with her parents. When Miller came to town, she attended each meeting with her family. The series made a decided impact on her. Although only twelve, Ellen appears to have understood a large part of what was presented.

As did most people at that time, Ellen and her parents had thought that Christ was going to return after a 1,000-year millennium, but they became convinced that the advent would occur in 1843. The entire family immediately took their stand with others eagerly awaiting their Lord's soon return.

Meetings were conducted during the day, as well as in the evening. Many from outlying areas attended them. Some brought their lunches, picnic style, and made an entire day of it. But, in view of the seriousness of the messages presented, a holy solemnity rested over the crowds.

Here Ellen later described this series:

"These lectures produced a great sensation, and the Christian church on Casco Street, that Mr. Miller occupied, was crowded day and night. No wild excitement attended these meetings, but a deep solemnity pervaded the minds of those who heard his discourses. Not only was there manifested a great interest in the city, but the country people flocked in day after day, bringing their lunch baskets, and remaining from morning until the close of the evening meeting.

"Mr. Miller dwelt upon the prophecies, comparing them with Bible history, that the end of the world was near. I attended these meetings in company with my friends and listened to the strange doctrines of the preacher. Four years previous to this, on my way to school, I had picked up a scrap of paper containing an account of a man in England who was preaching that the earth would be consumed in about thirty years from that time . . .

"Now I was listening to the most solemn and powerful sermons to the effect that Christ was coming in 1843, only a few short years in the future. The preacher traced down the prophecies with a keen exactitude that struck conviction to the hearts of his hearers. He dwelt upon the prophetic periods, and piled up proof

to strengthen his position. Then his solemn and powerful appeals and admonitions to those who were unprepared, held the crowd as if spell-bound."-Life Sketches, 1880 edition, 136-1 37.

**It was obvious to young Ellen that Miller's lectures were producing an excitement which reverberated throughout the city.**

"Terrible conviction spread through the entire city. Prayer meetings were established, and there was a general awakening among the various denominations, for they all felt more or less the influence that proceeded from the teaching of the near coming of Christ."--Op. cit., 137.

However, young Ellen still did not have that close walk with God which she desired. It was not until a little after Miller's next visit to Portland, in 1842, that she fully found peace in Christ. More on that later.

We have a number of interesting stories and comments which resulted from those meetings in Portland. Here are several; they reveal the stunning impression made by Miller and his message on the minds and morals of the city:

"A young man, hardly out of his teens, residing in the city, heard of Mr. M's lecturing, and though unconverted he was so awakened he determined to hear for himself. He entered a rumshop, where he found twelve of his acquaintances playing cards. Said he, 'Friends, there is a man in the city preaching at the Casco Street church that the Lord is coming in 1843. I think you better leave your gambling and go and hear him.' They at once stopped their gambling, gathered up their cards and money, and accompanied the young man to the meeting. The result was that the entire company was converted; and this man lives today to testify to the saving grace of God in rescuing him through the influence of Mr. Miller's preaching.'" - Mitchell, History of the Second Advent Church in Portland, Maine, 7.

L.D. Fleming, a Portland pastor, wrote Miller afterward about the powerful effect of the message on that city.

"Since you left, the good work has been progressing firmly. I should think somewhere near 200 have professed conversion in our meetings since you left and the good work is spreading all over the city, and in the country all around the city. Such a time was never known here. A number of grogshops [saloons] have been broken up and converted into little meetinghouses. One or two gambling establishments have been also broken up. Little prayer meetings have been set up in almost every part of the city . . .

"Many opposers begin to acknowledge that there is a work of God here. But some of them hate to own that Miller had any hand as an instrument in the matter."-L.D. Fleming, letter to Miller, April 11, 1840.

In his letter, Fleming enclosed one from Thomas Barry, another local pastor who had accepted Miller's positions. Noting that the same kind of results, reported by Fleming, were also occurring in Portsmouth, Rye, Exeter, and other localities. Barry added this comment:

"The Congregationalists through this section report that Mr. Miller has by his lectures prompted many to read the Bible and thus have been led to embrace religion. But say they, he has done nothing to commence or to aid the unusual revivals of religion among us. This appears to be strange and inconsistent reasoning!"-Thomas F. Barry, letter to Miller, April 11, 1840.

Five days before sending the above letter to Miller, Fleming sent Himes another one:

"Being down in the business part of our city . . . I was conducted into a room over one of the banks, where I found about thirty or forty men of different denominations, engaged with one accord in prayer, at about 11 o'clock in the day-time! . . . There is nothing like extravagant excitement, but an almost universal solemnity on the minds of all the people. One of the principal booksellers informed me that he had sold more Bibles in one month (since Brother Miller came here) than he had in any four months previous."-L.D. Fleming, letter to Joshua Himes, April 6, 1840, in Signs of the Times, April 15, 1840.

There were also those who more publicly discussed the meetings at Portland. The editor of the Maine Wesleyan Journal commented at length on what happened in Portland:

"Mr. Miller has been in Portland, lecturing to crowded congregations in Casco Street church, on his favorite theme, the end of the world, or literal reign of Christ for 1,000 years. As faithful chroniclers of passing events, it will be expected of us that we say something of the man, and his peculiar views.

"Mr. Miller is about sixty years of age; a plain farmer from Hampton, in the State of New York. He is a member of the Baptist church in that place, from which he brings satisfactory testimonials of good standing, and a license to improve publicly. He has, we understand, numerous testimonials also from clergymen of different denominations favorable to his general character. We should think him a man of but common-school education; evidently possessing strong powers of mind, which for about fourteen years have been almost exclusively bent to the investigation of Scripture prophecies. The last eight years of his life have been devoted to lecturing on this favorite subject.

"In his public discourses he is self-possessed and ready; distinct in his utterance, and frequently quaint in his expressions. He succeeds in chaining the attention of his auditory for an hour and a half to two hours; and in the management of his subject discovers much tact, holding frequent colloquies with the objector and inquirer, supplying the questions and answers himself in a very natural manner;

and although grave himself, sometimes producing a smile from a portion of his auditors.

"Mr. Miller is a great stickler for literal interpretations; never admitting the figurative, unless absolutely required to make correct sense or meet the event which is intended to be pointed out. He doubtless believes, most unwaveringly, all he teaches to others. His lectures are interspersed with powerful admonitions to the wicked, and he handles Universalism with gloves of steel.

"He is evidently disposed to make but little allowance for those who think differently from him on the millennium; dealing often in terrible denunciations against such as oppose his peculiar views on this point; as he fully believes they are crying peace and safety when sudden destruction cometh. Judging from what we see and hear, we should think his lectures are making a decided impression on many minds, favorable to his theory."-Editorial, *Maine Wesleyan Journal*, quoted in J. W Himes; *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology, Selected from Manuscripts of William Miller, with a Memoir of His Life, 15-16.*

At the same time, other periodical comments on Miller were not so complimentary. The editor of an essentially atheist newspaper, the *Trumpet* published by the Universalists, said that while "William Miller is a weak-minded, vain, and self-confident old man," and "certain societies and clergymen in different parts of New England have seen fit to make a tool of the old man, for the purpose of getting up excitements, and gaining converts for their churches ..Miller has been in the vicinity of Boston some two or three months. He is constantly giving lectures on his theory, which are attended by immense crowds" [*Editorial, The Trumpet, quoted in Signs of the Times, May 1, 1840.*]

The above statement was reprinted in the *Signs of the Times* under the heading, "Refuge of Scoffers." Himes was excellent at keeping the pot stirred up and boiling well.

As for William Miller, he had a deep burden to reach souls with the warning message. It was because he sought God in humility of heart, that the Lord could work with him.

"Those souls whom I addressed in my six months' tour are continually before me, sleeping or waking; I can see them perishing by thousands; and when I reflect on the accountability of their teachers, who say 'peace and safety,' I am in pain for them."-Miller, letter to Himes, March **31, 1840.**

## **THE FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE**

**In May 1840, William Miller preached his first lecture series in New York City. There was both strong interest and strong opposition.**

Amid the growing intensity of activity, Miller wrote to Himes. He was feeling overwhelmed, for there was so much to do:

"I do not know what to say to you about coming to Massachusetts again. I have more business on hand than two men like me could perform. I must lecture twice every day. I must converse with many—answer a host of questions—write answers to letters from all points of the compass, from Canada to Florida, from Maine to Missouri. I must read all the candid arguments, (which I confess are not many) that are urged against me. I must read all the 'slang' of the drunken and sober . .

"The polar Star must be kept in view, — the chart consulted, —the compass watched, —the reckoning kept, —the sails set, —the rudder managed, —the ship cleaned, —the sailors fed, —the voyage prosecuted, —the port of rest to which we are destined, understood." —Miller, letter to Himes, August *12, 1840*, in *Signs of the Times*, September *1, 1840.*

**But Miller was now gaining increasing help. Several ministers were coming to his aid, and uniting their voices with his.**

Prior to this time, all attempts to convene a conference of the leading Advent advocates had failed. But the steady guidance of Himes and several others produced the needed impetus for such a gathering.

**In the late summer of 1840, Miller and several ministers issued a call for "a general conference on the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." The meeting was to be held at Himes' Chardon Street Chapel in Boston.**

"The object of the conference will not be to form a new organization in the faith of Christ; nor to assail others of our brethren who differ from us in regard to the period and manner of the advent; but to discuss the whole subject faithfully and fairly."--Signed statement, *Signs of the Times*, September 1, 1840.

**This first "Second Advent Conference" convened on October 14, 1840**, with the well-known Episcopalian clergyman, Dr. Henry Dana Ward, of New York City, as chairman, and Congregationalist Henry Jones, also of New York, as secretary. Jones was a strong abolitionist and temperance lecturer. The objective was to unify the various men leading out in presenting the Millerite message.

**William Miller did not attend this first General Conference.** He had left his home on October 8, expecting to attend the conference. But he had only traveled two miles to Fairhaven, when he came down with typhoid fever, which was somewhat rare by that time, and was taken back to his home.

His plans to attend the conference were shattered, and **Miller could not see why he had been prevented from being there.** All he could do was to dictate a short note to those in attendance.

"Why was I deprived of meeting those congenial minds in this good, this glorious cause of light and truth? Why am I to bear this last affliction, and not enjoy this one pleasure of meeting fellow laborers in a cause so big with prospects, so glorious in its results, so honoring to God, and so safe to man? Why are the providences of God so mysterious? I have often inquired. Am I never to have my will? No, never, until my will shall harmonize with Thine, O Father! Yes, God is right; His providence is right; His ways are just and true; and I am foolish to murmur or complain."-Miller, note to the 1840 Conference, quoted in Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*, 153.

The various biographers have also found it difficult to understand why Miller was prevented from attending those early conferences. But, in His wisdom, God had ordained this. He knew it was best.

Up to this time, William Miller had been the strong center of the movement. **Yet the future which the Lord intended for the Advent awakening should not be overshadowed by Miller.** In 1840, everyone in the movement unconsciously bowed to his wishes. But this must not be. **Many men should be involved, and all eyes should be turned to the Lord and His Word. After the Great Disappointment, a prophet would be given to guide the people, and new truths about the Bible Sabbath, Sanctuary, state of the dead, and punishment of the wicked would be given to the people. Miller must not be in a position to be the sole arbiter of right and wrong.**

The conference convened at Joshua Himes' church in Boston. Among the leading men in attendance were Joshua V. Himes, Josiah Litch, Henry Dana Ward, Henry Jones, and Joseph Bates. **These were all strong, earnest preachers; and, lacking the presence of Miller, they had to set their own brains to work. Looking to God and His Word for guidance—and not to Miller—they had to plan and execute without him.**

The official printed proceedings of the session filled almost 200 pages, and consisted mainly of speeches read at the conference. (As might be expected, Himes raised the money to get it printed.) Many planning sessions were held during the conference, and a resolution was drafted "to call another general conference, as soon, and at such place, as they may deem expedient" (The First Report of the General Conference of Christians Expecting the Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ, section entitled "Proceedings of the Conference, " 12).

"Though in some of the less important views of this momentous subject we are not ourselves agreed, particularly in regard to fixing the year of Christ's second advent, yet we are unanimously agreed and established in this all-absorbing point, that the coming of the Lord to judge the world is now specially 'nigh at hand.'" -Op. cit., 14-15.

A few weeks after the meetings ended, Miller was well again, and he lectured in Fort Ann from December 26 to 30.

1840 had been a momentous year.

***Since a growing crescendo of activity began in 1841, we will pause to consider several key factors which helped the message swell so rapidly and gain such wide acceptance:***

- 1-The Leaders in the Movement**
- 2 -The Flood of Literature**
- 3 -The Conferences**
- 4 -The Camp Meetings**
- 5 -The Great Tent**
- 6 -The Grove Meetings**
- 7 -Charts and Diagrams**
- 8 -Songbooks**

## **THE LEADERS IN THE MOVEMENT**

In addition to Josiah V. Himes, who we discussed earlier, there were other important men who also arose to prominence in the work during 1840 and afterward. Indeed, events occurred so rapidly that it is well to discuss these influential men here in one section by itself.

### **HENRY JONES**

Apparently, Henry Jones was the first one of the leaders to become seriously interested in the awakening message. He first wrote Miller in 1832.

A Congregational minister, Jones sold subscriptions to temperance newspapers. He was also interested in healthful living and the abolition of slavery. He once wrote Miller that he had memorized the book of Revelation.

He was one of those leaders who called for the First Advent Conference in 1840. He served as one of its secretaries and was a prominent worker till the end of the movement.

### **JOSIAH LITCH**

Josiah Litch (1809-1886) became acquainted with Millerism at about the same time as Fitch—in 1838. Someone had handed him a copy of Miller's book, and he did not want to bother with it. But he decided to do so when the thought came to mind that he could disprove it in five minutes.

"Before concluding the book, I became fully satisfied that the arguments were so clear, so simple, and withal so Scriptural, that it was impossible to disprove the position."—*Advent Shield and Review, May -1844*.

**Litch was extremely honest and willing to face facts without flinching.** As soon as he read it, the thought came to mind that he be doing wrong not to preach it—even though it might damage his reputation.

"If it is true that the Lord is coming so soon, the world should know it: if it is not true, it should be discussed, and the error exposed. I believe the Bible teaches the doctrine; and while I believe thus, it is my duty to make it known to the extent of my power. It is a Scriptural subject, and one full of interest; and the discussion of it cannot do harm. These prophecies and periods are in the Bible, and mean something: if they do not mean this, what do they mean? Thus I reasoned, until the Lord, in a night dream . . . made me willing to bear reproach for Christ, when I resolved, at any cost, to present the truth on this subject."—*Ibid*.

A member of the New England Episcopal Conference, he was one of the first ministers in New England to defend the awakening message.

As soon as he committed himself, he began preaching and writing. His first publication (1838) was a 48-page summary of Miller's positions, entitled *The Midnight Cry, or a Review of Mr. Miller's Lectures on the Second Coming of Christ*, about A.D. 1843.

Along with preaching, Litch then set to work to write another book, this one with 204 pages, on the same subject. It bore the title, *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ about A.D. 1843*.

**When he first met Miller at Timothy Cole's church in 1839, Litch had already gone public in a far greater way than had any other of Miller's converts. Unlike many who adopted Miller's views, Litch accepted the 1843 date from the beginning.**

**It was in the second book of Litch's, that he declared that the Ottoman empire would collapse in August 1840, a date later refined to August 11.**

When that occurred, many people were greatly impressed that the other Millerite teachings must be correct also (see *Great Controversy, 334-335*).

However, it should be understood that Litch and the other Advent leaders did not have an advent date set in concrete. Perhaps it was at some other time in 1844, or perhaps a little later. For this reason, they were able to accept the fact when the spring 1843 date did not bring what they had expected.

On June 9, 1841, at the Methodists Conference in Providence, Rhode Island, Litch was called upon to defend his position. This he did well enough that those in attendance decided he was not a heretic, although his views were different than most at the conference.

When the second Millerite General Conference was held—only a week later—on June 15 through 17, it focused on extending the message through the printed page. At this time, Litch was appointed to head up the project, and was given the title of "general agent." Thus he became the first full-time paid employee of the advent awakening, and placed on the staff of Himes' *Signs of the Times*.

At this time Litch separated from the Methodists, so he could join the staff of Himes' *Signs of the Times* and give his time more fully to proclaiming the message.

Immediately Litch set to work. He traveled to several Methodist conferences and worked with the ministers who attended them. It would require a page to describe all that he accomplished along this line. Litch was a capable and earnest worker.

**By early 1842, Litch had centered his work in Philadelphia**, where he opened a book depository for the circulation of Millerite literature, and began the publication of the *Philadelphia Alarm*.

Josiah Litch was a careful Bible student. **He placed the judgment before the resurrection!** This was an important principle, and the result of very careful Biblical research.

"If there are to be two distinct resurrections of the dead, when is the general judgment to take place? Will it be at the first or second resurrection? At neither; but before either of them takes place. Perhaps there is no one point in the 20th chapter of Revelation that has been the cause of greater obscurity and more confusion among biblical students than the introduction of the judgment at the close of the chapter, and after the close of the millennium."— Litch, "Dissertation on the Millennium," *Second Report of the General Conference of Christians*

Expecting the Advent, 9.

Litch maintained that the judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 is according to works. Therefore the judgment must precede the resurrection. "The judgment is here most certainly placed prior to the resurrection." The truth that there are two resurrections--of the just and the unjust--renders it necessary. He adds that it is necessary in order to determine who are to be the "subjects of the first resurrection." The book of life is "opened for the purpose of determining who are written there. The judgment must, therefore, be before the resurrection." This "general judgment" must be "prior to the first resurrection" in order to harmonize with and explain Revelation 20:4 (op. cit., 10).

**Litch also declared that the thousand years was literal, not figurative,** "for the chapter is a literal description of what will actually take place." The "long cherished opinion of six thousand years' for this sinful world, followed by the thousand years of the great Sabbath [the seventh thousand years], or earth's jubilee, "requires it to be understood literally." Then comes the logical conclusion:

"If the foregoing explanation of the twentieth chapter of Revelation is correct, and the doctrine of two resurrections is sound and scriptural, then the prevailing view of the millennium must fall to the ground."-Ibid.

Litch kept hammering home his point—which was contrary to the Christian world in his day—that there would be no temporal thousand year millennium before Christ's return. Daniel 7 predicted the course of empire down to the second coming and kingdom of Christ. This concept was also to be found in 2 Thessalonians 2, where Paul said the man of sin would be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming. The kingdom of God was not established during the 1260 years. That was not the millennium of peace, but actually a terrible time in which God's people were persecuted. The 1260 years ended in 1798, and there was no place for a millennium between that time and the second advent.

**Another point which Litch was correct on— which many of our own people are abandoning today—is the fact that, when God's people are sealed, their probation has ended and their characters must at that time be perfect.**

"Character and conduct of men cannot be decided on until their probation ends and their character is finally fixed."-Op. cit., 11.

**Litch also said that, as in the days of Noah, a period of time would elapse after probation closed—and before Christ would return.** Men would knock on the antitypical ark, as it were, asking for entrance—after their probation had forever closed (op. cit., 12).

It is obvious that Litch was a deep and careful student of Scripture and, as such, was a great asset to the advent awakening.

Oh, that there were Litch's today who would give the urgent call which he gave! Oh, that there were men and women who would plead with the sinner to come to God before probation closes!

"The doctrine of a temporal and spiritual reign of Christ for a thousand years before His second coming, is but a cunningly devised fable, and in its very nature only calculated to lull men to sleep in their sins, and to induce them to say, *'My Lord delayeth his coming.'*

*'Perishing sinner!* if this argument is sound and conclusive, then you have no time to lose in preparing for the judgment. Then delay not, but haste thee to Christ for refuge, while He waits to be gracious.

*'Christian professor!* you have a great work to do to clear your skirts of the blood of souls, and to have your own lamps trimmed and burning, and oil in your vessels with your lamps. Remember, only perfect love can cast out fear, and give boldness in the day of judgment. Seek, then, and live it day by day.

*'Minister of the gospel-Watchman on Zion's walls!* lift up thy voice like a trumpet, cry aloud, spare not; show the people their sins, arouse them from their lethargy, lest, like the inhabitants of the old world, they know not till the door is shut. Amen."-Litch, *"Dissertation on the Millennium," Second Report of the General Conference of Christians Expecting the Advent, 16.*

## **CHARLES FITCH**

Charles Fitch ( 1805-1844) ranked with the most prominent men in the movement. In 1838, at about the same time that Litch read Miller's writings, Fitch obtained some of those also.

After attending Brown University, Fitch entered the ministry and the pastorate of the First Free Congregational Church, in Boston. In 1837, he wrote a strong attack on slavery, which revealed both clarity of thought and boldness to stand for the right.

Having read Miller's books six times, and having begun to preach about the second coming of Christ in Boston, Fitch attended a ministers conference in 1838 where he presented concepts he had learned from Miller's book. He was met with such ridicule that he forsook the message for several years.

However, three years later he was willing to be an outcast over a different issue. In 1839, he had written a book, *Views of Sanctification*, in which he taught that, in the strength of Christ, we can put away our sins and

live clean lives.

Such a sweet, godly, Biblical view was seen as heresy by the Newark Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church, his employing organization. They put him on trial, and Fitch replied to the presbytery's charges in these words:

"With my name you must do what you think right before God, and in view of an approaching judgment. I have no further defense to make [than his letter of explanation to them]. If you cannot own me as one of your number while I tell the church of Christ . . . that He was manifested to take away their sins, and that they may and ought so to abide in Him that they sin not . . . then just blot me out of your book, and let the transaction be recorded, as it will be, in the book of God, to be reviewed before the universe in the final day."-*Fitch, letter to the Newark Presbytery, 1840, reprinted in Oberlin Evangelist, March 25, 1840.*

**Charles Fitch was thus cast out of the Presbyterian Church for teaching that Christ came to take away our sins.** From that time onward, Fitch considered himself "an ecclesiastical outcast." Thus we can see why he was willing to once again reconsider another message he had earlier rejected.

**That same year, at the urging of Josiah Litch, he read his way back into the advent awakening and fully embraced it, never again laying it down.** He later said, "The truth is, that [in 1838] the fear of man brought me into a snare" (*Fitch, letter to Litch, 1841*).

In the summer of 1842, Fitch wrote a letter to "Brother and Sister Palmer," in which he expressed his dramatic conversion in 1840.

"Brother Litch, whom I had never seen, called and said, 'Brother, you need the doctrine of the second advent to put with the doctrine of holiness.' He knew that I had looked at the subject before I left Boston; which was a good while before I saw dear Brother and Sister Palmer. I had indeed looked at it and been overwhelmed with the evidence in proof of it, but laid it wholly aside.

"I went to the Lord; I read my Bible and all the works that I could obtain. I possessed myself of all the evidences in the case that I could; and then with fasting and prayer I laid them and myself . . . before the Lord, desiring only that the blessed Spirit might guide me into all truth.

"So soon as I was ready to come out on the second advent, the door before me was thrown wide open, and I have been wholly unable for the last eight months to meet one half the calls which I have received. Wherever I have been God has been with me. Since the first of December last I have preached as often as every day and about sixty times besides. I have been in all the New England States. Congregations have been large in all places."-*Fitch, letter to Brother and Sister Palmer, July 26, 1842.*

**From this time onward, Fitch was among the most aggressive promoters of the message. After traveling to various areas, in 1842 he moved westward and spent a large part of his time in Ohio, where he centered his work.** This was "the West"-the territory between the Appalachian Mountains and the Great Lakes. No railroads had as yet penetrated this region. Enoch Jacobs was working in Cincinnati, and Charles Fitch went to Cleveland with his family. He and Elon Galusha were pioneer advent ministers, traveling throughout the state preaching. The people were quite receptive, more so than those living back East.

**A definite interest developed at Oberlin College,** which was located near Cleveland. The reader may recall that Charles Finney was its founder and religious leader (*Great Controversy, 377*). Fitch was invited in 1842 to deliver a series of lectures at Oberlin, and he gave a second one in 1843. After that, the professors turned against the message.

"I have never seen the glorious truths of the Bible, teaching the kingdom and coming of Christ, met with more determined opposition, contempt and scorn, than they have been by the Oberlin Faculty; and never, in all my life have I felt such anguish at my heart's core, or shed such bitter, burning tears as I have at their rejection of the Word of the Lord."-*Fitch, Midnight Cry, December 21, 1843.*

**Fitch's growing number of believers eventually purchased one of the largest church buildings in Cleveland,** and he preached there nightly when he was in town.

One night, as Fitch gave his end-of-meeting call to repent and come to Christ, a big "lumbering fellow" started down the stairway from the balcony, and then stumbled. Some in the crowd laughed, but Fitch silenced them with a quick, ringing voice. "Never mind, brother, it is better to stumble into heaven, than to walk straight into hell" (*O.J. Hodge, Reminiscences, 31*).

**George Storr, another advent preacher whom we shall comment on soon, had taught Fitch the Bible teaching that the dead are asleep and the wicked will finally be destroyed; that is, they will not live forever. About the same time in Cleveland, Fitch also accepted the truth of baptism by immersion—and began publicly teaching that also.**

Just after he was baptized himself, in March 1844 Fitch baptized 12 people in the Ohio Canal in the piercing cold amid a snowstorm. We will later learn what happened as a result of a later baptism he conducted in mid-



October.

Describing his own baptism, along with 20 others, he explained his own understanding of the meaning of baptism: "Since I last wrote you I have been buried by baptism into the death of Christ" (*Fitch, letter to his wife, April 16, 1844*).

In addition to his powerful speaking style, Fitch began publishing a paper, the ***Second Advent of Christ***, in January 1843.

In its July 26, 1843, issue, **he was the first to preach on the second angel's message, and give a call out of Babylon which, he declared, by that time included not only Rome but the fallen Protestant churches which had rejected the truth of the second advent.**

Traveling to many parts of Ohio in his lecture work, and with his papers going far beyond, Fitch became the leading trans-Appalachian Millerite spokesman.

**A very important contribution by Fitch to the advent awakening was the "1843 Chart."** More on it later.

Another significant development, initiated by Fitch, occurred in July 1843 when he was the first to give a call to **"come out of Babylon."** More on that later also.

As noted earlier, in 1844, Fitch also accepted the Biblical teachings of baptism by immersion and death as a sleep until the resurrection.

Charles Fitch died only a few days before October 22, 1844. We shall discuss the circumstances later in this study. It may be that the Lord laid him to rest to save him. Fitch was a most earnest, devoted Christian, known for a fervent experience and love for God. Perhaps he might otherwise have later fallen away if he had lived through the Great Disappointment.

### **JOSEPH BATES**

Joseph Bates (1792-1872) was a sea captain who had sailed all over the world, encountering difficulties of every kind. He had risen from cabin boy to captain, and had retired before the first angel's message came to him. Always a man of decision and good principles and a lover of truth and right, even while sailing the high seas, he had felt condemned for using alcohol and tobacco, and had given them up. A few years later he also stopped using tea and coffee.

His wife had slipped a Bible into his luggage as he headed out on one of his sailing voyages. Ultimately he became a Christian. Ever a man of action, while they were changing clothes immediately after his baptism, he asked the pastor who baptized him to assist him in starting a temperance society. The pastor refused, so he went ahead and started one of the first in America by himself. He was also against slavery.

**In 1839, he learned of Miller's message, and was one of those who signed the call for the first conference meeting in 1840. Since both were from Boston, he had known Himes from his (Himes') boyhood.**

**By the time he retired, Bates had amassed a comfortable fortune. But he freely poured it into the advent movement, until it was nearly gone by 1844.**

Bates was a man of faith. He would frequently go somewhere without any money. One time he stepped on the train with no ticket or money. Within a few moments, a stranger came up and handed him \$5 to help him in his work.

#### **In order to better understand this man, let us consider just one missionary trip of his:**

After selling all his property and paying his debts, Bates went into full-time traveling evangelism with the awakening message. One missionary trip took him down into Maryland, at that time a slaveholding state.

"I was told that if I went south the slaveholders would kill me for being an abolitionist. I saw there was some danger, but imperative duty and a desire to benefit them and unburden my own soul, overbalanced all such obstacles."--Joseph Bates, *Autobiography*, 277.

Reaching Annapolis, Bates crossed Chesapeake Bay to Kent Island, and began holding meetings. As they were nearing their end, someone told him that, down the road at a "rum store," they were preparing to come up and attack him. Then someone arose in the meeting and, yelling, said they were going to ride him out of town on a rail. Bates replied:

"You must not think that we have come six hundred miles through the ice and snow, at our own expense, to give you the midnight cry, without first sitting down and counting the cost. And now, if the Lord has no more for us to do, we had as lief lie at the bottom of the Chesapeake Bay as anywhere else until the Lord comes. But if He has any more work for us to do, you can't touch us!"-Op. cit., 297.

Elsewhere in Maryland, a man walked up and challenged him, "Mr. Bates, I understand that you are an abolitionist, and have come here to get away our slaves." Bates replied:

"Yes, Judge, I am an abolitionist, and have COME TO GET YOUR SLAVES, and you too! As to getting your slaves from you, we have no such intention; for if you should give us all you have (and I was informed he owned quite a number), we should not know what to do with them. We teach that Christ is coming, and we want you all saved." -Op. cit., 281.

News of this amazing man spread everywhere. As he was walking down the road with an associate, a young man came running up, panting, and said, "I have traveled 13 miles this morning to see you." Then he stood gazing at them. "How do we look?" inquired Bates. "You look like other men."

When the tour of Maryland ended, Bates and his friend headed north by ship to Boston. As soon as the ship was settled into its trip, Bates hung up his chart, sang an advent song, and began preaching to the crowd which had gathered. When a storm arose, interrupting the lecture, everyone was transferred to a train, where it continued.

After the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844, Bates searched God's Word for light and accepted the Bible Sabbath when it was brought to his attention. He wrote the first Sabbath tract ever printed by Seventh-day Adventists. More on his later life later in this study.

### **GEORGE STORRS**

George Storrs (1796-1879) was a Methodist preacher who was used to traveling and preaching, having done it until 1836. His name appears more or less frequently in the Millerite papers from 1842 onward. He withdrew from the Methodist Church in 1840 because of the hostility of other preachers toward his anti-slavery concerns. The kind of men who led out in the advent awakening were principled, courageous men. In 1843, he began publication of a new advent periodical, the Bible Examiner.

Storrs had a view which was not shared by most of his fellow advent preachers: He did not believe in an ever-burning hell, and declared the very idea was an insult to the character of God. He taught that all who do not accept Christ will finally be annihilated. He also taught "soul sleep"; that those who die are in the grave until the resurrection at Christ's advent.

Because writers and editors are always very important in forwarding a movement, biographers include the following four editors as very influential Millerite leaders:

### **HENRY DANA WARD**

Henry Dana Ward was chairman of the first (1840) Millerite General Conference. A graduate of Harvard, he believed in the nearness of Christ's return, but not in setting time. In 1844 we do not find his name mentioned much in the advent papers. It is known that he became an Episcopal minister that year.

Ward was a well-educated pre-millennialist, who was a Bible scholar as Litch and Fitch were.

He was selected to give an in-depth analysis of the pre-millennial position at the first General Conference. Indeed, he had been studying it out since 1838-prior to his first knowledge of William Miller and his work.

Here is a brief overview of several of his significant conclusions: The 1260 years is the period of the Babylonian harlot. The day of judgment follows the empire series in Daniel 7. The present church on earth is not the coming kingdom. The 2300 years are nearing their close. A special message must be given to the nations just prior to Christ's coming, warning men of its approach. Messiah's kingdom will smite the modern nations and destroy them. The triple-crowned little horn will perish at the second advent. A literal thousand year millennium will follow that advent. We must now warn all men everywhere that Christ is soon to return!

The above summary recalls to mind the teachings of Charles Fitch, which we noted earlier. Both views were remarkably mature, and very much like our own.

### **ELON GALUSHA**

Elon Galusha was the son of the Vermont governor who had signed Miller's military commission. By the late 1830s Galusha had become a leading Baptist leader in New York State. He was also a strong advocate of the anti-slavery movement. In 1840, he went as a delegate to the world anti-slavery convention in Scotland.

In 1843, Galusha accepted the awakening message; and, by early 1844, he resigned from his church so he could devote all his time to preaching that truth. In his book, *Burned Over District (301)*, Whitney Cross wrote that Galusha was "one of the most influential individuals ever to join the Advent movement."

Freed from other responsibilities, Galusha feverishly set to work. In one lecture series in March 1844, he was used in bringing 800 souls to Christ. He became the foremost advent leader in western New York State. In addition, he traveled to Ohio and helped Charles Fitch in evangelism.

### **JOSEPH MARSH**

Joseph Marsh (1802-1863) became editor of the Christian Palladium, a journal of the Christian Connexion in upstate New York, in 1830. In early 1842, he accepted the advent message and, in April, began calling for "a candid and careful investigation" of that message. Since he began writing about the subject, by November he was

the center of a storm of controversy. On November 23, he wrote:

"I am fully convinced as to the time, and mean to proclaim it fearlessly from the pulpit and the press. My course is fixed-let consequences follow. I fear not the result. God will defend His cause."-*Marsh to Miller, letter dated February 24, 1842, printed in Signs of the Times, December 21, 1842.*

By November 1, 1843, Marsh had been fired by the *Palladium*. So, on January 1, 1844, he began publication of the *Voice of Truth*.

### **SYLVESTER BLISS**

In some respects, Sylvester Bliss (1814-1863) was the ablest of the many advent periodical editors. A Congregationalist scholar from Hartford, Connecticut, he did careful and excellent work. After he mailed several articles in to the Signs of the Times, his ability was so obvious that he was appointed assistant editor in November 1842. After being made full editor two years later, he changed the name from Signs of the Times to Advent Herald. He became the business agent of the publishers, the editor-in-chief of the scholarly quarterly, Advent Shield, and author of many defense literature pieces.

But, in some respects, his greatest contribution to later generations was his *Memoirs of William Miller*, published in 1853. This book is our best single source for information on the life of Miller. (Miller died in 1849, and Bliss in 1863.)

### **NATHANIEL SOUTHARD**

Nathaniel Southard had earlier been an active anti-slavery advocate, and, with his outstanding writing abilities, became editor of the very important New York City advent journal, *The Midnight Cry* in late 1842. A capable writer and editor, he was a strong asset to the cause.

### **NATHANIEL N. WHITING**

N.N. Whiting was a Baptist minister who in 1845 became editor of *The Midnight Cry* under its new name, the *Morning Watch*. A man of exceptional learning, he had earlier prepared a new translation of the New Testament for the Baptist Church. Whiting's name often appeared in the various awakening papers. Later in this study, we will discover that Whiting was the only advent leader who never accepted the October 22 date.

In addition to the above collection of leaders, there are three men whom we would not otherwise mention in this list of notable workers, if it had not been for special events which they were later involved in:

### **JAMES WHITE**

James White (1821-1881) was not one of the leaders of the Millerite movement, although he was one of the traveling preachers. In spite of his defective eyesight and the advice of his friends that he should stick to farming, James wanted more education. But, while attempting to obtain it, he became indifferent to spiritual matters, although he had been baptized in the Christian Church when only 15.

White became a schoolteacher, while doing manual labor and carrying on his studies on the side.

When he was 20 (in 1843), he learned the advent message and as a result became an earnest Christian. He immediately knew he must set to work.

"I had neither horse, saddle, bridle, or money, yet felt that I must go. I had used my past winter's earnings in necessary clothing, in attending second advent meetings, and in the purchase of books and the chart. But my father offered me the use of a horse for the winter, and Elder Polley gave me a saddle, with both pads torn off, and several pieces of an old bridle. I gladly accepted these, and cheerfully placed the saddle on a beech log and nailed on the pads, fastened the pieces of the bridle together with malleable nails, folded my chart, with a few pamphlets on the subject of the advent, over my breast, snugly buttoned up in my coat, and left my father's house on horseback."-James White, *Life Incidents*, 73.

Immediately, he set to work-traveling from place to place to warn the people, preaching wherever he could. All he had was a horse, a Bible, a chart, and a blanket.

But, starting out, he hardly knew what to say. He did the best he could, and improved as he went. When he had completed a series of seven lectures in one place, "sixty arose for prayers." James did not know what to do; he had nothing more to tell them. "My little pond of thought, in the course of seven lectures, had run out" (*op.cit.*,74). Contacting his brother, who was a minister, he told him to come right away. The result was that many were baptized and a large church was organized.

It was difficult traveling long distances through Maine in the winter on horseback "thinly clad." But James kept at it.

In one town, the mob outside began throwing snowballs through the windows as he preached. So James alternated between lectures and appeals for the men to repent. Soon they quieted down; he concluded with

prayer. A revival followed.

"I closed with benediction, took my chart and Bible, and made my way out through the subdued crowd." Op. cit., 79.

On one occasion, as White was completing his last sermon in a series in one town, the sun was setting; he felt there was no time to rest. They expected him to speak that night at another town 16 miles away.

"My clothes were wet with sweat. I needed rest. But there was my next appointment. The people would be together in about an hour, and I had sixteen miles to go. So I hastily said farewell to the friends with whom and for whom I had labored, mounted my horse and galloped away toward Lisbon Plains, in a stinging cold February evening. I was chilled, but there was no time to call and warm. My damp clothing nearly froze to me, but I galloped on."-Op. cit., 92.

Arriving at the church, James walked in and up to the podium. But his teeth were chattering so hard, he could not speak properly till he warmed up a bit. Soon he had launched into his subject with vigor.

In early April, 1843, James was riding his horse over drifts of snow higher than the fencetops.

"Rain came on, and the firmly trodden drifts became soft, so that my horse with my weight upon him would frequently sink to his body in the snow. I rode all day with my feet out of the stirrups, and as he would plunge into the snow, I would instantly slide off and relieve him of my weight, that he might better struggle out, or if he could not do this alone, assist him by lifting where most needed."-Op. cit., 97.

Arriving back home from that trip, ministers gathered and ordained him to the ministry.

Returning to one place where he had preached earlier, a minister, seeing him, joked, "Why, Mr. White, are you yet in the land of the living?" James quickly replied, "No, sir, I am in the land of the dying; but at the coming of the Lord I expect to go to the land of the living."

When summer 1843 arrived, he spent part of his time haying in the fields to earn enough to buy clothes for the winter.

An extremely sincere young man, he was present at the age of 21 at that August 12-16, 1844, Exeter New Hampshire meeting where the true midnight cry began.

On August 30, 1846, he was united in marriage to young Ellen Harmon. For the next 35 years until his death in 1881, they worked together to help others. James White would eventually become a leading figure in the organization and publishing work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

### **SAMUEL SNOW**

At a meeting on the evening of December 31, 1843, Samuel Sheffield Snow (1806-1870) told the unusual story of his life. He had been an atheist until he was 35, when he noticed a book by Miller which his brother had bought. Snow was struck by the "perfect harmony between Daniel and the Revelation, and the [world] history which is a perfect fulfillment of these revelations."

Converted by reading it, he joined a Congregational church in the autumn of 1840. At a camp meeting in 1842, he decided to spend his full time spreading the message.

We would not give much attention to Snow in this overview, except for his research study in the Old Testament sanctuary, which he shared with those assembled at the Exeter camp meeting in August 1844. The powerful midnight cry was the result.

More on Snow later in this historical review.

### **LEVI STOCKMAN**

Levi F. Stockman (1812-1844) was a capable and very spiritual Methodist minister in Portland, Maine.

**Around 1842 he, along with some 30 other Methodist ministers, accepted the advent message and began preaching that Christ would return, probably in 1843.**

**In 1843, he had to retire from active work because he had contracted pulmonary tuberculosis. But Methodist leaders were not content to let him rest.** A few weeks before the close of the Jewish year, in the fall of 1843, while he was confined to his home and frequently in bed, he was tried for "heresy." At the close of the trial, the presiding elder came to him and urged him to recant so he would not die outside the fold of the church. They also told him that, if he refused to confess his sin and retract his heresy, not only would he be expelled from the ministry, but his wife and children would no longer receive pension funds from the conference. Stockman would not yield, and a few months after being expelled, he died triumphant in the Advent faith.

This ecclesiastical trial of Stockman in Portland reveals the seriousness of the crisis and the heavy hand of threats and expulsion the churches laid on those who accepted the advent truth.

In a letter to Sylvester Bliss, editor of the *Signs of the Times*, Stockman told the story in some detail, and declared that God's people in the Methodist Church were unjustly suffering. He said they had been "unconstitutionally and unjustly deprived of their rights and privileges" for no other offense than "believing and advocating the coming of Christ in a few months" (*I.C. Wellcome, History of the Second Advent Message*, 294-296). Later in this study, we will again return to the Maine Conference of Methodists and their

persecution of ministers who accepted the advent message.

We would not mention Pastor Stockman here, except for two incidents:

The first is that, as a Methodist pastor living in Portland, Maine, he counseled young Ellen Harmon, at a difficult time in her life, to trust herself to God.

At the time of William Miller's second lecture series in Portland, Ellen had fully accepted the message-but was still fighting discouragement. She questioned how God could accept her. Then she had two dreams (visiting a temple and talking to Jesus: 1 Testimonies 27-29; Early Writings, 78-81). Following this experience, she spoke to her mother.

"I now confided all my sorrows and perplexities to my mother. She tenderly sympathized with and encouraged me, advising me to go for counsel to Elder [Levi] Stockman, who then preached the Advent doctrine in Portland . . . Upon hearing my story, he placed his hand affectionately upon my head, saying with tears in his eyes: "Ellen, you are only a child. Yours is a most singular experience for one of your tender age. Jesus must be preparing you for some special work . . .

"Go free, Ellen," said he; "return to your home trusting in Jesus, for He will not withhold His love from any true seeker."-Life Sketches, 1915 ed., 36-37.

Ellen was greatly encouraged by these words, and she later commented:

"During the few minutes in which I received instruction from Elder Stockman, I had obtained more knowledge on the subject of God's love and pitying tenderness than from all the sermons and exhortations to which I had ever listened."-Ibid.

Ellen White's principal biographer notes that her talk with Elder Stockman was the "turning point" in her Christian life.

"This was the turning point in Ellen's experience. Reaching home, she promised the Lord that she would do and suffer anything to have the favor of Jesus. That evening she attended a prayer meeting. As she offered her first prayer in public, the burden and agony of soul she so long endured vanished."-Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years*, 39.

The second incident regarding Elder Stockman is yet future. In her first vision, one year after Elder Stockman's death, Ellen was shown the earth made new, and saw and conversed with Elders Fitch and Stockman by the tree of life (both of whom had been laid in the grave before the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844).

"We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping. We tried to call up our greatest trials, but they looked so small compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that surrounded us that we could not speak them out, and we all cried out, 'Alleluia, heaven is cheap enough!' and we touched our glorious harps and made heaven's arches ring."-Day Star, January 24, 1846; Early Writings, 17.

## **OTHER WORKERS**

**There were other lesser-known Millerite preachers**, among whom were James Sabine of Boston; **Timothy Cole** (whom we already mentioned) of Lowell, Massachusetts; **John B. Cook** of Middle- town, Connecticut; **Freeman G. Brown** of New Hampshire; **David Bernard** of Pensfield, New York; and **Silas Hawley** of Groton, Massachusetts. These men were outstanding speakers and writers.

There were, of course, many other faithful men who went from place to place, carrying the news of the advent near. Here is but one example:

"I have traveled in the forty days, two hundred and seventy-five miles, had my beast fall twice, while on horseback, in sloughs; and once in the midst of Kennebec River while fording, where the current was considerably rapid, and up to the stirrups. As I was cast into the river, the horse fell upon me; but I escaped unhurt, with the exception of a lame ankle, on which I was unable to bear my weight for some days. But none of these things moved me. I could hobble with the assistance of a staff into the desk, happy in having the privilege still of arousing a slumbering church to a sense of the immediate 'appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' "-*Joel Spaulding, letter dated November 24, 1842, to Himes; published in Signs, December 14, 1842.*

**Mention should also be made of several advent preachers who were women:**

**Lucy Maria Hersey** accepted the message in 1842; and, soon after she accompanied her father to Schenectady, New York. A believer asked her non-clergyman father to speak to them about the message. He told them he was not able to do so, but his daughter could. She began a powerful series of lectures, and soon the meetings were shifted to the courthouse where even more could attend. That was the beginning of vigorous evangelistic work by this lady, which resulted in the conversion of several men who also became advent preachers (*Wellcome, History of the Second Advent Message*, 305-306).

**Olive Maria Rice** was also converted to the advent message in 1842. She had wanted to be a missionary since childhood. After becoming "convinced that the Lord had something more for me to do than to assist in prayer meetings," she began holding public evangelistic meetings that led to the conversion of hundreds by March 1843. She wrote Himes, that "there are constantly four or five places calling for my labors at the same time" (*Midnight Cry*, July 6, 1843).

"I could not conscientiously return to my studies in North Wilbraham, Ms., to prepare for future usefulness, when a few months at the longest must close not only my labors in this world, but those of all mankind. I was compelled by a solemn sense of duty, by the influences of the Spirit, and the power of truth, to go and warn my fellow men, to the extent of my ability, to prepare for Christ's second coming, and the solemn scenes of judgment."-*Midnight Cry*, July 6, 1843.

Elvira Fassett and her husband preached the message as a team. Other woman included Sarah J. Paine, Emily C. Clemons, and Clorinda S. Minor. The latter two also edited a periodical aimed especially to women (*The Advent Message to the Daughters of Zion*).

**Several black preachers also proclaimed the advent message.** These included **John W. Lewis** "a highly esteemed colored preacher," who worked full time "among that much neglected class of our brethren, with whom he is most closely connected" (*Signs of the Times*, June 7, 1843). Another was **William E. Foy**, who claimed to have had several visions beginning on January 18, 1842.

By February 1844, Himes reported in one of the papers that "many of the colored people have received the doctrine" (*Midnight Cry*, February 29, 1844).

**How many Millerite preachers were there?** No one knows the exact number; but, in January 1842, Himes [who would have had the best grasp on the situation] estimated it at 300 to 400. Six months later, he raised it to at least 700. **By the spring of 1844, the *Midnight Cry* reported that "something like fifteen hundred or two thousand lecturers are in the field** proclaiming 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand' " (*Midnight Cry*, March 21, 1844).

**What denominations did the lecturers come from?** Everett Dick tried to research this out, and concluded that of 174 which he was able to identify denominationally, 44 percent were Methodist, 27 percent Baptist, 9 percent Congregational, 8 percent Christian Connexion, and 7 percent Presbyterian. There were one or 2 lecturers for each of several other denominations.

**Aside from the Advent message, there was no general agreement among the lecturers on other points of doctrine.** Both Miller and Himes believed that time was too short to occupy their time with trying to unify everyone on their views. The world needed to be warned of its impending doom.

## **THE FLOOD OF LITERATURE**

But, because there were relatively few men preaching the message [in relation to the size of the total population], it was in the power of the press that the awakening movement exerted its greatest influence. As souls came into the message, they obtained literature and shared it widely. Many mailed literature to friends in distant areas or overseas. The available literature consisted of tracts, books, and periodicals. Let us for a moment consider the periodicals:

**The sheer number and scope of Millerite publications, published between 1840 and 1844, and their geographical distribution and total circulation is amazing. They ranged in size from 4-page tabloids up to a scholarly 148-page quarterly. They included weeklies, biweeklies, monthlies, a quarterly, and, for a time, even a daily paper.** There was a special paper for women, edited by two women preachers. The places where the periodicals were published ranged from Montreal and Nova Scotia, in the north, down to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, in the south, and out to Cleveland and Cincinnati in the west. It is obvious that it was the literature which carried the message so widely, not the preachers.

There were five papers in Canada, and two over-seas periodicals (The *Second Advent Harbinger* of Bristol, England, with Robert Winter and Fkederick Gunner as editors, and the *British Midnight Cry* of Liverpool, edited by Charles Dealtry).

**We know of at least 28 periodicals and 34 different editors.**

By 1842 (only two years after it began) the *Signs of the Times* in Boston had a subscriber list of 50,000, with a much larger circulation later.

**In 1842, 600,000 pieces of literature were distributed in New York City alone** (*Midnight Cry*, April 13, 1843). **By the latter part of 1843, over a million copies of second advent papers had been circulated, and 5 million by May 1844** (*Voice of Truth*, June 8, 1844).

But, as might be expected, the greatest distribution of literature occurred during the midnight cry: between August 17 and October 22, 1844. The presses were rolling day and night. Streams of periodicals and papers were

blanketing eastern U.S.

## THE CONFERENCES

We already discussed the first General Conference of the awakening movement, which was held in Boston on October 14-15, 1840. Because they made such an impact, let us look at them more closely.

The concept of general conferences was inspired by the influence of Himes and other Christian Connexionists in the advent movement. The Connexion had been holding such meetings since 1816, 58,60 to provide guidance to their congregational churches (each of which was independent from a larger organization). **These "general conferences" were not like ours! They were not central gatherings of a denomination, but rather periodic meetings of like-minded believers** who wanted to share ideas and pass non-binding resolutions to be shared with believers elsewhere.

**These conferences put leaders in contact with one another, provided opportunities for developing mission strategies and scheduling, and helped coordinate activities of the lecturers.** They also provided brief retreats, where those in attendance could receive inspiration and encouragement.

**The conferences were especially crucial between October 1840 and June 1842.** At the first conference, held in Boston on October 14- 15, 1840 (and mentioned earlier), and attended by about 200 believers, the leaders were anxious to let it be known that they were not starting a new denomination. They did not want the local churches to be closed to their lecturers, although this would eventually occur.

**The one belief they all held in common was the truth that the Second Advent of Christ was near.** They did not have full agreement on any other point, including the time of Christ's appearing. Yet, in spite of this, there was a remarkable harmony and sense of unity among those in attendance at these gatherings.

At 10 a.m. on the first morning of this first conference, Himes read this statement: "The object of the conference will not be to form a new organization in the faith of Christ; nor to assail others of our brethren who differ from us in regard to the period and manner of the advent; but to discuss the whole subject faithfully and fairly, . . . that the way of the Lord may be speedily prepared, whatever may be the precise period of His coming."—*Signs of the Times, September 1, 1840.*

Thus it was made clear that the exact time of the Advent was not the focal point of the conference. Interestingly enough, neither the chairman of this conference (Henry Dana Ward) nor its secretary (Henry Jones) believed in the 1843 date, although both were convinced Christ's coming was near.

Of special importance at this first conference was an action to call "another general conference, as soon, and at such place" as deemed expedient. More on these conferences later.

**Sixteen general conferences were held. Of special importance was the twelfth, which convened in Boston, in May 1842,** under the chairmanship of Joseph Bates. Three important decisions were voted: **(1) Come out solidly for the 1843 date. (2) Authorize the holding of camp meetings** (which began in June 1842). **(3) Endorse and authorize the lithographic publication of 300 copies of the 1843 prophetic chart,** which had been prepared by Charles Fitch and Apollos Hale, for standardized use by the lecturers. More on all this later.

**(As if 16 general conferences were not enough, the advent awakeners also sponsored about 120 local conferences.** These were public evangelism efforts, plus a few side meetings of local advent leaders for business.)

**The 16 general conferences cover four calendar years: one in the fall of 1840, six in 1841, five in 1842, and four in the spring of 1843. They were held in six different states** (five in Massachusetts -with four in Boston, one in Maine, five in New York State, one in New Hampshire, two in Vermont, and two in Pennsylvania. Twelve were held in churches, and four in halls or auditoriums [because of heavy attendance and increasing hostility among the established churches). Eleven different men presided as conference chairman (Miller chaired four of them).

The Broadway Tabernacle in New York City, seating 3,500, was filled; and the Chinese Auditorium in Philadelphia, holding 5,000, was "packed to suffocation." The last conference was held in the 4,000-seat Boston Millerite Tabernacle.

**The general conferences came to an end in the spring of 1843,** just after the "Jewish year 1843" phase of the movement began. **However, local conferences continued, and actually increased in number and effectiveness from 1842 down to October, 1844. The local conferences, which did not begin until January 1842, numbered 118** before they ended at the time of the Great Disappointment. There were 40 in 1842, 20 in 1843, and 58 in 1844.

## THE CAMP MEETINGS

Surely, the advent leaders thought, there must be some way to reach the great multitudes of people.

Churches, halls, and theaters were good and the conferences had been successful, but some more effective means must be found.

As mentioned above, **the twelfth General Conference, held at Boston under the chairmanship of Joseph Bates, authorized the great camp meeting project which, beginning in June 1842, developed into an amazing series of some 130 camp meetings in two years' time.**

After the above-mentioned conference, Litch hurried to Quebec for meetings. The interest steadily increased; and, within two weeks, everyone for 40 miles around was talking about the possibility that Christ's return was near. Such large crowds were coming to the meetings, that Litch decided to try out the camp meeting idea right then. Ground was rented, the area prepared, and **the first Millerite camp meeting was held at Hatley, Quebec**, beginning June 21, 1842. It lasted a week.

The people of nearby Bolton wanted one; and so the second camp meeting was held, ending on July 3. During that month about 500-600 were converted.

At the same time, during the last week in June **the first camp meeting in the States was held, at East Kingston, New Hampshire. More followed, with an average attendance of 6,000-8,000 at each one.**

This was the beginning of a vast outreach which "shook the nation" (*Litch, "Rise and Progress of Adventism,"* in *Advent Shield, May 1844*).

**In addition to those three, six or eight camp meetings were held that fall (1842) and 31 in the summer of 1843. About 130 were held in the two years of 1843 and 1844.**

### **How were these camp meetings held?**

A suitable tract of woodland, that had an abundance of water, would be rented. The ground would be cleared, but no trees were cut down. A large oval place would have rough, wooden seats for the audience. These were just planks to sit upon. At one end of the oval a wooden, raised platform was erected, with a vertical wooden board behind it. This acted as a sounding board to help carry the speaker's words to the audience. The tree boughs provided a canopy of shade above everyone. During the main assembly meetings, the men sat on one side and the women on the other. There were usually three main meetings each day: morning, afternoon, and evening. Between main meetings, prayer meetings and study groups were held in the group tents.

Around the large oval was a circle of canvas tents, about 30 x 50 feet in size. Each tent had been brought by a separate community, and those in it chose a "tent master" who represented them on the general camp committee.

Outside the tents was a long dining tent. Still farther out were stable tents for the horses while the carriages were nearby in the woods.

Stages, pulled by horses, arrived and departed continually. A temporary tent depot was often erected by the railroads for the larger camp meetings. Trains stopped to discharge and take on passengers. (The trains let ministers ride free.)

At each camp meeting, a full, connected series of lectures was given. There was preaching, exhorting, praying, singing, the communion service, the offering, and the parting scene or ceremony. Urgent appeals, conversions, and strong rededications occurred. The offerings frequently brought in a thousand dollars in gold, silver, and other valuables. (A daily wage for a man back then was only 75 cents.)

The famous secular-minded writer and poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, came to one of the Millerite camp meetings and later described what he saw.

"Three or four years ago, on my way eastward, I spent an hour or two at a campground of the second advent in East Kingston. The spot was well chosen. A tall growth of pine and hemlock threw its melancholy shadow over the multitude, who were arranged upon rough seats of boards and logs. Several hundred-perhaps a thousand people-were present, and more were rapidly coming. Drawn about in a circle, forming a back-ground of snowy whiteness to the dark masses of men and foliage, were the white tents, and back of them the provision stalls and cook shops. When I reached the ground, a hymn, the words of which I could not distinguish, was pealing through the dim aisles of the forest. I could readily perceive that it had its effect upon the multitude before me, kindling to higher intensity their already excited enthusiasm. The preachers were placed in a rude pulpit of rough boards, carpeted only by the dead forest leaves and flowers, and tasselled, not with silk and velvet, but with the green boughs of the sombre hemlocks around it. One of them followed the music in an earnest exhortation on the duty of preparing for the great event. Occasionally he was really eloquent, and his description of the last day had the ghastly distinctness of Anelli's painting of the End of the World.

"Suspended from the front of the rude pulpit were two broad sheets of canvas, upon one of which was the figure of a man, the head of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly of brass, the legs of iron, and feet



of clay,-the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. On the other was depicted the wonders of the Apocalyptic visions-the beasts, the dragon, the scarlet woman seen by the seer of Patmos, Oriental types, figures, and mystic symbols, translated into staring Yankee realities, and exhibited like the beasts of a traveling menagerie. One horrible image, with its hideous heads and scaly caudal extremity, reminded me of the tremendous line of Milton, who, in speaking of the same evil dragon describes him as 'Swinging the scaly horrors of his folded tail.' To an imaginative mind the scene was full of novel interest. The white circle of tents; the dim wood arches; the upturned, earnest faces; the loud voices of the speakers, burdened with the awful symbolic language of the Bible; the smoke from the fires, rising like incense,--carried me back to those days of primitive worship which tradition faintly whispers of, when on hilltops and in the shade of old woods Religion had her first altars, with every man for her priest and the whole universe for her temple. "John Greenleaf Whittier, Prose Works, Vol. 1, 425-426.

## **THE GREAT TENT**

**Then the Big Tent was purchased. It was an enormous canvas tent, seating thousands.**

The idea for a gigantic tent, in which thousands could be seated, was first suggested by Ezekiel Hale, Jr., at the East Kingston camp meeting. This would be used in cities where no churches or halls were open for Millerite lectures. Before that gathering broke up, Himes (who had been placed in charge of the project) already had hundreds of dollars in donations.

**This tent**, manufactured to their specifications in Rochester, New York, by a commercial tentmaker, **was the largest in America** and was indeed unique. It was made of heavy canvas, with a center pole 55 or 60 feet high, a spread that covered a circle 25 rods in circumference. **When closely seated, 4,000 could be gathered inside it, with another 2,000 around it.**

**But this tent proved to be too small**, so a 40-foot splice was later added between the two poles-enlarging the tent to 120 x 160 feet. **Thereafter 2,000 more people could be seated within it!**

Much publicized in the press, people flocked to it, and stayed to hear the message. These gigantic meetings would be held several times a day, with rotating speakers when necessary to keep from wearing them out.

High overhead, a streamer was suspended between the top of the two poles, and could be seen from a distance: "Thy Kingdom Come"

**Yet even this structure, which came to be known as the "Great Tent" or the "Big Tent," was unable to accommodate the vast crowds which gathered to hear the message.** So, outside of the tent, under the shade of large trees, additional lecturers would preach to the people gathered around them.

The tent was pitched, used, taken down, and transported eight times-hundreds of miles apart each time-between July 27 and November 3 of the first year it was used (1842).

At the same time, elsewhere, six or eight large camp meetings and numerous courses of lectures covered New England.

## **THE GROVE MEETINGS**

**Yet another form of preaching was to begin in 1843: the grove meeting. There was an urgent need for a short rally, and so these meetings were held in a grove of trees near some town.** Similar to camp meetings, a speaker's stand and temporary seats were erected for these gatherings. The people would come for the meetings from the surrounding communities, and return home at night while the hardier would sleep in the woods over- night. These meetings generally lasted only one, two-but sometimes several-days. Here is one example of frequent reports on these meetings: "We have had no less than ten or twelve grove meetings, of one and two days continuance, where the people would assemble from ten to fifteen miles around, to hear about the coming of the Lord."- Midnight Cry, November 30, 1843.

## **CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS**

**As the lecturers traveled from place to place, the picture-like symbols found in Daniel and Revelation were an important part of their presentations.** So various lecturers drew large charts portraying the symbols and time spans, so the audience could see them as the lecture progressed. Both Miller and Fitch commissioned the construction of a large Daniel 2 image, made in sections.

**The Millerites became the "chart people," and whenever the people heard one of their lecturers, they saw a chart near him.**

One of the first charts was a hand-lettered diagram of the 2300-year prophecy, prepared by William Miller, which extended from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1843. Here is what it contained:

The bottom, horizontal time line showed the 70 weeks from 457 B.C. to A.D. 33.

The line above it indicated the 1260-, 1290-, and 1335-year periods. On this line appeared the sentence: "Papal civil power begins A.D. 538 and ends A.D. 1798, being 1260 years."

The third and fourth lines showed the "Length of the Roman Kingdom." The third line began with 158 B.C. and read, "Pagan Rome 666 years" leading down to A.D. 508, from which date Miller extended the 1335 years of Daniel 12:12-13 "to the Resurrection."

The fourth line from the bottom was an early concept of Miller's, which few of his associates accepted, and which he later abandoned. According to it, 2,000 years of Roman power over God's people extended to 1842, and a third millennium would begin at the Jewish New Year in the spring of 1843.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh horizontal lines were all concerned with the 1260 years from 538, as the time of the "court trodden underfoot by the Gentiles" (Revelation 11:2; Daniel 12:7);

when the "two witnesses prophesy clothed in sackcloth" (Revelation 11:13-14); and the "church in the wilderness" received special persecution for three and a half times (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12:6, 14).

The eighth, or top, line dealt with the fifth and sixth trumpets. The fifth trumpet, or "5 months" (Revelation 9:1-12), extended 150 years (according to Miller's early view), from A.D. 1298 to 1448. The sixth trumpet or "391 years and 15 days" (the hour, day, month, and year of Revelation 9:13, 21), extended from A.D. 1448 to 1839. Directly above were the words: "The 7th [trumpet] begins 1839 and ends 1843."

Various other diagrams and charts were prepared from time to time. Some were only used by one lecturer; some were copied by others.

One simple chart, entitled "*Daniel's Visions*," was printed in the *Midnight Cry for February 3*, 1843. Here is a brief description of it:

In small type across the top of the page were the words, "Read Daniel II, VII, and VIII. 'Whoso readeth, let him UNDERSTAND!'"

Below this, in the left column, was a large Daniel 2 image, with lettering beside and on it.

In the center column was shown the winged lion, the bear, the four-headed leopard, and the ten-horned fourth non-descript beast—sprouting the little horn (among the others) with the pope's head on it.

In the right-hand column was portrayed (opposite the Medo-Persian breast and arms of silver, and the Persian bear) the Medo-Persian ram. Similarly the Grecian he-goat was to the right of the image thighs and leopard.

In 1842, Himes printed a "*A Pictorial Chart of Daniel's Visions*" in color, which showed the various symbols and Miller's early time spans.

A chart entitled, "*Diagram of Daniel's Visions*," was printed in the November 18, 1842, issue of *Midnight Cry*. It had been prepared by Calvin French. Similar to Miller's diagram, it had more explanatory notes.

In the April 24, 1843, issue of his *Trumpet of Alarm*, Litch printed another pictorial chart.

But it was the famous "*Fitch's 1843 Chart*," which, upon its publication, became the standard to be thereafter used by the lecturers.

Charles Fitch worked closely with Apollos Hale in developing this chart with these various symbols graphically portrayed, along with brief explanations of their meaning and the mathematics involved in calculating the time periods.

In May 1842, they presented their chart for the first time to the general conference session in Boston. All the major prophetic symbols of Daniel and Revelation were portrayed. Several ways that the prophetic numbers added up to the year 1843 were shown. This chart was about three feet wide and five feet long.

Those in attendance at the conference were thrilled with this helpful device, and immediately authorized the lithographic printing of 300 copies. Later, many more were printed. (Incidentally, that printing order reveals that, by early 1842, there were already well over 200 preachers and other lecturers proclaiming the message.)

As part of the authorization, the conference declared that the chart, itself, was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

"[The chart] had fulfilled a prophecy given by Habakkuk 2, 468 years before, where it says, 'And the Lord answered me and said, write the vision and make plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it' . . . [Therefore it is] voted to have three hundred of these charts lithographed . . . that those who felt the message may read and run with it."-*Bates, Second Advent Waymarks, 10-11.*

This Fitch Chart was a distinct improvement over all previous diagrams and charts, for it corrected certain former inaccuracies and omitted several untenable positions. The general conference, with Miller present, had approved it and Himes had it printed.

**For those interested in the development of early Advent prophetic positions, we will mention six of these changes:**

1-The three horns plucked up became the Ostrogoths, Vandals, and Heruli (Miller had Lombardy, Rome, and Ravenna).

2 -The ten kingdoms include the feet (not just the toes).

3 -The great horn of Daniel 8 is Rome, both pagan and Papal. (A few lecturers had something else.)

4 -The 1260 years of the little horn date from Justinian's elevation of the Roman bishop (not from the uprooting of the third opposing horn [the Ostrogoths]).

5 -The first beast of Revelation 13 is Papal Rome (not pagan Rome as in earlier charts-including Miller's).

6 -The 150 years of the fifth trumpet are from A.D. 1299 to 1449, when the sixth trumpet begins. (Not from Miller's earlier date: and no mention is made of the specific end date of the sixth trumpet.)

**Fitch's Chart appeared at a time of transition in thinking on several items, so certain points were left off the chart:**

1 -The 666 as denoting years of pagan or imperial Rome is omitted. (It was on most earlier charts.)

2 -The meaning of the "daily" is not mentioned (on earlier charts. It had been identified as paganism, but most of the lecturers no longer agreed with that.)

3 -The second beast of Revelation 13 is omitted. (It had previously been interpreted by Miller as Papal Rome, or France by others.)

4 -The date of the crucifixion is omitted. (Earlier charts had A.D. 33; and, based on Hales' research, A.D.31 was becoming more accepted.)

5 -The ten kings, as reigning 30 years, is not mentioned.

6 -The 1840 date, as the terminus of the 391 years of Revelation 9:15, is not included.

**Because the lecturers unitedly rallied behind Fitch's 1843 chart, they became more unified as they moved into the closing scenes of the Millerite movement.**

"The work spread with a power unparalleled in the history of religious excitements. And had it been the object of Adventists to form a sect, never was there a more favorable opportunity to carry all before them, given to any people. But higher and holier objects were in their vision;-- the saving of sinners from death, and the obtaining a preparation for the coming of the Lord, were the objects of their highest ambition."-

*Litch, "The Rise and Progress of the Advent Movement," Advent Shield, May 1844, 69.*

#### **SONGBOOKS**

**No religious movement can hope to give full expression to its beliefs and hopes without hymns. Recognizing this, in the summer of 1842 the Signs of the Times announced the release of a 216-page songbook, with two sections in it:**

"The *Millennial Harp* is now out, and will be published in a few days. Music of 72 pages, and the *Millennial Musings*, of 144 pages added, makes 216 pages."--Signs of the Times, July 27, 1842.

Looking through the hymnbook, it is clear that the songs are keyed to Christ and His coming. Here is a sample hymn:

"How long, O Lord our Saviour,

"Wilt Thou remain away?

"Our hearts are growing weary

"Of Thy so long delay.

"O when shall come the moment

"When, brighter far than morn,

"The sunshine of Thy glory

"Shall on Thy people dawn?"

-*Millennial Harp, or Second Advent Hymns: Designed for Meetings on the Second Coming of Christ, 1842, 7.*

(The author of this present study is thankful that very soon we will ourselves be able to publish three songbooks, each of the first two with 170 favorites from earlier years. Just now we are working on a third book for children. Watch for the announcements of their release. They will all be the old-fashioned songs we all love so dearly!) They may have been released by the time this tract is circulated.

#### **1841**

*So many events occurred so rapidly in the closing years of the advent awakening, that it seemed best to separately consider the different elements which enabled the message to so quickly spread. But now we want to return to our year-by-year review of events.*

**In review, you may recall that, as we ended the year 1840, Miller had for years been preaching alone, and that, by the late fall of that year, a few ministers were publicly recognizing the worth of his message. Joshua V. Himes had recently decided to help him, and the first General Conference had just been held-but Miller, already somewhat weakened by the palsy, was too ill to attend.**

**William Miller's first series of lectures, in 1841, began on January 31 in the city of Boston.** It was the fourth series he had given in that city and, doubtless, he wanted to return so he could confer at further length with Himes.

**Miller then traveled to Andover for a series.**

About the fourth day there, he received a letter from "Anonymous." It contained a number of Old and New Testament passages, intended to disprove Miller's teachings.

The next evening, Miller asked if "Anonymous" was in the audience. When no one replied, he took out the letter and read one passage after another, and then turned to the Bible and read it correctly, showing that every text had been misquoted. Then he read the concluding statement: "Mr. Miller, how dare you assert your theory with so much confidence without a knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages?" Miller then commented, "If I am not acquainted with the Hebrew and Greek, I know enough to quote the English texts of Scripture correctly"; and, with that, he launched into the lecture of the evening.

Although he was getting older, William Miller maintained a strict meeting schedule, to the degree that his health would permit it. As soon as he completed the Andover meetings on March 2, he began a fifth series in Boston. He then went on to Providence, Rhode Island, and Lowell, Massachusetts.

**In the spring, Miller wrote Hendryx, summarizing his activities to date:**

"Could you see the applications made for me to lecture, and the distances I have to travel, you would make an excuse for me. I will just state for your edification, that for one year up to the first of October, 1840, I traveled 4,560 miles, preached 627 lectures--each lecture would average as much a 1½ hours long. To sum up the number hopefully converted perhaps would be not an easy task; but from letters and other sources of information I speak within bounds to say 5,000 . . . The majority are men between the ages of 30 and 50."-*Miller, letter to Hendryx, May 19, 1841.*

In the same letter, Miller discussed the importance of preaching urgently and with the whole heart.

"Depend wholly on the power of the Spirit. Keep your sword the right side up, the edge to the heart, and your arm well nerved. Bring home the blow with an intent to kill. Be not afraid of hurting your hearers, wind no silk handkerchiefs around your blade, nor withhold one iota of power when you make a thrust. Some are in the habit of hiding a part of the sword, for fear the enemy will dodge the blow; but this will never do. The moment your enemy discovers your cowardice or fear, they despise you. They rouse to action with redoubled vigor and ten to one if you are not overthrown."-*Ibid.*

**Near the end of May, Miller had to return home, due to a painful inflammation in one leg, and then the other. He was forced to rest until the middle of June.** This illness prevented him from attending the Second General Conference, held at Lowell, Massachusetts on June 15, 1841. About 200 delegates were in attendance. Keeping in mind the difficulties and cost of transportation back then, this revealed the urgency in the minds of those who attended.

At this conference, additional plans for that bedrock of Millerite success—literature distribution—were discussed and the "Second Advent Libraries" were started.

"We shall distribute \$1,000 worth of the 'reports' and publications this year. You may ask where we expect to get it? Answer. We have got about \$700 now; and the rest will be forth coming when needed. We have resolved to establish a library in every town, where it is practicable."-*Himes, letter to Miller, June 26, 1841.*

**At this same conference, Himes introduced the small stickers, or seals,** which were placed on envelopes to help tell the message. It has been said that this had never been done before by anyone, and that our modern Easter Seals and Christmas Seals developed from it. As our readers know, we here at Pilgrims Rest prepared, printed, and have circulated literally millions of our Sabbath Seals at lowest cost, since the mid-1980s.

**It was at this time that Josiah Litch was appointed "general agent" for the movement.**

"The committee will depend upon the friends of the cause to supply the wants of their agent, wherever he may work. The laborer is worthy of his hire."-*Signs of the Times, August 2, 1841.*

Of the really prominent men who ultimately entered the movement, Litch was the first to go whole-heartedly into its promotion. He not only conducted lectures, but worked to influence religious and thought leaders in several major cities of the East Coast. A special task assigned him was to promote Millerite publications.

**By this time, the public press was becoming increasingly ugly in its attacks** on Miller and all who united with him in proclaiming the message. They were charged with lying, theft, deceit, and moneymaking. Himes would vigorously reply to these charges in his publications.

On one occasion, Miller cited a minister who had read a statement from someone. "This certifies that" he had heard Miller state in a certain church in the month of May 1839, that "there would not be any more rain on the earth or any marriages" after a certain date.

To this Miller replied that he had never given a lecture in that church, nor had he given any weather forecasts. Then added: "I never predicted there would be no rain on earth, at any time or plague since I have believed my Bible. For I do solemnly and firmly believe that when Christ comes, He will rain hail, fire, and brimstone upon all liars, and will sweep away the refuge of lies."-*Signs of the Times. June 1. 1841.*

**By the late summer of 1841, Boston had a "library and reading room."**

"The friends of the cause in this city have procured a spacious and convenient room within one minute's walk of the Post Office, where a Library and Reading Room, as a place of resort for our citizens who are interested in the cause; and for strangers in the country who may wish information, aid, or publications on the subject of the advent near.

'It will afford to inquirers all necessary information on the state and progress of the cause. American and English periodicals will be furnished having any bearing on the subject of the advent near, and signs of the times: a rich collection also of ancient and modern works on the predictions of the holy prophets.

"It will be sustained by the voluntary contributions of those who appreciate the measure as a profitable auxiliary to the cause."-*Signs of the Times. September 1. 1841.*

**On October 12-14, the third session of the General Conference was held in Portland, Maine.**

But, once again, Miller could not attend this time because of other speaking appointments.

In a letter which he sent to the conference. Miller sounded a note of caution. He wrote that it was important to maintain the beliefs which they held in common, and there was a danger in their being misrepresented by lecturers which, although zealous, were not qualified to speak. He recommended that "a committee be appointed for the express purpose of examining, advising and recommending" such persons as the committee felt were qualified to lecture.

Miller also stressed that the workers should not slip into the use of clerical titles that minister chiefly to pride. He urged that the practices of the world be abandoned. His counsel was heeded, and the Biblical term, Elder, was rather uniformly used in addressing ministers of the movement.

**The fourth session of the General Conference, held in New York City in October.** was also unattended by Miller. So those in attendance voted to hold the next (the fifth) conference in **Miller's home town: Low Hampton.** It would be interesting to know where they stayed in that small community; but the meetings were held there on November 2 to 5. 1841.

One item of special importance, enacted at this session, was a resolution naming certain persons as "entitled to the confidence" of the believers. Among those named were 'Brethren Miller, Himes, Litch, Jones, and Ward, together with those according with them in sentiment, and associate with them in effort as entitled to the confidence, prayers, and cooperation" of all the believers in the "advent near" (*Signs. December 1. 1841*).

**The Sixth General Conference convened at the Chardon Street Chapel, in Boston, on November 30,** at which time nearly \$1,000 was raised for the literature work. This was an immense amount back then, when a day's wage was between 50 cents and a dollar. Many more large offerings were later to be taken.

**It is of interest that some of the leaders in the movement did not agree in the time factor-** yet wholeheartedly believed that Christ's coming was near. One was Henry Dana Ward, chairman of the First General Conference; another was Henry Jones, secretary of that conference.

Near the close of 1841, Ward wrote a letter to the Signs which filled more than a page of the journal, in which he expressed his thinking on this matter:

"This is the length and breadth of our opinion relative to fixed times. It is not forwarded to you, Messrs. Editors, in a controversial spirit, but with the desire, humble and honest, to be held personally responsible, only for that I personally hold; and to be instructed in any matter on which I may seem to differ without reason. It is one of the blessed fruits of the doctrine of our Lord's near coming, that men can walk together, who differ on other points, while they accord in 'that blessed hope.' I wish to encourage your circulation, and to multiply the number

of your readers, and I ask the insertion of this, not for debate, but for the liberty of opinion to hold with our Lord. 'It is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power.' while I am with you expectant of His coming and kingdom."-Henry Dana Ward, letter dated November 15, 1841. in *Signs of the Times*. December 1, 1841.

A couple weeks later, the *Signs* reported that Charles Fitch had taken hold of the message and was now preaching it. He would become one of the three leading men in the work. Along with Miller and Himes, Litch would rank as fourth.

A letter written, on December 22, told of a series of lectures in Nashua, New Hampshire, which were "well-nigh broken up by some twelve or fifteen fellows of the baser sort" (T.M. Preble, letter dated December 22, 1841, in *Signs of the Times*, January 15, 1842).

Any of our readers acquainted with early Adventist history will find the name of "T.M. Preble" of special interest. This is the only time he is mentioned in this study until after the Great Disappointment. It was Elder Preble's later booklet which introduced the Bible Sabbath to Joseph Bates who, in turn, brought it to those who became pioneers in founding the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

## 1842

### **The year 1842 opened with a rapid succession of general conferences in Connecticut, New York State, Vermont, and New Hampshire.**

At one meeting, an attorney arose and said he arrived with skepticism, but now declared that he believed the advent of Christ was, indeed, near. Everywhere, men and women were becoming concerned for their souls. The postmaster in one small town wrote this to Miller:

"The minds of the people are strongly fixed on you and there is an impression on the minds of many that some great event is about to transpire . . . Many are deeply solicitous to have you come, while others manifest not a little uneasiness about your coming."--Charles W. Stewart, letter dated February 21, 1842, to Miller.

Stewart declared that the one inquiry in his town and nearby communities was this: Is Mr. Miller a coming? He concluded with these words: "We can-not refrain from beseeching you to come down ere we die."

**On February 21, Miller received a letter from Joseph Marsh's wife.** She told him she had accepted the message and her husband was studying into it. Joseph Marsh would become a leading Millerite editor and writer.

**Then there was the phrenologist.** Back then, somewhat like palm reading, those men pretended to feel the shape of people's skulls and tell what their personalities were like. One day in the spring of 1842, a convert of Miller's persuaded him to go with him to a phrenologist. To humor the man, Miller consented. The phrenologist knew Miller was in town, but did not know he was the man sitting before him. As he felt Miller's head, he compared it with what the head of the bird-brained William Miller, the lecturer in town just then, must be like:

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Miller could not easily make a convert of this man to his hare-brained theory. He has too much good sense."

"Thus he proceeded, making comparisons between the head he was examining and the head of Mr. Miller, as he fancied it would be. 'Oh, how I should like to examine Mr. Miller's head,' said he; 'I would give it one squeezing.'"

"The phrenologist, knowing that the gentleman was a particular friend of Mr. Miller, spared no pains in going out of the way to make remarks upon him. Putting his hand upon the organ of fanaticism, as it is sometimes called, or the organ of marvelousness, he said, 'There, I'll bet you anything that old Miller has got a bump on his head there as big as my fist,' at the same time doubling up his fist as a sample. Others laughed at the perfection of the joke, and he heartily joined them, supposing they were laughing at his dry jokes on Mr. Miller . . ."

"He got through, made out his chart, and politely asked Mr. Miller for his name. Mr. M. remarked, that it was of no consequence about putting his name upon the chart, but the phrenologist insisted. 'Very well,' said Mr. M., 'you may call it Miller, if you choose.'"

"Miller, Miller.' said he, 'what is your first name?'"

"Well, they call me William Miller.'"

"What, the gentleman who is lecturing in Boston?'"

"Yes, sir, the same.'"

'At this, the phrenologist, filled with astonishment and dismay, settled back into his chair, pale and trembling, and spake not a word while the company remained. The reader may judge of the poor fellow's feelings."-Midnight Cry, November 23, 1842.

When Miller held meetings in the city hall of Hartford, Connecticut, from March 22 to 28, the place was crowded with people wanting to hear the message. At the conclusion of the series, the Hartford Christian Secretary printed this editorial:

"One fact connected with this conference struck us somewhat forcibly: and that was the immense crowd which attended the whole course of lectures. Of one thing we are satisfied, and that is this: unless the clergy, generally, present a better theory than the one offered by Mr. Miller, the doctrine will prevail to a very general extent."-*Editorial, Hartford Christian Secretary, March 29, 1842, quoted in A Brief History of William Miller, 169.*

The **Signs of the Times**, founded in 1840 by Himes, had been an eight-page semimonthly. It **became a weekly in the spring of 1842**. At the same time, new books, pamphlets, and tracts were being published and circulated widely.

About the same time, **Miller and Himes went to New York City and rented the large expensive Apollo Hall on Broadway for a series of lectures.**

This was Miller's first trip there, and he found the city so worldly and preoccupied with other attractions, that hardly anyone came to the meetings. In addition, the public press portrayed him as a terrible person. Writing later about the incident, Himes remarked:

"An impression had gone abroad in reference to the Adventists, that they were monsters, or almost anything but civilized beings. So strong was this impression, and so general, that a number of days had passed and scarcely a lady dared to make her appearance in the meetings."-*Advent Shield and Review, May 1844.*

But, before the series closed, people began coming and it closed with the hall full.

As might be expected, **Himes immediately convened a three-day conference in that city!** As a result, the converts there formed an association and opened a depository for publications. Those who joined the association "were to pay a sum monthly, to defray expenses of forwarding the message of Christ's immediate coming" (*Isaac C. Wellcome, History of the Second Advent Message, 231*). This was the beginning of a larger work in that city.

**At a general conference in Boston, which opened on May 24, the decision was made to start holding camp meetings. As we have already noted, they produced a powerful impact.**

Another decision was also made at that conference:

"Resolved, That in the opinion of this conference, there are most serious and important reasons for believing that God has revealed the time of the end of the world and that that time is 1843." *Signs of the Times, June 1, 1842.*

**A person did not have to believe in definite time to be part of the movement, but the time factor was increasingly being emphasized.** An increasing sense of urgency was being felt. The thought was filling the minds of the believers that a powerful call to prepare for Christ's coming must be given, in view of the shortness of the time.

**As early as 1842, the name they gave to their work of warning the world of Christ's soon return was "the midnight cry."**

In one resolution at that conference, they formally declared, "Our time for giving the midnight cry is short."

"These means have been eminently owned and blessed of God to the awakening and salvation of souls. Why, then, should we not seize upon them [the holding of camp meetings] as one of the most efficient means of giving the midnight cry? We believe we should be criminally negligent not to do so."--*Signs of the Times, June 1, 1842.*

Urgency was the thought in every mind.

"Resolved, That we should keep it distinctly in mind, that we are this year to do our last praying, and make our last efforts, and shed our last tears for a perishing world."-*Ibid*

**In the decades since then, the period of time between the Exeter camp meeting in August 1844 and October 22 of that year, have been considered the "midnight cry," and we will so declare it in this study. But, in the minds of those who went through the entire experience, the "midnight cry" began at least two years earlier.**

As mentioned earlier, **it was at this same Twelfth General Conference that Fitch's 1843 Chart was officially adopted.**

"At the opening of this meeting, Brethren Charles Fitch and A. Hale, of Haverhill, presented us the visions of Daniel and John which they had painted on cloth, with the prophetic numbers and ending of the vision, which they called a chart. Brother Fitch, in explaining the subject said in substance as follows: he had been turning it over in his mind, and felt that if



something of this kind could be done, it would simplify the subject, and make it much easier for him to present it to the people." *Joseph Bates, Second Advent Waymarks and High Heaps, 10-11.*

**The first camp meeting in the United States was held just one month after such gatherings were authorized by the conference at Boston. This first one convened at East Kingston, New Hampshire**-and was only intended for advent believers and their friends. But, from then on, everyone was invited to attend.

"The principal object of the meeting is to awake sinners and purify Christians by giving the midnight cry, viz., to hold up the immediate coming of Christ to judge the world.

"We therefore inform all our Christian friends, by the permission of Divine Providence, that the meeting will be held at East Kingston, N. H., in a fine grove near the railroad, leading to Exeter. Commencing Tuesday, June 28, and continuing to July 5th, brethren and friends of the cause are affectionately invited to come and participate with us in this great feast of tabernacles, and bring their families and unconverted friends, with them.

"The object of the meeting is not controversy, the brethren and friends will understand that none will take part in public speaking except those who are believers in the second coming of Christ, near, even at the door."--*Signs of the Times, June 15, 1842.*

The cost of traveling to that meeting, for just one person by train from Boston or Lowell (each was 44 miles from East Kingston), had been reduced by the railroad to 90 cents. But that was one or two day's wages! The awakening leaders had misgivings about whether these camp meetings would succeed, and the cost of getting there was only part of their concern. But they stepped forward by faith,-and were awed by the results.

By stage, by horse and buggy, but mostly by train, people poured in literally by the thousands. Estimates, in the newspapers of the time, ranged from 7,000 to 15,000. The Signs of the Times estimated the crowd attending the East Kingston camp meeting as "probably ten or fifteen thousand" (*Signs of the Times, July 13, 1842*).

**Before the gathering ended, the Millerite leaders were planning for more-and 31 were held in the four months of that summer and fall! They became full-fledged evangelistic efforts.**

In authorizing this first camp meeting, the conference had appointed Apollos Hale to act as official secretary to take notes and afterward provide a written report of what occurred at that gathering.

**Here is part of the information gleaned from his report,** as later printed in the *Signs of the Times*:

The primary speaker was William Miller, who was assisted by several others. The meetings lasted eight days (June 28 to July 5),and people came from every state in the northeast and all of eastern Canada.

One man who attended was a traveling agent for the leading infidel weekly, the *Investigator*. He had come to provide a report for the atheist paper, ridiculing the Millerites.

"He was convinced of the divine origin and truth of the Bible by reading William Miller's lectures, and soon brought to submit his heart to God. He is now a member of a Congregational church, and employed in lecturing on the coming of Christ in '43."--*Signs of the Times, July 13, 1842.*

Here is another conversion story:

"Various and singular, in some cases, were the means by which individuals were brought to believe in the second advent doctrine; in one case an individual, with others, I believe, was led to embrace it by reading a part of a copy of the Signs of the Times, in which a parcel of tea was sent from the store."-Ibid.

Hale, the secretary, than made this comment about the general tenure and spirituality of the 10-day gathering:

"The great amount of good was among the ministers and members of the church. Such searching of heart-such humiliation-such confessions, the writer of this article never before witnessed."-Ibid.

Commenting on the large offering which was given, Apollos Hale said: "The desire for the riches of this world gives place to the stronger desire to secure a title to the better country,-worldly hopes all fade under the brighter 'hope of the glory of God' soon to be revealed."-Ibid.

And he concluded his report with these words:

"The holding of second advent camp meetings may be regarded as the commencement of a new era in the second advent cause."-Ibid.

**One of those who attended the East Kingston camp meeting was Robert Winter.**

Visiting America from England, he was converted at this camp meeting-and determined to return home and spread the word throughout England. And this he did.

Although, as mentioned earlier, the advent message had been preached in England as early as 1826, it did not take as definite a shape as in the United States. But Winter's return to Britain in 1842 brought a new, fresh impetus-an urgency which caused many to awake and unite with him in giving the message to various parts of the nation.

**Meanwhile, back in America, it was decided to purchase that gigantic "big tent" and begin pitching it in many large cities.** First used in August at Concord, New Hampshire, the evangelistic impact was powerful. Few people had ever seen such an immense tent. It was 120 feet in diameter and almost 50 feet high in the center. Seating 3,000 or 4,000, its very size was a novelty which attracted the people to enter, take a seat, and listen to what was said.

When the meetings at Concord ended on Monday, August 8, it was moved by train within two days to Albany, New York, where, by Wednesday, the 10th, additional thousands came to hear the message-- and again filled it to capacity.

Not desiring to let the work slow down, at the time of that first camp meeting, **Joshua Himes published a notice appealing for requests from any in "the South and the West" who might desire a lecturer to come to their area.**

"[There are] new lecturers now entering the field, and we hope to be able to supply more of the numerous calls in future, than we have been able in time past. The South and West also must be visited." *Signs of the Times*, June 29, 1842.

**Two weeks later, the *Signs* printed an announcement that Charles Fitch was packing up and heading west to Ohio,** to give a course of lectures at Oberlin College. As we have already learned, Fitch remained there and centered his work in Cleveland; from there he traveled throughout the state.

Charles Finney, the noted revivalist, was the acknowledged spiritual leader at Oberlin. Doubtless he was the one who extended the invitation for Fitch to hold a lecture series there. In fact, Fitch held several lecture courses at the college-until the faculty, under Finney's leadership, later turned against the message. Finney held a post-millennial view (*i.e.*, that Christ would not return until after the thousand years of peace).

You will recall Finney's statement, quoted in *Great Controversy*, in which he lamented the fact that, by the spring of 1844, there was such a dearth of spirituality among the people. Cause leads to effect. The truth of the advent near was being rejected by so many of the churches and the public, in general. In later years, the truths of the heavenly Sanctuary, the Bible Sabbath, and sacredness of all ten of the Commandments would be also. Little wonder that the churches were "becoming sadly degenerate."

"We have had the fact before our minds, that, in general, the Protestant churches of our country, as such, were either apathetic or hostile to nearly all the moral reforms of the age. There are partial exceptions, yet not enough to render the fact otherwise than general. We have also another corroborated fact: the almost universal absence of revival influence in the churches. The spiritual apathy is almost all-pervading, and is fearfully deep; so the religious press of the whole land testifies . . . Very extensively, church-members are becoming devotees of fashion, -join hands with the ungodly in parties of pleasure, in dancing, in festivities, etc. . . . But we need not expand this painful subject. Suffice it that the evidence thickens and rolls heavily upon us, to show that the churches generally are becoming sadly degenerate. They have gone very far from the Lord, and He has withdrawn Himself from them."-*Charles Finney, February 1844, quoted in Great Controversy, 377.*

Everyone did what they could to spread the light to others. Oh, that we were as fervent today! One man, **Joseph Howland, worked for the federal government; and his job was to carry oil to the lighthouses along the Atlantic coast. As he traveled, he carried advent literature with him-and shared it with all whom he met.** At every lighthouse, he left worthwhile literature.

You might think that Howland could do that because he was a fine speaker and had other out-standing qualities. But, **very likely, he was just an average person like you and me. Yet he knew where to obtain worthwhile literature, and he knew how to talk the English language. So, wherever he might happen to be, he shared the message in printed form.**

This is something everyone can do.

**In mid- July, Miller went home for a well-deserved rest for a few days.** From there he wrote this:

"I am now at home, and my health is as good as I could expect, after so long and wearisome a tour as my last; not having enjoyed one day's repose since the first of March last. How the old frame has been supported I cannot tell, unless God by His special providence has interposed, as in the case of Moses. And it looks to me as astonishing that God should select so unworthy an instrument as myself to give the midnight cry . . . I am more and more confident in my expectation of beholding my Saviour face to face, if I am His, in 1843 . . . I see by faith a smiling Son of God, in whom I have redemption by His blood, remittance of the past by grace. How can I fear? I love. Is this what our dear friends call perfection? I have it then; but not enough. I long, I hunger yet for more."-Miller, letter dated July 19, 1842, in *Signs of the Times*, August 3, 1842.

On the same date that Miller wrote his letter, **Himes wrote of his experience, working the ships, during and after he traveled north to Bangor, Maine, for an advent conference.**

While there, those in attendance at the conference hauled several thousand papers and tracts down to the water- front. Then they boarded the ships and handed literature to the passengers.

On one boat they were invited to give a lecture. So, early the next "Sunday morning at 5 o'clock," Himes preached "on the deck of the schooner *Martha Wood*, from the second and seventh chapter of Daniel." He afterward wrote that he had never "preached to a more attentive audience."

For his return south to Boston, Himes decided to go by ship. "Although a little seasick," he hung up his chart and talked about the prophecies for "an hour or two" (*Joshua Himes, letter dated July 19, 1842, in Signs of the Times, July 27, 1842*).

**In October 1842, William Miller returned to Portland for a second series of lectures.** You will recall that he gave his first series there in March 1840.

As he had done the first time, the meetings were held in the Christian Church on Casco Street. By this time, the name of Miller was well-known and people flocked in even greater numbers to his meetings. However, by this time the preachers were increasingly denouncing Miller and his associates as knaves. Churches were being closed to the advent preachers.

**Young Ellen G. Harmon had been 12 years old when Miller preached there the first time. Now she was 14. One of those in attendance, she was even more deeply impressed than at the first lecture series.**

"This second course created much more excitement in the city than the first. With very few exceptions, the different denominations closed the doors of their churches against Mr. Miller. Many discourses from the various pulpits sought to expose the alleged fanatical errors of the lecturer. But crowds of anxious listeners attended his meetings, while many were unable to enter the house. The congregations were unusually quiet and attentive."-Ellen White, *1 Testimonies*, 21.

Ellen White was deeply moved by Miller's solid Biblical preaching.

"His manner of preaching was not flowery or oratorical, but he dealt in plain and startling facts that roused his hearers from the apathy in which they had been locked. He substantiated his statements and theories by Scripture as he progressed. A convicting power attended his words that seemed to stamp them as the language of truth.

"He was courteous and sympathetic. When every seat in the house was full, and the platform and places about the pulpit seemed crowded, I have seen him leave the desk and walk down the aisle, and take some feeble old man or woman by the hand and find a seat for them, then return and resume his discourse. He was indeed rightly called Father Miller, for he had a watchful care over those who came under his ministrations, was affectionate in his manner, of genial and tender heart. He was a very interesting speaker, and his exhortations, both to professed Christians and the impenitent, were appropriate and powerful."-Ibid.

**It was at this time that young Ellen fully accepted the message.** Her accident had occurred four years earlier, at the age of nine.

**It was shortly after this second series by Miller that Ellen had the two dreams,** mentioned in *Early Writings*, 78-81, and *1 Testimonies* 27-28. She immediately afterward told her mother her concerns, who recommended that she go see a deeply religious advent pastor in town, Elder Levi Stockman.

We quoted the experience earlier; it is found in Ellen White, *Life Sketches*, 1915 ed., 36-37.

The ministers in Portland opposed the advent awakening so strongly that Robert, Ellen's brother, asked her if the Millerite movement could be a deception.

"Ellen," said Robert, 'are we deceived? Is this hope of Christ's soon appearing upon the earth a heresy, that ministers and professors of religion oppose it so bitterly? They say that

Jesus will not come for thousands and thousands of years. If they even approach the truth, then the world cannot come to an end in our day' "-Ellen White, *Life Sketches*, 1915 ed., 44.

But young 14-year-old Ellen was convinced that the message was from God.

"I have not a doubt but that the doctrine preached by Mr. Miller is the truth. What power attends his words, what conviction is carried home to the sinner's heart."-Ibid.

**Robert was greatly encouraged by this; and, with Ellen and her parents, remained true to the message. But the elders of the Methodist church, to which they belonged, later cast them out** because they would not yield their faith. (*See Life Sketches*, 1915 ed., 52-53.) It was in September 1843 that this final break with Methodism occurred.

**Throughout the territory reached by the advent message, the situation was becoming increasingly ugly, as the public press and the unrepentant were aroused to oppose the faithful believers.**

According to the Methodist Olive Branch, "Elder Himes is a man with a mind in a nut shell, extremely weak in every point of light . . . To a sane man he must be an object of pity. He is fat as an Alderman and lives like a Prince."--Olive Branch, quoted in *Midnight Cry*, December 5, 1842.

It was a favorite charge that the Millerite leaders were amassing fortunes from the incredulous who listened to them. As the Olive Branch put it: They were "vampyres," sucking the "life-blood" out of "those whom they duped."

There is no evidence that Himes, or any of the other advent preachers and editors, profited from their labors.

The atheist publication, *Trumpet*, published by the Universalist Church, was milder. Himes, they said, had made "a tool of the old man" and was using him (Miller) for his own purposes. Joshua is very much in need of converts; and he is in hopes to get a good batch out of Miller's oven. We are afraid some of them will not be more than half baked."- *Trumpet*, quoted in *Signs of the Times*, May 1, 1840.

"Half baked" from "Miller's oven." Shallow talk, but that is the best the wicked can ever pour forth. It takes a man of God to speak with principle, to reprove sin, and warn sinners of the error of their ways.

In the summer of 1842. Himes received a note which he printed.

"Mr. Himes, your life may be taken away in a sudden and unexpected manner. I would advise you therefore, if you value your own interests, and those of your family, to immediately leave this city!"-*Anonymous note*, quoted in *Signs of the Times*, August 17, 1842.

**These godly men had caught a vision of the work which needed to be done, and they would not relent nor forsake their post of duty. They were warning men and women that the end of the world was upon them. Oh, that we were more fervent in carrying on our work today.**

As 1842 wore to its close, the camp meetings, lecture courses, grove meetings, and big tent continued in use. Thousands were being reached by the message—and, according to their reports, a large share was due to literature distribution.

**The last time the big tent was pitched in 1842 was at Newark, New Jersey, on November 3.** The New York Herald sent a reporter to cover the happenings in some detail. He did not ridicule, nor report rumors, but what he actually saw.

*We will quote at length from his report:*

"You can form no idea of the excitement this camp meeting has created in this very orderly and sober little town, or city. It is the universal subject discussed here."-New York Herald Tribune, Thursday, November 3, 1842 (the first day of the series).

Two days later, the reporter wrote:

"The excitement is gradually but surely increasing in this place in relation to the second advent . . .

"Those who think that one of these Millerite meetings resembles a Methodist camp meeting are greatly mistaken; there is much more order, decorum, and argument in these Miller meetings. Up to the present time there has not been a disorderly person upon the ground; all has been quiet and decorous."--Op. cit., Saturday, November 5, 1842.

"At one time there were over six thousand people on the campground today . . . There was no riot, no confusion, no disturbance on the campground."-Op. cit., Sunday, November 6, 1842.

"The excitement in regard to this camp meeting increases with every succeeding day . . . At any rate, the excitement is so great, that at all the churches here yesterday, the respective

ministers preached against it. Some . . . denounced Mr. Miller as a great humbug . . . [Mr. Miller] appears to be very sincere, although he is a Yankee."-Op. cit., Monday, November 7, 1842.

Although it was a Monday, the reporter noted that "there were six thousand people here today" (ibid.). He also mentioned that a prominent minister, a Mr. Brownlee, was coming to Newark to give a lecture, opposing Miller's teachings. Such opposition generally only added to the interest of the public to hear what the advent preachers had to say. As Himes afterward wrote:

"Brother Brownlee's coming over here has done us so much good, that I'd cheerfully pay all his expenses if he'd come again. We want the people aroused."-*Midnight Cry, November 17, 1842.*

On Wednesday, the reporter warned the ministers back home in New York City that they had better prepare themselves to withstand Miller when he arrived there.

"As he has already converted three ministers in this place, and secured a footing in one of the churches, I think it highly advisable that the learned theologians of New York should be made fully acquainted with his movements and his statements, in order that they may prepare themselves, as the ministers of this place and Doctor Brownlee are doing, to controvert him . . . I sincerely hope that next Sunday they will all preach upon it. Bear in mind, that I am no believer in or convert to his doctrines, but he has produced a tremendous impression among the people of this city and the country round about."-Op. cit., Wednesday, November 9, 1842.

For his Thursday article, the reporter from New York told about Brownlee's lecture and the eagerness of many to hear his side of the matter.

The Friday article consisted almost entirely of a summary of one of Miller's lectures. By Saturday, the reporter was exhausted-and said so.

"I have to attend their meetings, morning, noon and night until I feel completely fagged out. Some days I have scarcely had time to get my meals, and write out the report between the acts. I thought the Methodists were pretty indefatigable at camp meetings, but these people can beat 'em hollow."-Op. cit., Saturday, November 12, 1842.

Then the reporter noted with surprise that the Millerites were not trying to make money.

"I haven't heard the old gentleman [Miller] allude to money matters or contributions at all yet, nor any of his regular preachers."-Ibid,

By Sunday, the crowds were so big that Miller held an open-air meeting, and "preached on the steps of the courthouse . . . to a large crowd of country people" estimated at "near 5,000" (op. cit., Sunday, November 13, 1842).

On Monday the final meeting was held; this one in the Presbyterian church. Unlike the preceding ones, it focused on a denial of the various rumors and falsehoods being spread about the Millerites. Encouraged, people stood up in the audience and asked questions, which Himes led out in answering.

"We have been classed, by the clergy, with Joe Smith, Matthias, and others, as base fanatics; but we have sought to spread the truth, not by fanatical prophecies arising out of our own hearts, but by the light of the Scriptures, history, and by sober argument. We appeal only to the Bible, and give you our rules of interpretation. The veriest villains on earth would be saints compared to us, if we were not sincere. We sacrifice time, health, money, personal comfort, and all earthly prospects, to the cause. We have continual calls to give lectures all over the country; as we can't do this, we publish books to speak for us. This they call a speculation, and they say Brother Miller has made a fortune by his writings. Why he hasn't made enough to pay for the paper and ink on which his books were written . . . We have pitched our great tent eight times, in places 500 miles apart . . .

"We have held 30 camp meetings within the last four months . . .

"And now you must get up an association here, to be as a depot. The whole State must be waked up. Love your church, your minister, your Bible, but don't let your mouth be gagged. Pray, read, circulate pamphlets, form Bible classes; get your ministers to join them. Be kind and good to all."-*Midnight Cry, November 17, 1842.*

**The above overview of the meetings at Newark, New Jersey, in November 1842 provides a remarkable glimpse of the situation prevailing by that time.**

Keep in mind that, up to this point, the Millerites were expecting the advent to occur within four months or so.

Knowing that Miller was headed their way, the New York Herald published an extra, in which they made this comment:

"[At the close of the Newark meetings, Miller] got into a plain wagon, drove down to the boat, and put off for New York amid the prayers and singing of many who accompanied him."-New York Herald Extra.

It was near the end of 1842 that Himes started the New York City newspaper, the Midnight Cry.

Only 13 issues were planned, but it continued on throughout 1844-and became one of the most influential of the Millerite periodicals. In the first four weeks, a quarter million copies of this paper, published as a 4-page daily, were printed and distributed.

*Why was this done?* Because the men believed that the world must be warned of the fact that Christ was soon to return. And, in preparation for it, all men everywhere must repent of their sins!

"Our work is one of unutterable magnitude. It is a mission and an enterprise, unlike, in some respects, anything that has ever awakened the energies of man . . . It is an alarm, and a CRY, uttered by those who, from among all Protestant sects, as Watchmen standing upon the walls of the moral world, believe the WORLD'S CRISIS IS COME—and who, under the influence of this faith, are united in proclaiming to the world, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!' It is an enterprise that swallows up all the petty peculiarities of sectarianism and unites us upon an elevation so far above those mercenary undulations, that they are utterly lost to our view below."-Midnight Cry, November 17, 1842 [the First issue of this weekly].

By this time, the message was spreading throughout the world. At Bangor, Maine, and other port cities, thousands of copies of advent papers were given to sailors and ship captains—who distributed them in ports they traveled to. "The expectation of the second advent, in 1843, is becoming general in all parts of the world. We are informed by a gentleman from New Bedford, that the sailors who go out to sea from that port, are writing home from all parts of the world respecting it. These sailors have carried out from that port second advent publications, and are scattering them in all lands, and are telling of these things wherever they go, from port to port, and from coast to coast."--Signs of the Times, January 4, 1843.

'A young lady, lately from that country, states that in one small town in Scotland the people generally are in the church every day in the week, preparing for the coming of the Lord in 1843. They distribute what they have among them, and do not dream of a failure."-Midnight Cry, November 30, 1842.

**The year 1842 had drawn to a close. What would 1843 bring? Before considering it, let us look more closely at this man whom thousands wanted to hear.**

#### **MILLER, AS A SPEAKER**

During the Newark meetings, that same New York reporter also commented on Miller's appearance and the impression he made on the people: "In person he is about five feet seven inches in height, very thick set, broad shoulders; lightish brown hair, a little bald, a benevolent countenance, full of wrinkles, and his head shakes as though he was slightly afflicted with the palsy. His manners are very much in his favor; he is not a very well-educated man; but he has read and studied history and prophecy very closely; has much strong common sense, and is evidently sincere in his belief."-New York Herald Extra.

Here is another pen picture of William Miller, by a reporter who attended Miller's series in Bennington, Vermont, shortly after the Newark meetings:

"He is earnest and vehement in his delivery, and frequently intersperses his argument with epitaphs in which he sometimes puts in 'the rich licks' against the clergy who oppose his system, and sometimes administers some very whole- some exhortations to sinners and unbelievers, in general. He is afflicted with a shaking or trembling which is so considerable that the motion of his head and hands can be observed across the house . . . The old gentleman has a good fund of historical and Biblical information, and a very retentive memory."-Massachusetts Spy (Worcester), February 22, 1843.

A month later, Miller was in Philadelphia when a reporter for a major newspaper described him in these words:

"He is apparently about fifty [actually sixty-one] years of age, of robust and healthy appearance, and he speaks with energy. He utters his opinions in a somewhat positive tone, and occasionally appeals to his audience in language of earnest persuasion. He is by no means choice of epitaphs when alluding to the prominent religious persuasions of the day, and the clergy are anything but complimented. His style of argument is not remarkable either for grace or eloquence."-*Pennsylvania Inquirer, quoted in Providence (Rhode Island) Daily Journal, February 10, 1843.*

On November 19, Miller began a series in New Haven, Connecticut. A reporter there made this comment about his preaching:

"[Miller is] one of the most interesting lecturers we have any recollection of ever having heard . . . [He] certainly evinces great candor and fairness in his manner of proving his points.'" -*The Fountain* (a temperance paper, published in New Haven).

Earlier in this study, we mentioned Joseph Marsh, one of the more prominent Millerite preachers and writers. Fifty years later, his daughter, Jane Marsh Parker (who was only eight years old at the time described in the article we quote from), wrote about Miller:

" 'Father Miller' he was called by his followers. He had aged prematurely from a stroke of palsy, which made him tremulous. He had a rosy, kindly face, shrewd, twinkling blue eyes, which could read character unerringly. The many cranks and impostors that were the barnacles of the delusion did not deceive him. His power was in his strong mellow voice and earnest manner, making his most cultivated hearers to forget his homely phraseology and provincial pronunciation." -*Jane Marsh Parker, 'A Spiritual Cyclone: The Millerite Delusion,' Magazine of Christian Literature, September 1891, 325.*

**There were three reasons why Miller was such an effective speaker. First, he had a Scripture-based message. Second, he had a deep burden for souls. Third, it was expressed in messages which were urgent and demanded decisions.**

"Those souls whom I have addressed in my six months' tour are continually before me, sleeping or waking; I can see them perishing by the thousands; and when I reflect on the account- ability of their teachers, who say 'peace and safety,' I am in pain for them." -Miller, letter dated March 31, 1840 to Himes, in *Signs of the Times*, April 15, 1840.

Thomas Armitage had spoken with Miller many times, and had been an interested listener to his lectures. Here is his comment:

"In person he was large and heavily built, his head broad and his brow high, with a soft and expressive eye, and all the inflexions of his voice indicated the sincerest devotion. He exerted large influence on all who knew him, from his many excellencies and spotless character." -*Thomas Armitage, A History of the Baptists, 769.*

The following description resulted from Miller's lecture series at the Chinese Museum Auditorium in Philadelphia in February 1844:

"There is a kindness of soul, simplicity, and power, peculiarly original, combined in his manner, and he is affable and attentive to all without any affectation of superiority. He is of about medium stature, a little corpulent, and in temperament a mixture of sanguine and nervous. His intellectual developments are unusually full, and we see in his head, great benevolence and firmness, united with a lack of self-esteem. He is also wanting in marvellousness [credulity], and is NATURALLY skeptical. His countenance is full and round, and much like the engraving we have seen, while there is a peculiar depth of expression in his blue eyes, of shrewdness and love. Although about sixty-two years of age, his hair is not grey, but a light glossy auburn, his voice is full and distinct, and his pronunciation some-what northern-antique. In his social relations, he is gentle and affectionate, and insures the esteem of all with whom he mingles. In giving this charcoal sketch to the public, I have merely sought to correct numerous misstatements, and gratify the honest desire of many distant believers, with a faint outline of the character and appearance of the man." -"*William Miller by the Fireside,*" quoted in *the Advent Message to the Daughters of Zion, May 1844.*

The editor of *Zion's Herald* compared Miller favorably to George Whitefield, the most powerful speaker of the 17th century. Did William Miller give powerful appeals in his talks? Yes, he did! Here is a prime example from one of his sermons-taken from *Zion's Herald*, which disbelieved Miller's message but was awed by his words: "Be warned! Repent! Fly, fly for succor to the ark of God-to Jesus Christ-the Lamb which once was slain, that you might live, for He is worthy to receive all honor, power and glory. Believe, and you shall live. Obey His Word, His spirit, His calls, His invitations. There is no time for delay. Put it not off I beg of you; no, not for a moment. Do you want an interest in the New Jerusalem, the beloved city? Then set your face as a flint Zion-ward. Become a pilgrim in the good old way. 'Seek first the kingdom of heaven,' says Christ, 'and then all these things shall be added unto you.'

"But you my impenitent friends, who have never wept nor confessed your sins to God, who have been more anxious to have your names written in the book of fame, of worldly honor, of the riches of this world, than in the Book of Life, remember you too will weep when all heaven is silent. When the last seal is broken, then you will see the book, and your name blotted out! Then you will weep and say, once my name was there. I had a day of probation. Life was

proffered, but I hated instruction. I despised reproof, and my part is taken from the Book of Life! Fare-well happiness! farewell hope! Amen."-*Zion's Herald, quoted in Signs of the Times, April 15, 1840.*

**Let us now turn our attention directly to some samples from William Miller's speeches:**

Here is how Miller replied to a quibbler in regard to the "evenings-mornings" in Daniel 8:14: " 'But,' says the critic, 'it is "evenings-mornings.'

"No matter: all men seem to understand it *days*; for so it is translated in every language with which we are acquainted at the present day. Therefore, this can never be made plainer, if this compound Hebrew word should be criticized upon until the judgment shall set. I am sick of this continual harping upon words. Our learned critics are worse on the waters of truth than a school of sharks on the fishing-banks of the north, and they have made more infidels in our world than all the heathen mythology in existence. What word in revelation has not been turned, twisted, racked, wrested, distorted, demolished, and annihilated by these voracious harpies in human shape, until the public have become so bewildered they know not what to believe? 'They have fouled the waters with their feet.' I have always noticed where they tread the religious spirit is at a low ebb; it becomes cold, formal, and doubtful, at least. It is the mind of the Spirit we want, and God's word then becomes spirit and life unto us."-*Miller, excerpt from lecture, quoted in Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller, 207.*

In preparing this study, the present writer came across a rather lengthy explanation by Miller of the "evenings-mornings" question. It is not quoted here because it cannot be effectively shortened.

For the reader's information, the Hebrew of Daniel 8:14 says "**Unto 2300 evenings-mornings, then shall . . .**"The present writer analyzed this in the early 1960s and found that "**evening-morning**" (*i.e.*, "evening and morning") is a Hebrew phrase denoting **a full day from sunset to sunset.**

The first reference to this is found repeatedly in Genesis 1.

In contrast, "**morning-evening**" ("morning and evening") denotes something that occurs twice a day, such as the morning and evening burnt offering.

This information is mentioned because you will encounter some who erroneously imagine that Daniel 8:14 means 2300 half-days, or 1150 full days. -"Morning" or "evening," alone denotes a half- day; "morning-evening" ("morning and evening") denotes a full 24-hour day.

**In the following excerpt, Miller explained the "day equals a year in prophecy" principle.** In vivid phrases, he shows that the child of God will accept information in the way God provides it to him; he does not question nor quibble about it.

" 'God has said it, and I must believe. Now the only difficulty is in time.'

" 'How can this be?'

" 'Very well,' says the dear child of God; 'I remember: God says I must "dig for the truth as for hid treasure." I will go to work, and, while I am digging, I will live by begging. Father in heaven, I believe it is Thy word; but I do not understand it; show me Thy truth.'

" 'I had rather have one humble prayer of this kind, with an English Bible in my hand, than all the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Bro. S. ever knew. [According to Bliss, "Brother S." was probably Professor Moses Stuart or Dr. C.E. Stowe (both critics of Miller's) who taught at Andover College, in Massachusetts.]

"The child then takes the word *day*, and compares spiritual things with spiritual, to find what his heavenly Father means by days in a figurative sense. The first text he lights upon is in Num. 14:34, '*each day for a year.*'

" 'May this not be it?' says the child. "He takes hold of it by faith, carries it home, lays it up in his cell of sweets, richer than a lord, and again goes forth in search of more. He now lights upon Eze. 4:6: '*I have appointed thee each day for a year.*' He is now rich in very deed- two jewels in one cell. He does not stop to criticize, like a Stuart, and query, and reason himself out of common sense and reason too; but, Abraham-like, he believes, and lays up his treasure at home.

" 'I see,' says the child, 'this use of days was so ordained by my Father in two cases; and two witnesses are enough. But I am not certain that I have a right to use these jewels in this place. I will go and beg, and dig again.'

" 'In this excursion he lights on Daniel 9:23-27: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people.'

" 'Seventy weeks of what? says the critic.



" 'I do not care a fig,' says the believing child, 'whether you call it *days* or *years*: I know how long it was in fulfilling.'

" 'How long'

" 'Exactly four hundred and ninety years: from the decree given in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, four hundred and fifty-seven years before Christ, unto His death, thirty-three years after the birth of Christ, making exactly four hundred and ninety years, or seventy sevens of years of the vision.' "-Miller, *quoted in op. cit.*, 207-208.

**In the following excerpt, Miller maintained that, in the 1840s, the world had to be beyond the 1260 year span of Daniel and Revelation, from the simple fact that the church was no longer "in the wilderness."**

"Can we be mistaken in the fulfillment of this prophecy? Is the church now in the wilderness? And if you should respond, She is,-I ask you, When, then, was she out? Not in the apostolic age; for she was not more free than now. And then, let me inquire, where are your twelve hundred and sixty years? They can have no meaning. O, Christian! I beg of you, believe in the Word of God; do not, I pray you, discard time, any more than concern. Is it not selfishness in us to discard the set times which God has fixed, and not man? Where is our faith? Why are we so slow of heart to believe? Three times we have witnessed,-yes, in the lifetime of some of us,-the fulfillment of the 'time, times, and an half,' in the accomplishment of the 'forty-two months,' in the completion of the 'twelve hundred and three-score days,' and yet, O God, we refuse to believe! Shame on that professor who will not open his eyes!

"They tell us we cannot understand prophecy until it is fulfilled.

"But here it is three times fulfilled in this day in which we live. What excuse have you now, O ye heralds of the cross? Ah! say you, that is *your* construction; we are not bound to follow your explanations. No, no! But for ages you and your fathers have been telling us that these prophecies were true; and you have told us that when they come to pass we should know what they meant; and, although ages on ages have rolled their rapid course, yet nothing has transpired, as you will own; and we, if we should search, and find, as we believe, the prophecies fulfilling, and tell our reasons, you then can taunt us with a skeptic argument,-'this is *your* construction,'-and then not dare to tell us what it means! We have a right to ask, 'Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?' An answer we must have; or you must leave your towers. It will not do to answer us, 'I am under no obligation to tell you.'

"Has Zion no better watchman on her walls than this? Alas! Alas! then we may sleep, and sleep, until the trumpet's dreadful blast shall shake our dusty beds, and the last angel raise his hand and swear 'that time shall be no longer.' Why are you thus negligent and remiss in duty? If I am not right in my construction of God's holy word, pray tell us what is truth, and make it look more plain,-and will we not believe? Thus you will cleanse your garments from our blood, and we must bear the shame. What time of night? Come, tell us plainly. There are portentous clouds hanging over our heads; we hear the murmurs of the fitful winds; we see sad omens of a dreadful storm; and where is our watchman's voice? Your silence give us fears that we are betrayed. Awake! awake! ye watchmen, to your post!

"It is no false alarm. There are judgments, heavy judgments, at the door. 'Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.' How shall the fearful stand in that great day, when heaven and earth shall hear His mighty voice, and they that hear must come to judgment? Where will the unbelieving scoffer then appear? When God makes inquisition for the blood of souls, and when the under shepherds stand, with their flocks, around the 'great white throne,' to have each motive, thought, word, act, and deed, brought out to light, before a gazing world, and tried by that unerring rule, 'the Word.'-I ask you, scorners, jesters, scoffer, how will you appear? Stop, stop, and think, before you take a fatal leap, and jest away your soul!"- *Op. cit.*, 207-208.

We will conclude with one more sample of William Miller's powerful appeals to his hearers:

"And now, drunkards, is your time; Wisdom stands at the door and knocks; let go the intoxicating bowl; be sober, and hear the midnight cry, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh.' For your souls' sake drink not another draught, lest He come and find you drunken, 'and that day come upon you unawares and find you sleeping.' O, be wise, ye intemperate men! for they only went into the marriage who were found ready, 'and the door was shut.' 'Then came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord open to us. But He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye neither know the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh.' 'But the wise shall understand,' says Daniel 12:10.

'And now, my Christian friends, let me inquire, Are your lamps trimmed and burning, And have you oil in your vessels? Are you prepared for the coming Bridegroom? And are you awake to this important subject? What say you? If this parable, to which I have directed your minds, has reference to the last day and the coming of Christ; if the 'virgins' have reference to all men in the probationary state, and dividing them into two classes, wise and foolish; if the 'lamp' is the Word of God, and 'oil' means faith in His Word, or grace in the heart, as some say, -then my conclusions are just, and the evidence is strong that we live at the end of the gospel kingdom, and upon the threshold of the glorified state of the righteous. 'Then examine your Bibles, and if you can more fairly prove any other exposition of this parable than I have this, then believe yours, and time must settle the issue; but if you can find nothing in the Scriptures to controvert plainly my explanation, then believe, and prepare to meet the Bridegroom; for, behold, He cometh!

"Awake, ye fathers and mothers in Zion! ye have long looked and prayed for this day. Behold the signs! He is near, even at the door. And, ye children of God, lift up your heads and rejoice, for your redemption draweth nigh. For these things have begun to come to pass. And, ye little lambs of the flock, remember, Jesus has promised to carry you in His arms, and that He will come and take you to Himself, that where He is there ye may be also. But remember, all of you, the wise had oil in their lamps, and they were trimmed and burning. Search deep; examine yourselves closely; be not deceived; and may the Spirit, which searcheth all things, and knoweth what is in the mind of man, assist you.

"But, my impenitent friends, what shall I say to you? Shall I say, as the Master in the parable, 'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet Him'? prepare to meet your Judge. Now He has given you a time for repentance; you have a probationary season, and possibly now the scepter of mercy is held out to you. Repent, or it will soon be said to you, as Jeremiah said to the virgins, the daughter of Egypt, 'In vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured;' or, as in the parable, 'I know you not.' Have you no oil in your lamps? Delay not a moment; believe the gospel, and you will live; believe the word of God; receive the love of the Bridegroom, and make no delay; for while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut, O, think what must be the exercise of your minds when these things shall be real; when you will stand without and knock, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' Again I ask, will you repent, believe, and be saved? Are you determined to resist the truth until it is too late? Say, sinner, what think ye?

" 'We will risk the consequences. We do not believe in your day you tell us of. The world is the same as it always was, -no change, nor ever will be; but if it should come, it will not be this ten thousand years, -not in our day, certainly. You do not believe yourself. If you did, we should call you a fool.'

"Are these your arguments, sinner?

" 'Yes.'

"Well, if I had brought no more, no stronger arguments than these, I would not blame you for not believing, for not one of yours can you or have you supported with a particle of proof. They are mere assertions; your believing or not believing will not alter the designs of God. The antediluvians believed not. The citizens of the plain laughed at the folly of Lot. And where are they now?"-Op. *cit.*, 224-226.

**William Miller reached the heart. He did this because he was a man of God who prayed long hours for souls, when he was not preaching to them.** He also labored vigorously to bring the message to them.

**Although older than most Millerite preachers, he set the pace for the younger men.** In one ten-day period, for example, he gave 18 lectures at Lockport, New York, followed immediately by 17 at Buffalo in nine days. In 1843, when he was 61, he gave 82 lectures within the space of 47 days, with only five days when there was no meeting. He recorded that, in the 12 years between 1832 and 1844, he delivered 3,200 lectures.

**A complete series by Miller consisted of 18 sermons, which he called lectures. Each was one to two hours in length.** On many occasions, he did not give the complete series. He frequently based the first lecture of each series on Titus 2: 13: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." In Boston, he preached seven different sermons from this text.

**During his last years of preaching, Miller did his work, not because of good health, but in spite of poor health.**

William Miller had more than ordinary intellectual strength, a thorough grasp of his subject, an overpowering conviction that his message was from God, and a sincerity that even his strongest opponents admitted.

"Thousands were led to embrace the truth preached by William Miller, and servants of God were raised up in the spirit and power of Elijah to proclaim the message. Like John, the forerunner of Jesus, those who preached this solemn message felt compelled to lay the ax at the root of the tree, and call upon men to bring forth fruits meet for repentance . . . God called him to leave his farm, as He called Elisha to leave his oxen and the field of his labor to follow Elijah . . . As John the Baptist heralded the first advent of Jesus and prepared the way for His coming, so William Miller and those who joined him proclaimed the second advent of the Son of God."- *Early Writings*, 229-230, 233.

**Sometimes people were so enraged by Satan at his words, that they determined to slay Miller,** "but angels of God were sent to protect him, and they led him safely away from the angry mob. His work was not yet finished" (*op. cit.*, 234).

**It should be kept in mind that Millerism was primarily based on the truth of the nearness of Christ's coming rather than time.** It is an interesting fact about Miller's teaching, that (although he obtained his concepts from the Bible, not from other men) **none of his points were unique. His contribution was in putting them together,** like a giant jigsaw puzzle, in such a way that they stood the test of Scripture.

It was an angel of God, not human impulse, that moved upon Miller's heart to study the Bible (*Story of Redemption*, 356-357). Unknown to him, angels often opened his mind and guided his thinking to a correct understanding of Bible prophecy. He was led to find link after link until he had discovered, in the Scriptures, "a perfect chain of truth."

**Let us now turn our attention to the important year 1843.**

#### **1843 BEGINS**

**It was not until 1843 began that William Miller narrowed the date of Christ's advent closer than "about the year 1843."** But, on January 1, 1843, a series of articles by Miller began to be released, in which he summarized his positions. In the fourteenth and concluding article, he, for the first time, narrowed the dating parameters somewhat:

"I believe the time can be known by all who desire to understand and to be ready for His coming. And I am fully convinced that sometime between March 21st, 1843, and March 21, 1844, according to the Jewish mode of computation of time, Christ will come, and bring all His saints with Him; and that then He will reward every man as his work shall be."--*Signs of the Times*, January 25, 1843.

Miller followed this statement by an article published February 1, 1843, entitled 'Address to Believers in the Near Advent.' In it he reaffirmed his belief that "this year, according to our faith, is the last year that Satan will reign in our earth." He also warned the faithful that "this year will try our faith" (*Signs of the Times*, February 1, 1843).

**The New York Herald Tribune had recently declared that Miller had set April 3, 1843, as the date.** In response to this false report, Himes wrote in the first issue of the Signs for 1843, this refutation:

"The fact is, that the believers of the second advent in 1843, have fixed NO TIME in the year for the event. And Brethren Miller, Himes, Litch, Hale, Fitch, Hawley, and other prominent lecturers, most decidedly protest against . . . fixing the day or hour of the event. This we have done over and over again, in our paper."--*Signs of the Times*, January 4, 1843 [*cf.* January 18, 1843, and April 5, 1843, of the Signs for similar refutations].

**It would not be until the summer of 1844 that a definite day was set.** The following definitive statement was made nearly two years later, regarding the position of the Millerites during, and before, 1843 on date setting. "There were never any set days in that year [1843], as our opponents have repeatedly asserted, upon which the Adventists were united in their expectations, as the day which would be honored by the Lord's advent. There were, however, several days in that year, which were looked to with great interest; but while some had their eye upon one day, others had their minds directed to other days, so that there was no unanimity of expectation respecting them. In that year we were all united, and believed that some-time between March 21st, 1843, and March 21st, 1844, the Lord would come."-*The Advent Herald*, November 13, 1844 [the later name for the Signs of the Times].

**A growing question among the advent awakeners was whether they should bother to plant crops or harvest them.** This question was decisively answered in an article in the Signs, entitled "Occupy Till I Come."

"To conclude that we have nothing to do by way of laboring for the souls of others or providing for our temporal wants, and therefore spend our time in idleness, is to disobey God and bring dishonor on the cause we have espoused. Let everyone therefore 'be diligent in business, fervent in spirit serving the lord.' Let him visit the sick, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, administer to the afflicted, relieve the wants of the destitute, and do good as he may have opportunity.

"Let him also continue to sow his field and gather the fruits of the earth while seedtime and harvest may continue, neglecting none of the duties of this life. But watch, stand fast in the faith, lead holy lives, showing to the world that this is not our home, that our affections are not set on the things of this world."--Signs of the Times, February 22, 1843.

**By this year, newspapers were occasionally reprinting one or the other of the Millerite charts.** At the same time, word of the soon coming of Christ was traveling farther and farther.

"Publications . . . [have] found their way not only into nearly every section and district of our own land, but are being read and believed in the islands of the sea, and at all the missionary stations, of which we have any knowledge, on the face of the globe."--Signs of the Times, March 8, 1843.

Advent awakeners were even mailing their letters on sheets which had prophetic symbols and explanations printed on the back.

The position of the Millerites was that March 1843 was to open the year in which the world would end. Because it had been taught so widely, this concept was shared, more or less, by many who were not Millerites.

**Then, suddenly in late February, a flaming comet appeared in the southwestern skies of late evenings. People were wholly unprepared for this, and it seemed an omen of approaching disaster.**

This comet was truly brilliant and, we are told by an expert, was the brightest comet of the century.

"The great comet of 1843 was easily visible in broad daylight. It was first seen about 11 a.m. on February 27, 1843, by people in the Southern Hemisphere . . . On the next day, February 28, the comet was seen by a multitude of people on both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. For a month it was a brilliant object, seen in the southwestern sky in the evening. It began to fade about the first of April . . . The comet of 1843 was the most brilliant of the century. The head of the comet was about a degree in width and the tail was nearly 60 degrees in length."--Captain J. F. Hellweg, Superintendent of the US. Naval Observatory, letter dated February 21, 1944.

Fear was entering the hearts of men. Was it possible that soon the guilty secrets of their souls would be exposed to the gaze of a judgment-seated God?

Whether correctly or not, men thought they saw other strange sights in the skies.

"Signs and wonders are becoming very common in the sky since the advent of Millerism. Every meteor that flashes in the heavens is imagined to have some portentous meaning and seen to take some extra-ordinary form."--Kennebec Journal (Augusta, Maine), April 28, 1843.

However, little space was given to such astral phenomena in the pages of the Millerite journals. The advent awakeners were concerned for men's souls, not with mysterious sights in the heavens.

"While the community were evidently excited with varied forebodings, those who are looking for the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, have looked on unmoved, with enough to arouse their fears."--Signs of the Times, March 29, 1843.

Having said that, the editor added this comment: "Having established that it is a comet, the present great question [among the populace] is as to its probable course, but advent believers care little about its course.

"They believe the Lord is coming, and that right speedily; and whether He sends this as the messenger of His fury, is immaterial, knowing that whether so or not, He will be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God; and that a fiery stream will issue and come forth before Him ."--Ibid.

A few weeks later, the *Midnight Cry* included some news clips of various sky sightings reported in the public press,-and added this comment:

"We have been looking on in silence, for several weeks, while the newspapers have teemed with descriptions of wonderful sights. We now publish some of them as specimens . . . Our faith rests on the Word of God, and such things are not needed to confirm it; but we are willing our

readers should see the sort of statements which are spread before so many minds by the press."- Midnight Cry, April 13, 1843.

**There was an increasing desire to meet with fellow believers, even though the Millerites had not yet generally been ejected from their own churches. So, in Boston, the decision was made to erect a building.** It quickly became known as the "*Millerite Tabernacle*," and became the subject of an immense amount of comment in the news- papers.

There were stories that the building had been condemned as unsafe, that the walls were cracking, and that the Millerites had taken out a seven-year fire insurance policy on the building-thus denying their faith. (Only a one-year policy had been taken out.) On and on it went. Ridicule, falsehoods, jokes; anything, everything to turn the attention of the people from solemn thoughts of meeting their God.

--And, indeed, all that generation had to meet their God, did they not? Like all the rest of humanity, they have since died, and are awaiting that day when they shall meet their Creator face to face.

At least one reporter gave an objective description of the Millerite Tabernacle.

"This building erected by the '43 brethren' in Boston, is one of the most spacious, convenient, and pleasant houses of worship I was ever in. On entering it I was greatly disappointed. I expected to see a rough, uncouth affair, which would end whether the world did or not, with the exciting cause to which it owes its existence. But not so. I beheld a neat spacious room, capable of seating over 3,000 persons, so constructed as to be easy to speak in, and to be so substantial in its structure as to promise to vie with Marlborough Chapel (should the world stand) as a lecture room and house of prayer, for at least one generation. It is indeed a model of neatness, simplicity, comfort, and frugality. It cost, exclusive of the land, I am informed, about \$4,000. Those brethren who are in want of chapels, and have but little money, will do well to visit the Tabernacle—learn a good lesson and go home and build on the same plan." *Christian Herald, quoted in Signs of the Times, June 14, 1843.*

**The building was dedicated on May 4, with about 3,500 in attendance.**

"The spacious building, which is certainly a very pleasant one inside, and very convenient withal, was completely filled with a very solemn attentive and apparently intelligent audience. The whole proceedings were conducted with great regularity and good order and broke up quietly between 5 and 6 o'clock."-*Massachusetts Spy (Worcester), May 10, 1843.*

At this meeting, a report from "the Tabernacle committee" was read to the assembled multitude. One section in particular deserves the attention of our own people today. It is entitled "Dangers which believers in the doctrine of the second advent should avoid."

"1. We should avoid a censorious spirit towards those who cannot see all things in the same light that we do . . . If others are honest in their views, and are candid, they are entitled to the utmost charity . . .

"2. Second advent believers are from all religious denominations; and to act in unison, it is necessary to meet on common ground; to so meet it is necessary to lay aside all sectarian views. . .

"3. We should avoid bringing in connection with the second advent, and a preparation therefor, any doctrines not necessarily connected therewith. . .

"4. We should avoid all extravagant notions, and everything which may tend to fanaticism. God is not the author of confusion . . .

"5. We should avoid placing too much reliance upon impressions . . .

"6. Judge no man . . .

"7. We should avoid setting up one's own experience as the standard by which to test the experience of others. Men's experience will differ, as did those of the apostles . . .

"8. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' . . . Our adversary is continually on the watch, that he may overcome us at our least guarded point. He likes to whisper in the ear of man that he has attained the victory, and become so holy, that do what he will, it is not sin . . .

"9. We are commended to occupy till Christ comes. We are to sow our seed, and gather our harvest, so long as God gives us seedtime and harvest."-*Excerpt from "Report of the Tabernacle Committee," in Signs of the Times, May 10, 1843.*

But poor William Miller missed it all. **On March 27, he became ill, remaining so for the next crucial five months,** often approaching the point of death. Erysipelas had fastened on him again. He also had what he described as "carbuncle boils."

"My health is on the gain, as my folks would say. I have now only twenty-two boils, from the bigness of a grape to a walnut, on my shoulder, side, back and arms. I am truly afflicted like Job. And [I have] about as many comforters—only they do not come to see me as did Job's, and their arguments are not near as rational."- *Miller, letter to Himes, in Signs of the Times, May 17, 1843.*

(It is possible that Miller took a sizeable dose of "sulphur and molasses," which back then was considered a "spring tonic." The inorganic sulphur, having special affinity to escape through the skin, can produce boils as it tries to leave the body.)

Two weeks later, Miller was again feeble. He would not preach again until the fall. While he was lying ill, he received a letter addressed to the "**Great End of the World Man,**" with a notation on the envelope, "To the Postmaster: to be delivered before the 23rd of April." (One erroneous rumor was that the Millerites had set that date as "ascension time.") The letter itself was filled with ribaldry and ridicule. Some poor fellow wrote it; may God have mercy on those who do not recognize the opportunities given them in this life to repent.

**Yet Miller could rejoice in the fact that his wife and children had all accepted the message and had made their peace with God.** You may recall his letter to his eldest son in 1838, when he prayed that his children might awaken to the fact that they were "sleeping over the volcano of God's wrath," and needed conversion. They were now all gathered into the fold.

**If William Miller could not be out preaching, — his friends surely were! Workers were traveling out farther and farther. Missionary literature was being sent overseas in increasing amounts. The big tent went through a round of pitchings. Second advent conferences were held in strategic places.** People were writing to the Signs from Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The message was reaching nearly as far west as European civilization had penetrated on the continent.

**Important new workers were coming to the fore, such as George Storrs, Joseph Marsh, Elon Galusha, and others. New periodicals were starting, and important advances were made on many fronts.**

**Charles Fitch was getting started in Ohio** when a young businessman in Cleveland was converted, and offered to drive Fitch anywhere he wanted to go in his horse and buggy. A printer was converted who began printing a periodical for Fitch, for only the cost of paper and ink.

A man in Michigan had never heard a lecture, but had been converted by receiving some literature. He immediately set to work.

"In connection with my other engagements, I have given the warning in sixteen different settlements, at the distance of one hundred miles, and to large and crowded audiences."-*S. Barnes letter to Himes, May 4, 1843, in Signs of the Times, May 31, 1843.*

**Interestingly enough, the southern states were less responsive to the message and harder to penetrate.** The problem was the slavery issue. Many Millerite leaders had earlier been abolitionists, and the southern states wanted to keep everything as it had been. They were not open to innovations. The holding of slaves had hardened their minds.

**Meanwhile, Robert Winter was at work spreading the message in England.** You will recall that Millerite preachers began working in Britain as early as 1841, but it was the conversion of Winter at the first Millerite camp meeting in June 1842—which gave it remarkable impetus. Returning to England, Winter set to work. By the spring of 1843, he could report that he was operating a press in London and had printed 15,000 copies of selected Millerite books.

"We are at work all the time, and many preachers have received the truth by reading these works. I preach about the streets with my chart hoisted up on a pole. Another preacher and myself are passing all through the country. Others are proclaiming the cry. Methodists, Baptists, and Independent preachers have embraced the doctrine, and are at work. We intend to hold a second advent camp meeting in May, if time continues; but if the Lord comes, we will hold it in the new earth. The way is now prepared for any of you to come over if the time is not too short. They will more readily receive this doctrine in England, than in America. I have preached about the streets of London, our books are flying about, and are making quite a stir in this great city."- *Midnight Cry, May 18, 1843.*

**In August the great tent was moved to Ohio. Himes and his associates were determined to help spread the message westward.** Himes wrote: "We intend, if permitted, to meet our brethren in that part of the country, to distribute about \$2,000 worth of publications, in that portion of the Union. We shall supply every town with a [Second Advent] Library, as far as practicable. We intend also to furnish all the ministers, who will read on the subject, with

publications. If they cannot furnish themselves, we will furnish them. They shall be left without excuse. We hope and expect to see one mighty gathering in the west."-*Signs of the Times*, August 9, 1843.

"Many of our editorial brethren are disposed to ridicule this doctrine and its propagators, although not one of them has endeavored to prove that it is not true . . . If ridiculing a doctrine proves its falsity, then none are true. Even the Word of God itself has not been exempt from the shafts of ridicule . . .

"That those who recently held a camp meeting near this village, were true and sincere Christians, we have good reason to believe . . . They appeared to be well acquainted with the Scriptures, and urged their hearers to search for themselves, to see whether their doctrine was true or not. If then these men were Christians, and in the discharge of what they conceive to be their duty, are they the proper subjects for sarcasm and ridicule?"-*Hempstead Inquirer*, June 24, 1843, quoted in *Midnight Cry*, July 13, 1843.

Silas Hawley told of a grove meeting he held near Utica, New York: "No house could be obtained for the presentation of the subject. But we went to a sanctuary of the Lord's own erection, composed of the butternuts of a tall and thrifty growth, spreading their long and ample branches over our heads, and forming a vast arch of great beauty and grandeur. Under that, in a lumber wagon, surrounded by a large number of persons, I preached two discourses, both occupying nearly five hours. God was there—a deep impression was produced. Some of the first men in the place, as to piety, intelligence and influence, were there, to hear candidly; and went away favorably disposed. Sinners were there, to tremble and turn pale."-*Silas Hawley*, letter dated August 15, 1843, in *Midnight Cry*, August 24, 1843.

**Not only advent books and papers were being acquired, but Bibles also.**

"The great eagerness of the people for Bibles, was a very cheering illustration of the effect of the lectures. Two lots were sold, and we sent to Philadelphia for a bundle of which fifteen were sold in a few hours."-*Signs of the Times*, August 16, 1843.

**ATTACK AND DEFENSE BY THE PRESS**

**William Miller was concerned for his flock, well-aware that Satan would use every possible means to introduce problems,** cause divisions, or harass them in other ways.

"The world will watch for our halting. They cannot think we believe what we speak, for they count our faith a strange faith, and now beware and not give them any advantage of ground over us. They will perhaps look for the halting and falling away of many. But I hope none who are looking for the glorious appearing, will let their faith waver, keep cool, let patience have its perfect work, and after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promises . . .

"I beseech you my dear brethren, be careful that Satan gets no advantage over you, by scattering coals of wild fire among you; for if he cannot drive you into unbelief and doubt, he will then try his wild fire of fanaticism, and speculation, to get us off from the Word of God . . .

"Then let me advise a continual searching for the truth, both for faith and practice, and wherever we have wandered from the Word of God, let us come back to the primitive simplicity of the gospel."-*Miller*, in *Signs of the Times*, January 25, 1843.

**Indeed, Satan was busy. The press was becoming even more scurrilous in their attacks.** Whatever the devil could do to distract the attention, he did.

Early in 1843 in Washington, D.C., someone printed a handbill that Miller would speak in front of the U.S. Patent Office tomorrow, Sunday, January 22. It was a hoax, yet crowds came out, filling the streets for two blocks; the number was "estimated from five to ten thousand" (*Signs of the Times*, February 1, 1843).

**Even advertisers were capitalizing on the attention given to the matter.** A solemn truth was turned into cheap, bantering ads. One ad, which ran for months in the newspapers, pictured an angel carrying a banner with the inscription, "The Time Has Come." The ad continued that it was time to take a certain patent medicine.

Other ads ran under startling headlines, "*End of the World*" or "*The Second Advent*," to call attention to cough drops or cigars which, the ad declared, should be enjoyed while the world lasted.

You will recall how great men declared that Noah must be a crazed fanatic, since the scientists had decided that rain could not fall (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 96-97). Well, similar claims were made to counteract the teaching of William Miller and his associates, that Christ was going to return to the earth and destroy sinners.

In one of the Boston churches a lecturer discussed the theme, "***Duration and Destruction of the World, as Inferred from the Records of Geology.***" His point was that the present world is the result of slow, gradual change over long periods, and so its end would have to occur in the same manner. No sudden transitions would ever occur.

**Early this year [1843], Miller wrote a disclaimer article** in which he denied that he claimed to be a prophet, or that he was making money out his lectures and books. He also added this personal glimpse into his family:

"As to worldly cares, I have had but very few for twelve years past. I have a wife, and eight children; I have great reason to believe they are all the children of God, and believers in the same doctrine with myself. I own a small farm in Low Hampton, New York, my family support them- selves upon it . 'I owe no man anything;' I have expended more than 2,000 dollars of my property in twelve years, besides what God has given me through the dear friends, in this cause."- *Miller, letter dated February 4, 1843, to Himes, in Signs of the Times, February 15, 1843. [Copies of this letter were sent to a large number of daily newspapers, which generally printed it.]*

In a letter sent to his eldest son from Philadelphia, William Miller wrote this:

"Here, as in all other places, the D.D.'s and priests, the clergy and editors, are out upon us with all their ribaldry and lies.

"God converts it all to His glory, and their shame. I rejoice that I am counted worthy to receive persecution and slander for the truth's sake."-*Miller, letter dated February 2, 1843, to his oldest son, William S. Miller.*

Miller wrote that, the day before he was to begin a lecture series at the Chinese Museum (one of the largest auditoriums in Philadelphia). **In the middle of one of the lectures, someone shouted "fire," and stampeded the audience.** The next morning, someone else caused a disturbance, and the owner of the building closed down the meetings prematurely.

The public press picked up the story and distorted it into "orgies" carried on by the Millerites.

**Desperate men were so anxious to blot from the minds of the people the possibility that Christ might return in judgment on the lives of men, that they resorted to the boldest lies.**

"The Millerites have very properly been shut out of the buildings in which they have for some time been holding their orgies in Philadelphia, and we are happy to learn that the grand jury of the Boston municipal court has presented the great temple itself as a dangerous structure. After some half dozen more deaths occurred and a few more men and women are sent to madhouses by this miserable fanaticism perhaps some grand jury may think it worth while to indict the vagabonds who are the cause of so much mischief."- *The news weekly, Brother Jonathan, February 18, 1843.*

However, a leading Philadelphia newspaper, which earlier had been highly critical of Miller, had sent a reporter to the meetings, who wrote this description before the hoodlums stirred up trouble:

"It is generally known that Mr. Miller, sometimes known as 'End of the World' Miller, came into our city on Friday last, and rented the Chinese Museum for thirteen days and nights, for \$300. He has since three times a day and evening, held meetings which have been numerously attended. Last night he had an audience of between four and five thousand persons, all of whom listened with great decorum to a sermon from him of more than an hour and half's length."-*Philadelphia Public Ledger, February 8, 1843.*

As soon as Miller had left Philadelphia, a downtown theater opened a play entitled "*Miller, or the End of the World.*" The part of Miller was played by a comedian (*see Lowell [Massachusetts] Courier, February 23, 1843*).

**Hearing that Miller was about to leave Philadelphia, the mayor of Trenton, New Jersey, invited him to speak in that city.** His arrival brought this response from a newspaper:

"Mr. Miller has been holding forth on his narrow-minded humbug at Trenton to large audiences . . . This Miller does not appear to be a knave, but simply a fool, or more properly a monomaniac. If the Almighty intended to give due notice of the world's destruction, He would not do it by sending a fat, illiterate old fellow to preach bad grammar and worse sense, down in Jersey!" —*New York Plebeian, quoted in Maine Inquirer (Bath), March 1, 1843.*

The press, which referred to Miller as a fool, also referred to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as the "silly remarks of the President" in 1863. *The Chicago Times*, in reporting the ceremonies at the dedication of Gettysburg, made a statement to the effect that every American must be



embarrassed as he reads the foolish words of the man who has to be pointed out as the President of the United States to intelligent foreigners. Some political cartoons pictured Lincoln as a baboon. Such was the price of fame.

The "caricature prints" were particularly offensive. It was as if all the devils of hell were being turned loose. The hatred of things Godly was remarkable.

These prints were often in the form of sacrilegious broadsides presenting large cartoon-like caricatures of the Millerite teachings. Here is an example:

(VICIOUS CARTOON—The Miller Tabernacle in Boston is shown ascending to heaven, pulled up by ropes held by angels. Below the crowds look up while Himes is held back by the devil, who claims that Himes belongs to him.)

"There is one caricature going the rounds representing Mr. Miller ascending to heaven with all the Millerites—so called—hanging on to him. It is adorned with various cuts, among which is an enormous key, called 'the key to the great tent of salvation' . . . There is another sheet just issued, No. 1, Vol. 1, called the 'Vial of Wrath, and Junk Bottle of Destruction.' In this sheet the most sacred truths are the most wickedly scoffed at. The resurrection of the dead is ridiculed and caricatured by a cut of a skeleton rising halfway out of his coffin, and throwing his shin bone at a croaking toad that sits on the foot of the coffin. The ascension of the saints to meet their Lord in the air, is shown in a ludicrous light, in various attitudes of ascension, while the fat ones are described as being drawn up with hooks by angels."--*Signs of the Times, March 29, 1843 (cf. March 22, 1843).*

Other caricatures centered on the rumor that Miller was dead, that the Millerites were preparing long, flowing ascension robes in which to meet the Lord, and that the leaders had carefully checked their figures and discovered they were off by one thousand years. Here is an example of one grave news report in a respected journal:

"It is understood that Miller and his associates have recently carefully reviewed their calculations upon which they found the prophecy of the near approach of the end of the world, when an error was discovered in the footing of the column of a thousand years. This is a very important discovery just now. The 'ascension robes' with which many of the Millerites on Long Island have provided themselves, are not likely to be wanted."-*Journal of Commerce, quoted in Signs of the Times, February 1, 1843.*

In several issues in 1843, the Hartford Universalist referred to the Millerites as "simple," "deluded," "ignorant," "ridiculous," "notorious," "illiterate," "excited," "coarse," "ill-bred," "blind," "fanatical," "evil," "weak-minded," "imposterism" and "humbugs."

Accusations of Miller-induced insanity continually increased. According to the American Journal of Insanity, many individuals had become deranged because of Millerism, and

" 'Thousands who have not yet become deranged, have had their health impaired to such a degree as to unfit them for the duties of life forever; and especially is this the case with females.' The medical name assigned to the problem was 'epidemic or contagious monomania' " (*American Journal of Insanity, January 1845*).

"The prevalence of the yellow fever or of the cholera has never proved so great a calamity to this country [as Miller's teachings]." -Ibid.

In February 1843, Miller wrote to his eldest son about "the thousand and one falsehoods, which a proud and haughty priesthood have invented, and an hireling press has circulated." The *Gazette and Advertiser* wrote that Miller "has probably been an object of more abuse, ridicule and blackguardism, than any other man now living." *Gazette and Advertiser, quoted in Bliss, Memoirs, 227.*

**All this ribaldry in the public press brought the opposite reaction from some editors.**

The editor of the Sandy Hill (New Hampshire) Herald:

"While we are not prepared to subscribe to the doctrine promulgated by this gentleman, we have been surprised at the means made use of by his opponents to put it down. Certainly all who have ever heard him lecture, or have read his works, must acknowledge that he is a sound reasoner, and as such is entitled to fair arguments from those who differ with him. Yet his opposers do not see fit to exert their reasoning powers, but content themselves by denouncing the old gentleman, as a 'fanatic,' a 'liar,' 'deluded old fool,' 'speculator,' etc., etc. Mr. Miller is now, and has been for many years a resident of this county, and as a citizen, a man and a Christian. stands high in the estimation of all who know him, and we have been pained to hear the gray-headed, trembling old man denounced as a 'speculating knave.' Speculating, forsooth. Why need he speculate? He has enough of the good things of this world to last him through the few days which at longest may be his on earth, without traveling from city to city, from town to

village, laboring night and day, like a galley slave, to add to a store which is already abundant. Who, that has witnessed his earnestness in the pulpit, and listened to the uncultivated eloquence of nature which falls in such rich profusion from his lips, dare say that he is an impostor? We answer, without fear of contradiction from any candid mind, none!"--*Sandy Hill Herald, quoted in Signs of the Times, March 1, 1843.*

The *Oberlin Evangelist* decried the "absurd stories . . . kept in circulation" "by a large portion of the religious press . . . Bros. Miller and Fitch may be wrong, but they are not knaves, nor dunces. They may err, but they have a right not to be misrepresented."--*Oberlin Evangelist, January 18, 1843.*

**Another newspaper editor recounted the story of a recent convert to the advent awakening, who journeyed 30 miles on one of the coldest days in the winter to confess to a man that, 13 years before, he had stolen \$13 from him. The editor concluded:**

"If all men could become the Millerites of this fashion, and be prompted to like acts of justice—what a revolution would be effected throughout this entire country." *Connecticut Courant (Hartford), February 4, 1843.*

**In Rochester, New York, a woman who had been attending the meetings, went to the police and confessed that she had committed a murder in England several years before, and wanted to go back and pay the penalty. She said the Millerite meetings had brought her to God. Commenting on it, a Boston newspaper said, "Millerism seems likely to prove not the worst of the isms with which this country at present abounds" (*Daily Evening Transcript, July 10, 1843*).**

### **SEPARATION DEEPENS**

**It was becoming increasingly difficult for the Millerites to secure the use of Protestant churches in the larger cities. In the 1830s, ministers welcomed Miller's work, as it brought new members to their congregations. But open hostility was developing.**

"[Pastor] Parsons Cook of Lynn [Massachusetts] asserts in the *Puritan* that Mr. Miller's lectures are more demoralizing than the theater!"-- *Signs of the Times, February 28, 1840 [first issue of the Signs].*

Because the faithful were beginning to be edged out of their churches, the Millerite Tabernacle on Howard Street in Boston had been so successful, that **soon other tabernacles were built in Cincinnati, Akron, and Cleveland.**

**By the summer of 1843, the clergy of the various denominations were becoming quite openly antagonistic toward the advent awakens. The faithful found themselves no longer welcome in their own congregations!** The pastors feared they would poison the minds of others with their teachings, and those who had not accepted the message were frequently worldly minded and had rejected it.

**Spirituality seemed to be dying in the regular churches.** Silas Hawley, who had preached the dedicatory sermon at the Boston Tabernacle in May, wrote in August that his evangelistic labors had brought nearly 200 "hopeless and hardened cases" into repentance and conversion.- But they did not know where to go, since the churches were so dead.

"There is one thing, in reference to these converts, that should be noticed. The great mass of them have not joined any of the existing sects: they stand by themselves. Nearly all such are living, thriving Christians, and strong in the belief of the speedy advent. But most of those who have connected themselves with any of the sects, are dying in religion, and are giving up the doctrine of the speedy appearing. They have the spiritual asthma; it is hard for them to breathe."- *Silas Hawley, letter dated August 15, 1843, in Midnight Cry, August 24, 1843.*

About the same time Hawley wrote that an event occurred in Ohio which would later be seen as a pivotal turning point in the movement. **The first sermon on the second angel's message of Revelation 14 was written.** Charles Fitch, one of the most prominent of the awakening leaders, was writing a sermon entitled, "Come Out of Her, My People." He combined the message of Revelation 14:8 with that of the angel's message of Revelation 18:2-5. "Babylon the great is fallen . . . Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

As presented in this sermon, which he afterward printed, Fitch declared that Babylon was not only the Catholic Church, but also the great body of "Protestant Christendom." He said both had fallen by rejecting the soon, literal coming of Christ, or by spiritualizing it away. They did not truly love His appearing, and so were Babylon.

"To come out of Babylon, is to be converted to the true Scriptural doctrine of the personal coming and kingdom of Christ: to receive the truth on this subject with all readiness of mind,

as you find it plainly written out on the pages of the Bible, to love Christ's appearing and rejoice in it, and fully and faithfully to avow to the world your unshrinking belief in God's Word touching this momentous subject, and to do all in your power to open the eyes of others, and influence them to a similar course, that they may be ready to meet their Lord . . .

"If you are a Christian, come out of Babylon. If you intend to be found a Christian when Christ appears, come out of Babylon, and come out now. Throw away that miserable medley of ridiculous spiritualizing nonsense, with which multitudes have so long been making the Word of God of none effect, and dare to believe the Bible."--*Second Advent of Christ, July 26, 1843.*

**This message helped firm in the growing conviction of many of the advent preachers and lay-men that they should no longer remain in their cold, formal churches.**

**Fitch printed his sermon in a pamphlet which was given wide circulation. Soon the editors of the *Midnight Cry* reprinted it, with the declaration that "the call for it has been so great that we have inserted it in the *Cry*" (*Midnight Cry, September 21, 1843*).**

Gradually, as the believers became more fervent in their devotion to the nearness of the advent, they found themselves so out of place in their churches, that they began leaving them. Had not the Bible commanded them to "come out"?

**Reviewing the transition**, at first the advent believers had been advised to remain in their respective churches, and witness. But by 1842, mention was being made that opposition was developing, conflict with the clergy increasing, and egg—and stone—throwing was beginning to occur. By 1843 counsel began to be given to withdraw from the churches when oppressed, and to separate when necessary. By 1844, the call rang out clearly in sermon, periodical, and conference: "Babylon is fallen"; it is time to leave. By that time, the call was being given, not only to separate from the world, but to come out from those churches that continued to oppose and reject the advent truth. A great separatist movement resulted, with 50,000 to 100,000 responding.

"We are exceedingly blamed, censured, judged and condemned, shut out of most pulpits."-  
*Himes, Signs of the Times, August 3, 1842.*

"The doors of most of the churches in our land have been closed against this doctrine. Pastors have boasted that their churches were free from it . . .

"Sarcasm and ridicule have been the arguments used to disprove it. Members of churches, in good and regular standing, have been denied the privilege of exhorting their fellow servants to prepare for the coming judgment. And they have been excommunicated without a cause."-  
*Advent Herald, March 6, 1844. [About the turn of the year, the name of the Signs of the Times had been changed to the Advent Herald].*

#### **1843 ENDS**

**In October 1843, Nathaniel Southard, editor of the *Midnight Cry*, journeyed to Miller's home and afterward reported on his visit.** He was surprised at the many visitors, and noted that Miller had ten children (seven sons and three daughters), eight were living (one died at birth, the other at the age of three), and were grown and married. The eldest son, William S., was postmaster at Low Hampton (a cluster of farmhouses about four miles north of Hampton).

Southard also told the story, mentioned earlier, of the minister who once came to visit Miller and, disappointed that he was not home, asked to see "Miller's library." One of the daughters took him to the northeast room on the first floor, and showed him the Bible and *Cruden's Concordance*, with the comment, "This is his library." Southard added, "Her remark was strictly true, as far as theological writings were concerned. He never had a commentary in his house." Southard mentioned that, aside from carefully reading the advent papers, Miller only read the Bible.

**The scope and influence of the advent awakening by the fall of 1843 was remarkable.**

"They who limit the influence of Millerism to those who have adopted its chronology, form a very inadequate estimate of its effects. It has affected the whole public mind of New England."-  
*Zion's Herald, November 22, 1843, quoted in Signs of the Times, December 27, 1843.*

William Miller himself wrote in November:

"What a great change since I went to Massachusetts a few years ago. Then I had not a minister to stand by me except Brother Cole of Lowell-God bless him-and a few brethren in Randolph . . . In my last tour to Boston through Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, I was introduced to, and saw more than, one hundred servants of Christ, who are giving the mid- night cry, all of whom are better able to present, and defend the blessed truth than myself."- *Miller, letter dated November 3, 1843, to Himes, in Midnight Cry, December 7, 1843.*

If Miller met one hundred fellow preachers on that one tour, how many more must there have been? About the same time, Litch summarized the situation:

"Camp meetings and conferences have been held in all parts of the country . . . We have our depots for publications in most of the cities, especially in the Eastern, Northern and Western States, and to a limited extent in the South. There are second advent meetings held regularly in most of our cities, and hundreds of men devoting their whole time to the work of giving the cry. Within the past year God has raised up men of learning and talents to defend the cause, and that too, at a time when it was most desperately assailed both from pulpit and press."- *Litch, letter dated October 24, 1843, in Midnight Cry, November 2, 1843.*

**The Millerite captain of a canal boat running between Albany and Buffalo got into a discussion with some Norwegian immigrants, and asked if they had ever heard of the movement.**

"They asked if it was Mr. Miller's prophecy [I was referring to]. I told them it was so called. They then said that almost every paper among them, last fall and winter had more or less to say on the subject. I then showed them the chart I have on board. The moment they saw it, they said that they had seen it in their own country."- *Midnight Cry, September 21, 1843.*

**A missionary in the Sandwich [Hawaiian] Islands wrote to the Signs and said the papers were circulating there.**

"I have studied the Bible more within a fortnight [two weeks] past, than I have before, since I came to the Islands."--*Signs of the Times, October 4, 1843.*

Late in the year, Robert Winter wrote, reporting on the progress of the work in England: "The Advent doctrine is chiefly the talk in this country now, -the newspapers often contain sketches about the people in America, especially Mr. Miller. Various reports have been circulated about this country in reference to him.-Some say he is in prison-some say he is dead-some say he has denied his doctrine, and altered his calculations-some say he and many others have turned infidels . . .

"Thousands are now looking for the coming of the Lord, and believe it is at the door-and preachers of all denominations are now giving the midnight cry . . . The midnight cry has produced such powerful effects in some parts of this country, that nearly whole villages have turned to the Lord."-*Robert Winter, letter dated November 6, 1843, in Midnight Cry, January 4, 1844.*

How widespread was the movement? In November, Josiah Litch asked the question, "Is this everlasting glad tidings now being preached in all the world for a witness to all nations?" Here was the answer he gave:

"So far as we have the means of knowing, it is. Within the last few years, there has been a continuous effort by the believers in the speedy coming of the Lord, to send light on this subject to the whole world. And so far as the opportunity has offered, publications have been sent to every English and American mission in the world. These publications have gone to the various parts of the four quarters of the earth and various islands of the sea."-*Litch, in Signs of the Times, November 15, 1843.*

Then Litch cited several examples. He mentioned the work of Joseph Wolff, who "went through the interior and southern parts of Asia, proclaiming the coming kingdom of the Lord." Mentioning a group of "English Adventists" who were entirely independent of the Millerites, but had preached the soon return of Christ for years, Litch told of a whaling vessel that touched at a port on the coast of Chile, South America. The people there were not only acquainted with the Millerite message, but had heard the false rumor of April 23rd as the date. From a "hundred miles back in the country" people had come to the port city, so they could be there that day.

This coverage also included Russia, according to Joseph Marsh (*Voice of Truth, July 16, 1845*).

The editorial office of the *Midnight Cry* alone had received 3,500 letters in 1843.

A great awakening was in progress, which was laying the basis for the Adventist movement which was to follow.

"[By the summer of 1843] the second advent excitement had become quite extensive . . . ; lecturers had traveled over the country, with charts and hideous diagrams."-*Stephen Allen and W. H. Pilsbury, History of Methodism in Maine, 1793-1886, 122.*

In December, as the year was nearing its close, Himes wrote:

"The advent of the Lord is right upon us. All our efforts now should tend to prepare for this solemn event. To this end I propose to issue a million or more of little tracts of a practical

character, to cost from two cents to one mill a piece. These will be furnished to all our depots, where brethren willing to aid in the circulation can get them . . .

"The Lord in His providence is favoring us with the means, we intend to fill the land with these swift messengers of truth. Who will help in this work? What we do must be done quickly!"- *Himes in Midnight Cry, December 28, 1843.*

"The virgins are truly waking up, in every part of the country. The saints are 'lifting up their heads, and looking up.' The scoffers are raging and 'foaming out their own shame.' But the Lord is at the door, 'Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.' " -*Signs of the Times, November 15, 1843.*

#### **1844 BEGINS**

William Miller was almost 62 as the year opened. He had been in poor health for several years, yet had pressed forward in the giving of the message.

As the New Year opened, he had just returned home from a strenuous six-weeks lecture tour.

Resting for a few days, he penned these lines:

"Time rolls on his resistless course. We are one more year down its rapid stream towards the ocean of eternity. We have passed what the world calls the last round of 1843; and already they begin to shout victory over us. Does your heart begin to quail? Are you ready to give up your blessed hope in the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ? or are you waiting for it, although it seems to us that it tarries? Let me say to you in the language of the blessed Book of God, 'Although it tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not tarry.' Never has my faith been stronger than at this very moment."-*Miller, letter to Himes, in Signs of the Times, January 31, 1844.*

Already worldlings were declaring that Miller's predictions had been proven a grand hoax, since 1843 was past. Yet, near the beginning of 1843, William Miller had stated that, in his view, the advent would occur between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. So he wanted to encourage the believers to hold fast; victory was just ahead.

Miller called their attention to the prophecy of Habakkuk 2:3: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry."

He told them to base their faith on God's Written Word and the promises found in it.

"I call heaven and yourselves to witness, my brethren, that I have never taught anything to make you throw away any part of God's Word. I have never pretended to preach anything but the Bible. I have used no sophistry. My preaching has not been with words of man's wisdom. I have not countenanced fanaticism in any form. I use no dreams or visions except those in the word of God. I have not advised anyone to separate from the churches to which they may have belonged, unless their brethren cast them out, or deny them religious privileges. I have taught you no precept of man; nor the creed of any sect. I have never designed to make a new sect . . . I have wronged no man; neither have I sought for your honors or gold. I have preached about 4,500 lectures in about twelve years, to at least 500,000 different people. I have broken my constitution and lost my health; and for what? That if possible I might be the means of saving some . . .

"I hope, my brethren, you will continue faithful unto the end."-*Signs of the Times, January 31, 1844.*

In spite of harsh winter conditions, as many meetings as possible were held. On the 28th of January, Miller began a series in the Millerite Tabernacle in Boston. The seats and aisles were filled to capacity. People would stand for two hours, listening to a sermon, and then return the next night and do it again.

Beginning in early February, conferences were held in major cities--one after another.

Near the end of February, Miller was in Washington, D.C., holding lectures three times a day. The frail, old man kept right at it; week after week, in one city and then in another.

Learning what Miller really taught, men of rank and authority were deeply impressed.

"Men of the world who heard us, told us that Mr. Miller had been misrepresented, and that whatever his opponents might say about him, it would be difficult for them to disprove the doctrine by the Bible. We have advocates of our views, in the circles of the high and low. And although we never visited a place where we saw so few Bibles, yet every Bible there is, seems to be in good demand. The Bible has been read more generally within a few weeks, than for years before."-*The Advent Herald, March 20, 1844.*

Himes told of a senator who asked a reporter whether the Millerites were in town. Having been told that they were, the senator replied, "I thought so, for I never heard so much singing and praying in Washington before."

A Millerite who was employed as a watchman at the navy yard by the nation's capital, told Himes:

"You have made me a great deal of trouble . . . Why, before you came, I found it difficult to introduce the subject of the advent to the soldiers and officers of the Navy, but now they are all upon me: I have as much as I can do to hear and answer questions."-*Signs of the Times, March 20, 1844.*

As Miller preached, Himes was busy "scattering his papers and his tracts by the thousands, and a more hungry class of anxious inquirers I never saw. They throng us constantly for papers, books or tracts, for information on this important subject."- Ibid.

Himes was so happy at how well the work was progressing.

"And now in the capital of our country, the prospect is fair, yes, very fair; . . . When the last trying moment has come, and our enemies supposed that the advent cause would slumber in the tomb of bygone days; behold from hill and dale, from village and hamlet, from city and country, from kingdoms and states, from continents and isles, a redoubled shout is heard, ON! ON! To victory!"- *Signs of the Times, March 6, 1844.*

In William Miller's late-February report to Himes, for printing in the Signs, he knew that **there were only three weeks before March 21-the deadline for the close of the Jewish year 1843. Yet Miller was full of confidence** as he penned these lines:

"If Christ comes, as we expect, we will sing the song of victory soon; if not, we will watch, and pray, and preach until He comes, for soon our time, and all prophetic days, will have been fulfilled."--*Miller to Himes, in Signs of the Times, March 6, 1844.*

Yes, the vision might tarry, as the prophecy of Habakkuk declared; perhaps, in the providence of God, **there might be a little delay. But they would wait until it was fulfilled. Miller had always said that there could be errors in chronology**, down through the centuries. **Another factor was that there was more than one way of reckoning the Jewish year.**

They increasingly inclined to the position that the reckoning of Jewish time kept by the **Karaite Jews** was the true Biblical reckoning. **This would mean that the Jewish year, 1843, would not end until one lunar month later** than they had first reckoned. Indeed, a February editorial expressed the belief of many of the leaders:

"If we are mistaken in the time, we feel the fullest confidence that the event we have anticipated is the next great event in the World's History."-*Midnight Cry, February 15, 1844.*

**By this time a remarkable number of preachers were in the field.** In March 1844, L. D. Fleming, associate editor, declared that there were "something like fifteen hundred or two thousand lecturers are in the field proclaiming " 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,' therefore repent.' " *Midnight Cry, March 21, 1844).*

#### **SEPARATION INTENSIFIES**

**By February, 1844, the move toward separation from the churches was in full swing.** In anticipation of this, let us briefly return to the previous summer.

**By the summer of 1843, a major crisis was developing in the Maine Conference of the Methodist Church.** The crisis is discussed in the book, *History of Methodism in Maine*. "The second advent excitement had become quite extensive": so much so that about 30 Methodist pastors were either interested in Millerism or preaching it.

**So a meeting was called in July at the town of Bath, and resolutions were enacted against the advent awakening.** They were called the "Bath Resolutions." These resolutions were important.

The second resolution declared that Millerism was contrary to Methodism and must be regarded "as among the erroneous and strange doctrines which we are pledged to banish and drive away."

The third resolution claimed that the preaching of Millerism was "irreconcilably inconsistent" with the duties of the Methodist ministry and had a "disastrous tendency."

The fourth resolution ordered Methodist pastors "to refrain entirely from disseminating them in the future."

**As a result, Levi Stockman—who continued to preach the message was brought to trial and, as we noted earlier, was fired and disfellowshipped from the Methodist Church.**

Stockman declared that what the church had done to him and to others made the Maine Conference look "enough like the old 'Mother of Harlots,' to be one of her daughters!" (*Advent Herald, February 14, 1844*). "We are very near a crisis," he added, "an awful crisis, between ourselves and the churches on this question; it is not a difference of opinion merely, but a difference of action and spirit . . . The line of division is fast being drawn" (*Advent Herald, February 21, 1844*).

(Because his home was in Portland, you will recall that young 14-year-old Ellen Harmon came to Elder Stockman for counsel in 1842, counsel which greatly strengthened her Christian experience (*cf. Early Writings, 12, 17*).

**By early 1844, the Millerite papers repeatedly mentioned the ouster of ministers and lay-men from the churches, because they adhered to the advent faith. Others were leaving voluntarily.** A number of news clips could be quoted.

**The belief that the Protestant churches were a part of Babylon had begun to take hold of Millerite thinking as early as 1843, but it was greatly strengthening in 1844.**

Were not the churches becoming increasingly hostile and antagonistic toward the advent believers? It seemed as if they were rejecting God's Word.

**At the general conference of February 7, 1844, in New York City, it was recommended that those believers who were "denied the privilege of the open advocacy of the doctrine of the Lord's speedy coming to withdraw themselves** from all sectarian organizations, since they cannot remain in such fellowship but at the expense of piety, peace, and usefulness" (*Advent Herald, February 21, 1844*).

The concept in Revelation 18 which Charles Fitch had urged the year before, "*Come out of her, My people*," was now brought to the front. **The February 1, 1844, issue of the *Midnight Cry* included a lengthy article on the nature of "Babylon."** An introductory editorial made this statement:

"I consider it of *primary* consequence, nay, that it should take *precedence*, at this stage of the advent cause. I ask your attention to the fact, that John [the revelator] heard, as distinctly, 'a voice from heaven, saying, COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE,' as he did that '*the hour of His judgment is come.*' And you may depend that this cry must be heard as *distinctly*, and as *fully* made as the *other.*" -*Midnight Cry, February 1, 1844.*

Only a few months earlier, this editor was understandably cautious about Fitch's position, but now the same editor was heartily recommending it!

"We have not had the time . . . to give *all* its parts that thorough scrutiny which might enable us to say, there is no error here, but we are *sure*, so much of it is true and Scriptural, that we are happy, with great earnestness, to say to our readers, *do* read it, *immediately*, and lay not the subject aside till, with humble, prayerful searching, you have decided as to your duty; and then fearfully do your duty, for, 'Behold the JUDGE standeth before the door.' "-*ibid.*

**As separation increased, believers began forming together into small companies. They worshiped in home churches or erected buildings in which to hold their services.**

In Toronto, Canada, an Adventist lecturer found it impossible to hold meetings, for the number who wanted to attend were far too many to fit in any existing building, and the churches were all closed to them. When he told the people that he would have to leave, they asked him to wait--and in two hours they had collected enough money for the building, and had a 30 x 90-foot building erected in about a week (*ibid.*).

**Not experiencing the problems in his home congregation that others were, William tended to be far more moderate.**

As for William Miller, he was very slow to support this "come out" position, although by the spring of 1844 most of his associate preachers were doing so. In January 1844, he reiterated his view, and stated that he had not "advised anyone to separate from the churches to which they may have belonged, unless their brethren cast them out, or deny them religious privileges" (*Signs of the Times, January 31, 1844*).

His concern is expressed in a letter to Jonas Galusha, one of the leading Millerite workers in early April:

"But one thing more that has been a trouble on my mind. Do give me light. You are well aware that many of our advent brethren are giving another cry, '*Come out of her My people.*' I must tell you where my fear lies. 1st, I fear the enemy has a hand in this, to divert our attention from the true issue, the midnight cry, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh.' Again 2d, I fear we do err in our application of 'her.' "-*Miller, letter dated April 5, 1844, to Jonas Galusha.*

Miller's question was whether the "*her*" in Revelation 18:4 applied to Protestantism, as well as to Catholicism. **Yet, as he considered the matter, he recognized more clearly that God's people ought to be able to worship with fellow believers.** Miller wrote this about a month later: "I am not certain but that God will confound all of our sectarian churches, and bring out His people from among them. Yet it is plain God did command His people to associate themselves in churches, and bid them to walk in His precepts, and obey His ordinances. Now what must we do? To disobey God, I dare not. And to walk with and have a good fellowship with those who by their traditions, make void the law of God, I must not. To fellowship those who say and act as if they spoke the truth, that Christ will never come again to earth, . . . in me it would be wicked."- *Advent Herald, May 1, 1844.*



The conflict through which William Miller was passing was one which many of our own people are undergoing today. Some local congregations are warm supporters of our historic beliefs, while others could care less. In all our cares and conflicts, we must look to God for guidance. He will always lead us, individually, aright.

In mid-February, Miller had written,

"If the Roman church was the mother of harlots, then her daughters must be harlots: and therefore that portion of the Protestant churches that imitate and partake of the spirit of the old mother must be the daughters referred to."- *Advent Herald, February 14, 1844.*

Miller reversed himself after the Great Disappointment; and, in 1845, he declared that it was a "perversion of Scripture" to include a call out of Babylon as part of the advent message (*Miller, Apology and Defense, 25, 30*). He said that this added message had greatly harmed the giving of the message, so that it had not been as widely accepted.

In 1846, he bemoaned the trouble brought about by the "unholy crusade" against the Protestant churches (*Advent Herald, February 11, 1846*).

But Miller had forgotten the persecution his brethren had been experiencing. Those in his home church in Low Hampton were primarily fellow believers in the Advent message,-but it had not been thus elsewhere. (As we shall learn later, in September 1844, serious division came to his own church.)

**It is of interest that Himes did not accept the call to "come out" until September 1844, one month before the Disappointment.** By that time he had reluctantly concluded that "it is death to remain connected with those bodies that speak lightly of, or oppose, the coming of the Lord" (*Advent Herald, September 18, 1844*).

**The older leaders tended to be more conservative about the matter, but the newer ones welcomed the Revelation 18:4 concept.** In February, George Storrs directly challenged Miller's position when he, Storrs, declared that the faithful should not just wait in the churches until they were "turned out," but should obey the command of God to His children: "Come out of her My people" (*Midnight Cry, February 15, 1844*).

Yet Storrs was somewhat radical on this point, for he went on to declare that starting any new organization should not be done, for it would become Babylon as soon as it was put in place. The Spirit of Prophecy would later provide different counsel. Organization is not intrinsically evil, even though that is often the end result. In December 1843, Joseph Marsh had declared: "It is evident as much our duty now to come out of Babylon, as it was for Lot to flee from Sodom, on the morning before its overthrow. I am aware that by some this will be called ultraism, come-outism, or some other ism; but what of that? We should not seek to please men, but God. If He has told us to come out of Babylon, I do not know how we can be saved from the doom that awaits her, unless we obey His imperative command."-*Signs of the Times, January 3, 1844.*

**It is difficult to recognize the impact on the advent movement of this call "out of Babylon" which Fitch started. By early 1844 it had become one of the central features of Millerism. By that summer and early fall, estimates varied between 50,000 and 100,000 as to the number which had come out of the denominations.**

But it should also be understood that this coming out marked Millerism as a sectarian movement to be vigorously opposed. Such opposition only accelerated the exodus from the churches.

**Yet, we must admit that the "coming out" was inevitable. If Fitch had not started the call out, others would have. The situation in the local churches was becoming intolerable.** In any given congregation, there was peace and harmony only if nearly all accepted the message. If only a small number accepted the truth of the "advent near," they were increasingly persecuted by their former brethren—until they either left the church or were driven out.

**Throughout human history, church relationship has always been a problem for the minority—when the majority believe something else.**

We live with the same problem today.

### **FANATICISM INCREASES**

There was good reason why the Millerite leaders were issuing statements encouraging believers to stay close to Scripture and be guarded. **As with nearly every religious movement in which God directs, Satan was stirring up fanaticism to confuse the believers and cause the world to turn scornfully from the call to repent.**

**Some of those who had accepted the message had become extreme in their beliefs and practices.** In an attempt to defeat God's purposes, Satan was busily clouding issues and turning men's attention from truth to error.

**But the Millerite leaders had, since 1840, been warning the faithful to be on guard against such excesses.**

The first warning was given at their very first General Conference in October 1840. Early in 1843, Miller published a strongly worded caution against the rise of fanaticism, and pled with the people to remain with the Word of God. Yet problems arose anyway.

**Calvin French** was a Millerite lecturer who adopted the concept of "spiritual wifery" from some fanatics called "Cochranites." French declared that, since Christians were already perfect, they could do anything without sin, including living with someone they were not married to.

**John Starkweather** stirred up trouble at Himes' home church in Boston. Starkweather, who had accepted the message in 1842, maintained that a "physical manifestation," such as temporary loss of physical strength or other cataleptic phenomena, were needed before a person could be accepted by God. Only then, Starkweather maintained, would the person have "sealing power." He succeeded in winning over a number of the believers in Boston, before Himes refuted his teaching.

At a meeting in which Himes discussed the problem, Starkweather arose in the audience and began a commotion. Then a woman stood up and said, "You are throwing cold water" on God's work. To which Himes replied, "Throwing cold water! I would throw on the whole Atlantic Ocean before I would be identified with such abominations as these, or suffer them in this place unrebuked!" At this, Stark announced that the "saints" should follow him out of the church, which several did, and he started a group elsewhere in town.

It is an intriguing fact that Himes could not easily discipline or disfellowship Starkweather or his followers, since there was no church organization throughout Millerism.

**In the summer of 1844, Starkweather was a nuisance in at least three Connecticut camp meetings.** Litch, who witnessed the event, declared that the Philadelphia Public Ledger correctly reported an event at the Bridgeport gathering. While Starkweather preached, a man passed through the audience waving a green leaf over his head, crying "Hallelujah" and "Glory" as loud as he could. Then he would point to various individuals, and mutter a curse, damning them to hell. This pretended discerning-of-spirits activity, along with other acts of public fanaticism, was duly reported in the press [*Philadelphia Public Ledger, September 11, 1844*].

Commenting on the awful spectacle, Litch said,

"A more disgraceful scene, under garb of piety, I have rarely witnessed. It is evil, and only evil, and that continually . . . The origin of it is the idea that the individuals thus exercised are entirely under the influence of the Spirit of God, are His children, and that He will not deceive them and lead them astray; hence every impulse which comes upon them is yielded to as coming from God, and following it there is no length of fanaticism to which they will not go . . .

"If second advent meetings must be the scenes of such disgraceful proceedings as I there witnessed, I protest against more being held. It would be better for the cause never to have another at such a price."-*Litch, Midnight Cry, September 14, 1844.*

William Miller, who had seen some of these exhibitions as early as the end of 1843, sadly commented:

"My heart was deeply pained during my tour East, to see in some few of my former friends, a proneness to the wild and foolish extremes of some vain delusions, such as working miracles, discerning of spirits, vague and loose views on sanctification, etc." -*Signs of the Times, November 8, 1843.*

**Starkweather reached his apex of influence in the spring of 1844.** In April he tried to unite all the advent believers under his banner; but, interestingly enough, the fanatics turned on one another with anger and hatred, and accused each other of having the devil and "mesmeric ecstasies."

"Such a medley of discordant elements has not been often assembled. No two were of one mind and each wished to lead off in his own direction . . . Instead of escaping from Babylon, they had landed in the wilderness."-*Defense of Elder Joshua K Himes, 13-15.*

After the April meeting, Starkweather lost his following. He then deserted his wife, adopted French's "spiritual wifery" theory, and sank into lustful living.

**Fanaticism took many forms before, and after, the disappointments of 1843 and 1844.** One group said the faithful must become "little children" and creep and crawl around. They did so in their homes, and at church, and sometimes on the streets.

Another group taught that it was a sin to work. That fanaticism ended when the leader hanged himself.

Michael Barton wrote Miller: "I left my body and found myself flying thru the air. At length I found myself in heaven, and heard a voice saying 'I am Christ.' But the Being who said I am Christ left heaven with us and drew me after him to the earth, as a nickel would be drawn by a powerful load stone."

**You can see, from all this, why it was difficult, six months later, for young Ellen to go forth and begin telling others about her visions and experiences.**

We should keep in mind that Satan appears able to anticipate the workings and plans of God better than we. Recognizing that God would grant the prophetic gift to someone at about 1844, he raised up Joseph Smith, Michael Barton, Mary Baker Eddy, and other false prophets in the 19th century. The devil is shrewd.

Following the Great Disappointment of October 22, fanatical movements arose again. **Satan was determined to destroy the influence of the Spirit of Prophecy from its inception.**

**Satan knew that October 22, 1844, would mark the time when God would open the second apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary to view, revealing the need for complete obedience to the law of God** (Revelation 11:19; Great Controversy, 433-435, 451-453, etc.), **and that this renewed obedience would be paralleled by the gift of prophecy** (Proverbs 29:18; Joel 2:28; Hosea 12:13; 2 Chronicles 20:20; 2 Thessalonians 5:20-21; Revelation 19:10).

At the Exeter camp meeting in August, fanatics in the Watertown tent yelled "nearly all night and attended, with great excitement, noise of shouting and clapping of hands, singular gestures and exercises. Some lost their voice; others "literally blistered their hands" from excessive clapping (*Advent Herald, August 21, 1844*).

Believers from Portland, Maine [including young James White), had pitched their tent quite near the fanatics' Watertown tent. So they moved their tent to a quieter area. Yet, White noted that, as they left, the fanatics screamed that this proved they were being "persecuted," and they cried "persecution! and shouted glory to God over it, as if a new and brilliant victory had been gained" (*James White, Life Incidents, 157*).

**It was the Millerite journals which warned the believers about these dangers. If the faithful did not have these moderating cautions coming to them monthly in their mailboxes, they would have been more open to error and capture by the devil.** Defending the faith and warning against error was needed, just as much then as now. It was for such reasons that the believers made sure they received Himes' two monthly papers: Signs of the Times and Midnight Cry.

**When William Miller recovered from his illness in the late summer of 1843, he traveled through Massachusetts rebuking the fanaticism.** "From personal acquaintance with Mr. Miller, and a thorough knowledge of his teachings, we are happy to state that during his entire public life he had no sympathy whatever with those teachings and influences which lead to fanaticism."--*James White, Brief History of William Miller, 249*.

In one statement printed in the Signs, Miller, writing about the "wild and foolish extremes" of some professed believers, said he had "no faith in those who pretend beforehand that they can work miracles." He said that "whenever God has seen fit to work miracles, the instruments have seemingly been unconscious of having the power, until the work was done." Fanaticism, he said, "draws off Adventists from the truth, and leads men to depend on the feeling, exercise, and conceit of their own mind, more than on the Word of God" (op. cit., 222-224).

## **THE FIRST DISAPPOINTMENT**

### **March 21, 1843**

From upstate New York, a Millerite minister, S.C. Chandler, wrote to Miller and told of their experience. **He and his group were meeting in a district schoolhouse in West Troy, when a mob approached the building and demanded that they get out at once--or else!** Remonstrance were in vain, so they marched out of the schoolhouse, singing "Religion makes us happy!" and went to the home of one of the believers. Chandler added, "We are building a tabernacle and expect to have it done by the 7th of May, if time continues" (*S.C. Chandler, letter dated April 18, 1844, to William Miller*).

**"If time continues." How soon was the second coming? This was on the minds of all the advent believers.** At the beginning of 1843, William Miller had suggested that the advent would occur some time between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844.

**There was no sudden disappointment when March 21, 1844, came and went; for they might have made a small error in computing the chronology.**

Four days after the 21st, Miller wrote this from his home:

"I am now seated at my old desk in my east room. Having obtained help of God until the present time, I am still looking for the Dear Saviour, the Son of God from heaven, and for the fulfillment of the promise made to our fathers, and confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, that He would come again and would receive us to Himself. The time, as I have calculated it, is now filled up; and I expect every moment to see the Saviour descend from heaven. I have now nothing to look for but this glorious hope."-- *Miller, letter dated March 25, 1844, to Himes, in Advent Herald, April 10, 1844.*

On April 5, he wrote this to Galusha:

"My faith is strong, unwavering, and I hope true. I now am looking every day and hour for Christ to come. My time is full. The end of days is come, and at the end the vision shall speak and will not lie. I now have fixed my mind to watch and look and pray until my Saviour comes. It is a glorious hope. I soon shall be like Him, whom twenty-eight years ago I loved . . . I thought before this time I should be with Him, yet I am here a pilgrim and a stranger, waiting for a change from mortal to immortal.

"[The scoffers will scoff and say] 'Where is the promise of His coming?' But I must let them scoff. God will take care of me, His truth, and scoffers too. When then should I complain? If God should give a few days, or even months more as probation time, for some to find salvation and others to fill up the measure of their cup, . . . it is my Saviour's will and I rejoice that He will do things right."-*Himes, letter dated April 5, 1844, to Jonas Galusha.*

"Twenty-eight years ago" takes us back to Miller's conversion in 1816, when he began studying the Bible.

**The days passed, and then early in April the two leading papers carried a statement, entitled "Future Operations. "**

In it, Himes wrote this:

"It has been our sincere and solemn conviction, for three years past, that the second glorious and blessed Advent of the Saviour of the world, would have taken place before the present time. I still look for this event as being nigh; and cannot avoid the entire conviction . . . that it is the next great event, and must transpire within a very short time. It is not safe, therefore, for us to defer in our minds the event for an hour, but to live in constant expectation, and readiness to meet our Judge. With such views, we can make no certain arrangements for the future; except in conformity with the views of the shortness and uncertainty of time."-*Advent Herald, April 10, 1844, and Midnight Cry, April 11, 1844.*

**With this in mind, Himes added, any plans should be "in conformity with these views of the shortness and uncertainty of time." The faithful should continue their labors to share the message** of Christ's soon coming; for the good influence of what had already been done would be "perverted, or lost, unless it be followed up by continued effort, while probation shall last." Indeed, he said, the very fact, that "the mass of the church and ministry" were trying vigorously to "neutralize the vital influence of the 'midnight cry,' furnishes the strongest reasons for united and persevering effort." So "lecturing, conferences, tent, camp meetings, and the distribution of publications" should continue [ibid.).

From that time onward, announcements of camp meetings and conferences carried qualifying phrases, such as "Providence permitting," or "if time continues."

**Reactions to the passing of the time were mixed. While many of the Millerites remained faithful, some "walked no more with us,"** Miller noted (Miller, Apology and Defense, 24). As for worldlings, many still feared the advent, but many were rejoicing that it would never occur. Millerites heard comments like this on the streets: "What!- not gone up yet?-We thought you'd gone up! . . . Wife didn't go up and leave you behind to burn, did she?" [*Sears, Days of Delusion, 144.*)]

## CHRONOLOGY REVISIONS

**During the years of the movement there had always been a soft approach toward providing an exact date. This saved the movement from collapse in the spring of 1844.**

**Indeed, there had been talk that the spring date should be calculated according to the Karaite Jewish date** for the beginning of the Hebrew year rather than the date set by the Rabbinical Jews. **So Himes suggested that April 18/19, 1844, might represent the correct date.** (Midnight Cry, April 4, 1844).

The Karaite Jews apparently kept a more strict accounting of time than other Jews. **According to their method, the Jewish year, 1843, would close at sundown on April 18, 1844, rather than on the March 21 equinox date Miller had arbitrarily selected.** Miller had always admitted his dependence on the chronological system worked out by others. This explains his reluctance to fix upon a specific date. He did not want any to delay their preparation too long or to become discouraged if Christ did not come on the day expected.

Here is some technical data, you may wish to skip: I include it because it is important that we have, in writing, a clear understanding of the basis of our faith: Miller had set the date at the vernal equinox on March 21, 1843. But, according to Karaite reckoning, the Jewish new year would occur at the new moon (April 18/19 of that year), which would be the start of the Jewish new year. They therefore concluded that the year, "1843," would end at sunset on April 18, 1844. Therefore, the first day of the first month (Nisan) of "1844"-in true Jewish time-would have as its civil equivalent April 19, though beginning actually with the sunset of April 18. This is why it was written "April 18/19."

According to the early Karaites, the true sacred year of the Jews began the "new moon of the barley harvest" in Judea, which usually fell in April. This was the basis for their designation of October as the seventh month. true Jewish time, for the Jewish sacred year.

The Karaite Jews (Karaite meaning "literal adherence to the law") came into prominence under Anan in the eighth century A.D. The Karaites protested against the departure of the rabbinical Jews from the original Mosaic calendar. According to Scripture, the sacred year began with the new moon of Nisan, nearest the time of barley harvest in Judea, because in that month, at Passover time, the wave sheaf of barley was offered- and Palestine barley usually ripened in April.

In contrast, the rabbinical Jews, from the fourth century A.D. onward, began regulating the year by a fixed calendar, and started the year with the first day of the new moon nearest the vernal equinox. Because of this, their passover moons generally fell in March, one moon early.

**But the April 18 date, of the Karaites, came and went also.** So, in the issue of the Advent Herald immediately following April 19, Himes made this statement:

"All our expected and published time has passed: the Jewish year, civil and ecclesiastical, in which we expected the Lord, has expired, and the Savior has not been revealed; and we would not disguise the fact at all, that we were mistaken in the precise time of the termination of the prophetic periods."-*Advent Herald, April 24, 1844.*

**It was not a dramatic disappointment, since no specific day had been anticipated exclusively. Some became disillusioned and decided that Miller understood things entirely wrong. They returned to their old churches or lapsed into skepticism.**

**But the majority still believed that the ad-vent was near.**

**In the summer, a second dating discovery was made. Millerite lecturers suddenly discovered that the B.C.-A.D. system of chronology allowed for no "zero" year.**

If you count, inclusively, from 1980 to 1990, you will have counted 11 years. If you count from A.D. 10 to A.D. 20, you will count 11 years. If you count from 20 B.C. down to 10 B.C., you will count 11 years.

**But if you count from 10 B.C. over to A.D. 10, you will count-not 21 years, but 20 years! Let us count them together:**

**10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

**The problem here is that there is no "zero" year between 1 B.C. and A.D. 1. Therefore, in figuring the 2300 year prophecy, we have to count down to 1 B.C., and then up from 1 A.D. Doing this, we end up with one more year.** Counting 2300, straight from 457 B.C., we end at A.D. 1843. But if we count down and then count up, we arrive at A.D. 1844.

Sounds somewhat complicated? It really is not. Our number system requires that zero to operate correctly-and there is no zero year between 1 B.C. and A.D. 1.

At any rate, the Millerites did not discover the mistake in their reckoning until the summer of 1844. Therefore the terminal date had to occur sometime in 1844; but when that date might be, no one knew.

(The present author has, for years, been intrigued with the fact that, since the Millerites knew by the summer of 1844 that the final year of the 2300 ran from spring 1844 to spring 1845,-why should they have so totally given up by December 1844? The answer is the intensity of conviction which the Holy Spirit placed upon them from the middle of August till October 22-that IT WAS THE TERMINAL DATE!)

**Now, Let us return to the spring of 1844.**

### **THE TARRYING TIME**

**During this time, the Millerites came to a fuller and more complete understanding of a Biblical key to part of the puzzle: Why were they in this waiting period?**

An April 24 *Advent Herald* editorial provided the explanation when it connected the fact that all the virgins in the parable of the midnight cry tarried, slumbered, and slept (Matthew 25:5)-to an-other Bible prophecy. **It linked the tarrying to Habakkuk 2:2-3.** Verse two was already well-known to the Advent believers:

"And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it."-*Habakkuk 22.*

**This passage had been used in earlier years as the Biblical basis for preparing second advent charts for use in lecture work.** This verse was applied to the prophetic Chart of Fitch and Hale: Make charts, so he can run that readeth it. **But it was not until April 1844 that the significance of the very next verse was apprehended. It also spoke of that vision:**

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come."- verse 3.

And there is more: Consider verse 4:

"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith."-- verse 4.

The full impact of verse 4 was not realized until after the Great Disappointment. Those words helped the faithful weather the storm of discouragement, until God could plant their feet on a clearer under- standing of His Word.

In April 1844, as the Millerites considered this matter, it was clear that both Matthew 25:5 and Habakkuk 2:3 spoke of a tarrying time before the end of the vision.

**This is all the more significant, in view of the fact that the parable of the virgins (Matthew 25:1-12)was at the very heart of their message!** Their key phrases came directly from it ("oil in their vessels," "at midnight there was a cry made," "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." They now applied a new one, "while the Bridegroom tarried,"- and another they would soon consider: "and the door was shut."

**Then the Millerites found additional confirmation of the "tarrying time" in Hebrews:**

"For we have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."- *Advent Herald, April 24, 1844.*

**Then there was the experience of Noah and his family.** After entering the Ark, they had to wait seven days before the rain began falling. Referring to the crisis of the Flood, Jesus had predicted: "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:30).

**Another example cited was that of Sodom:**

"The threatened destruction did not fall upon the city as soon as some of them expected, or his [Lot's] wife would not have looked back."- *Western Midnight Cry, quoted in Midnight Cry, May 9, 1844.*

**The world had predicted that the Millerites would burn their Bibles and abandon the faith when the date passed; yet, instead, they were confident that God had something special for them. They were waiting.**

**It was at this time that the Millerites decided to adopt a distinctive name.** Since they were to be in this world a little longer, they must continue as a well-defined movement with a name that would properly describe them. What should that name be? In discussing the matter in the March 20 issue of the *Advent Herald*, Himes said they had "no particular objection to being called 'Millerites,' " the name given them by the world, but William Miller himself did not like the term; **so, Himes said, the most exact name which could be selected was "Adventists." That name, he said, "marks the real ground of difference** between us and the great body of our opponents." Himes then went on to say this:

"We are fully aware that they [the opponents] have endeavored to keep the question of time before the public as the obnoxious and heretical point (and we fully believe the time to be as distinctly revealed as any other part of the subject. On that account we have defended it. and thus it has become so prominent), still that is not, nor has it ever been, the only, or the main question in dispute. In fact, there is a greater difference between us and our opposers on the nature of the events predicted, than upon the interpretation of the prophetic periods, or their termination periods, or their termination."-*Advent Herald, March 20, 1844.*

**Thus matters stood at the beginning of the summer of 1844. What should be done? It seemed well to go out and proclaim the truth that Christ was coming soon,--and so the brethren went out and did just that!**

### **SUMMER 1844**

More days passed, and then **on May 2, six weeks after the March 21 terminal date, William Miller wrote a frank statement that there must be some error in his message.**

"Were I to live my life over again, with the same evidence that I then had, to be honest with God and man I should have to do as I have done. Although opposers said it would not come, they produced no weighty arguments. It was evidently guesswork with them; and I then thought, and do now, that their denial was based more on an unwillingness for the Lord to come than on any arguments leading to such a conclusion.

"I *confess my error*, and acknowledge my disappointment; yet I still believe that the day of the Lord is near, even at the door; and I exhort you, my brethren, to be watchful, and not let that day come upon you unawares.

"[Do not] be drawn away from the manner and object of Christ's coming; for the next attack of the adversary will be to induce unbelief respecting these."-*Miller, letter dated May 2, 1844, quoted in Sylvester Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller, 256.*

(It is intriguing that he would say this. In January 1843, he had estimated that the second advent would occur at some time between the spring of 1843 and the spring of 1844. But now, that 1844 was recognized as the correct year, he did not consider that the advent could occur at some time on down to spring 1845.)

**Three weeks later, a large advent conference convened in the Tabernacle in Boston.** Miller, Himes, and other leaders were present. **Miller arose and, as reported in the *Advent Herald* "frankly confessed his mistake** in the definite time at which he supposed the prophetic periods would run out" (*Advent Herald*, June 5, 1844).

However, a reporter from the *Boston Post* who was present, noted that **even though disappointed, Miller had not lost faith or courage.** "I never heard him when he was more eloquent or animated, or more happy in communicating his feelings and sentiments to others" (*Boston Post*, quoted in Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*, 262-1 63). **It is wonderful how encouraged a person can be, even under the most difficult circumstances, when he takes it all to the Lord in prayer and lays it there.** Each of us, in our own experience, has learned what this is like. Miller said that, because of his error, he was glad that his followers had not trusted in him.

" 'Father Miller' has proved himself to you all to be only a poor fallible creature, and if you had trusted in him you would have given up your faith, and I don't know what would have become of you; but now you stand on the Word of God, and that cannot fail you" (*Miller, Advent Herald, June 5, 1844*).

Another leader arose and noted that when, on earlier occasions, the movement appeared as though it "must come to nothing," "some unforeseen circumstance" would always "give the work greater power and stability than ever."

Then N.N. Whiting came to the podium and expressed his confidence in the message in these words: "If every Adventist connected with the cause should abandon it tomorrow, God would raise up new instruments to sustain and carry it forward (ibid.).

Another speaker at the conference noted that the lack of a close-knit organization "has left us to a great extent in a scattered condition, and deprives us of the benefit of mutual counsel" (ibid.).

Just as today, it was the periodicals which kept the scattered faithful united. Because of persecution, they had been turned out and had no other church body to turn to.

The advent awakeners, scattered abroad, were urged to "beware of everything which would exclude" the advent message "from the first place in your hearts, or deny it the first claim upon your efforts," and were warned to beware of entering any type of fanaticism.

**The advent message was larger than a date. It taught that Christ would return soon, something the major churches denied** (they all said a millennium of peace on earth must occur first). **The Millerites were disappointed, yet they were still waiting. It seemed that something was going to happen.**

The same month (June 1844), William Miller spoke at a meeting in New York City, which was attended by a reporter.

"He tried to define his present position, but appeared not himself to know what it was. One moment he would confess that he was mistaken, and the next say that he could discover no possible mistake, and go over his old calculations . . . One moment he would say that henceforth he could set no time, and the next he would say in words which I copied as they fell from his lips, 'I don't believe that we can possibly even imagine that it can be off a year,' and again, 'I believe it is as near, perhaps, as the spring is to the summer, or the summer to the harvest' . . . Then he would refer to his promise to confess himself wrong, if his prediction did not come true, and would say, 'Well, what must I confess? I'm willing to confess that Christ did not come in 1843- but I can't see where I'm wrong.' "-Christian Watchman, quoted in Vermont Chronicle (Windsor), June 26, 1844.

**It was at this time that Himes, Miller, and Miller's son, George, headed west for a speaking tour, which took them as far as Ohio.**

Other workers went elsewhere. There were camp meetings, city meetings, and grove meetings. The faithful set to work.

As he was about to embark on his trip west, Himes wrote:

"I have never witnessed a stronger, or more active faith. Indeed, the faith and confidence of the brethren in the prophetic word was never stronger. I find few, if any who ever believed on Bible evidence, that are at all shaken in the faith; while others are embracing our views."-*Advent Herald*, July 17, 1844.

**In mid-July, Himes wrote:**

"The trying crisis is past, and the cause is on the rise in this city. The calls for lectures in the vicinity, were never more pressing than now. The minister in charge of the Ebenezer station, Kensington (Protestant Methodist), has just come out on the doctrine in full and He has been driven out; many have followed him. They have set up a meeting, and there is a **considerable interest to hear on the subject.**"-*Advent Herald*, July 24, 1844.

**A week later, in Troy, New York, Himes wrote that an estimated 4,000 were present at the Sunday meeting**, and he added: "We had invitations to lecture in many places, which we could not fill."-- *Advent Herald*, August 7, 1844.

**It was the deep spirituality in these meetings which brought the people.** Their own churches had a dearth of warmth, a famine for the hearing of the Word of God—as could be found in the Adventist meetings.

**On July 31, Miller wrote that he had not given up the faith**, nor his confidence in God and in His Word. "I am now waiting every hour for what I then looked for," he explained.

"Our opposers ought to see that nothing will draw us from our present faith, but a better construction of Scripture. Let them give us this, and we yield. But misrepresentation, burlesque and ridicule, will never make a real Adventist give up his hope."-*Advent Herald*, August 14, 1844.

Frankly, it is unfortunate that they could not maintain this firm confidence after October 22, as they had done after March 21. God was testing His people; and, unfortunately, many fell away. The problem was that they did not keep trusting God's Word as before. They had been clearly shown that the prophecies were correct. So something did happen on October 22! But many afterward repudiated the fact.

**In Cleveland, Akron, and Cincinnati, Himes and Miller found large crowds eager to hear them speak.**



Yet it is a fact that, although the meetings were crowded with people, the great majority were those who had already accepted the message! **It was noted that, after March and April, there were relatively few conversions** of worldlings or Christians from the other churches. All who were not believers, seemed dead to the subject of the second coming of Christ!

**Articles about coming out of the churches were to be found in the Adventist papers this summer; and, on August 29, Himes, himself, publicly adopted this view.** He recounted the ridicule that had been heaped upon the believers, which finally caused many of them to arise and shake "off the yoke" and raise the cry, "Come out of her, My people" [*Himes, letter dated August 29, 1844, in Midnight Cry, September 12, 1844*].

"We are agreed in the instant and final separation from all who oppose the doctrine of the coming and kingdom of God at hand. We believe it to be a case of life and death. It is death to remain connected with those bodies that speak lightly of, or oppose the coming of the Lord. It is life to come out from all human tradition, stand upon the Word of God, and look daily for the appearing of the Lord. We therefore now say to all who are in any way entangled in the yoke of bondage, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.'" -Ibid.

**This clear-cut statement by Himes seemed to settle the ongoing controversy over whether or not God's people should separate from the apostate churches they belonged to.** Although Miller never really accepted this view, he did not oppose it until months after the Great Disappointment.

**By the summer of 1844, the Millerite movement had an existence separate from the churches. It had separate ministers, meetings places, journals, books, tracts, and camp meetings. Yet it had no central structure; it was not an organized denomination.**

The parallels to the independent Adventist ministries in our own day is striking. The causes are remarkably similar: opposition to fundamental truths which has led to many faithful being ejected-- or abandoning their former church homes.

In many respects this is an unnecessary tragedy. It would be well if all in our denomination would unite on the platform of our historic beliefs, which are clearly given in the Bible and abundantly confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy. Yet because this does not happen, very many are entering upon uncharted waters. We can only pray that Jesus will return soon.

**By early August, Himes was talking about plans to start mission work overseas, with himself and others traveling to England and elsewhere to preach. But all such thoughts unraveled as, in the middle of the month, the powerful Midnight Cry was experienced.**

## **-SECTION SIX -**

### **THE MIDNIGHT CRY**

**August 12-16 -October 21, 1844**

#### **BACKGROUND OF THE MIDNIGHT CRY**

**We are now entering upon the most interesting and significant portion of this historical study.** The preceding sections contained many worthwhile lessons for the people of God today. But, we are now going to turn our attention to a review of very deep truths.

*Beginning at this point, we will discuss certain portions in much closer detail. This is because the author--and very likely most readers--will want to know more about events from August 12-16 through October 23.*

**The phrase, "midnight cry," is adapted from Christ's parable in Matthew 25:1-13** about the wise and foolish virgins who were waiting for the Bridegroom to come forth that they might go "with Him into the marriage." During the lengthy wait, they "all slumbered and slept."

**Suddenly, at midnight, a cry was heard!** "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!"

All arose when the cry went forth at midnight. but only the wise virgins had taken oil in their lamps. The foolish went to buy oil while the wise went in with Christ to the marriage celebration, and the door was shut.

Regarding this event, Christ had declared, "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." The language of this parable is woven all through the literature of the Millerites.

**Returning from their trip west, Himes and Miller found that a growing belief in a new concept was gripping the faithful. It was as if a powerful windstorm of activity was**

**at work; a movement which Himes, Miller, and the other leaders seemed powerless to stop. What had happened while they were gone?**

**Few of our people today realize that the story of the changeover to a fall date for the advent actually began with William Miller in May 1843**, when he called attention to the autumnal Hebrew festivals (day of atonement and feast of tabernacles) as typifying the second advent, in contrast with the spring festivals (Passover, unleavened bread, and Pentecost), which were fulfilled in connection with the first advent.

"All the ceremonies of the typical law that were observed in the first month, or vernal equinox, had their fulfillment in Christ's first advent and sufferings; but all the feasts and ceremonies in the seventh month or autumnal equinox, can only have their fulfillment at His second advent."- *Miller, letter dated May 3, 1843, in Signs of the Times, May 17, 1843.*

This printed statement was frequently cited in the early fall of 1844 as the real inception of, what became known as, "**the seventh month movement**" (*Advent Herald, September 18, 1844, October 2, 1844; Midnight Cry, October 11, 1844; etc.*). But Miller's suggestion lay dormant for 17 months.

**Actually, even before the Millerites came to the fateful date of March 21, 1844, and found that nothing had happened, -a new date was being suggested by someone named Snow.**

**Samuel Sheffield Snow** (1806-1870) was a Congregationalist, then a skeptic, and later a Millerite lecturer. He was converted to the message at the first Millerite camp meeting, in East Kingston, at the end of June 1842.

Until 1844, Snow centered his work in New York City. In January 1844, he invited Himes to the city to begin a course of lectures in Franklin Hall. But friction gradually developed between Snow and the leaders, and many believers over his insistence on an autumn advent rather than a spring advent date. This early opposition was in spite of the fact that Miller had earlier recommended such an idea.

**As early as February 16, 1844, Snow wrote a letter to the Signs which Himes printed.** In it he declared that the great time prophecy of 2300 years—which was at the heart of Millerite prophetic reckoning—would not end until the autumn of 1844.

Whereas the Millerites were declaring that the second advent would occur at some time between the beginning and end of the Jewish year 1843 (March 21, 1843, to March 21, 1844), Snow maintained that the tenth day of the Jewish seventh month, Tishri, the Jewish Day of Atonement, as the true ending date of the prophetic 2300 years.

However, in February, Snow set no particular date; just that it would occur some time in the autumn of 1844. **As we shall learn below, it was not until August (only a week or so before the fateful Exeter camp meeting) that he set October 22 as the date.** This is significant. The midnight cry could not begin until that date was set, so it could not have begun prior to Exeter.)

**His letter, dated February 16, 1844, and printed in the February 22 issue of the Midnight Cry, received almost no attention.** Indeed, the editor of the *Midnight Cry* prefaced the letter with a comment expressing serious doubts about the correctness of Snow's reasoning. Few responded when, during January and February, Snow preached on the fall of Babylon and the coming of the Lord, as the Bridegroom to the marriage, on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month, 1844. In April he moved his family out of the city to Worcester, then returned to New York City where hostility toward his dating had lessened. After preaching three weeks in New York City, Brooklyn, and Newark, he accepted an invitation from George Storrs to come to Philadelphia. **Storrs accepted the message, the first important minister to do so.** [As you may recall, Storrs was also the Millerite preacher who—beginning in 1841—led out in teaching the truth of conditional immortality.)

**In May, Snow wrote a letter to the Midnight Cry.** Having returned to Worcester, he wrote this: "John's ministry began in the latter part of A.D. 26, and ended with the autumn of A.D. 27. Here commenced the week of the confirmation of the covenant, i.e., the establishment of the gospel as a divine system, by the mighty works of Christ. Three years and a half from this point brings us to the spring of A.D. 31, when our Lord was crucified in the 'MIDST [i.e., middle] of the week.' Three years and a half more [the last half of the week], during which the word or covenant was confirmed by them who had heard the Lord (Heb. 2:3), brings us down to the autumn of A.D. 34 . . ."

"I believe this argument to be based on correct premises, and to be perfectly sound. What then is the conclusion? It must certainly be this: That as the 70 weeks ended in the

autumn of A.D. 34, the remaining part of the 2300 days, i.e., 1810, being added, brings us to the autumn of A.D. 1844 . . . But I am confident, from the light I have received from God's blessed word, in those glorious types which He has given in mercy, for His children to understand, that our King and Saviour will appear in His glory in the seventh month of the Jewish sacred year." - *Snow, Midnight Cry, May 2, 1844 [brackets in the original]*.

At first, there was but little interest or response, but **when Snow preached on July 21 in the large Boston Tabernacle** on the text, "Behold, the Bride-groom cometh [on the tenth day of the seventh month]; go ye out to meet Him," **some began to be roused.**

It was not until early August that Snow set forth the specific day as October 22, 1844, our calendar equivalent of the tenth day of the seventh month in that year according to the old Karaite Jewish calendar. In a four-page paper, entitled True Midnight Cry, published in August 22 (published at Haverhill, Massachusetts), Snow first placed the October 22 date in print.

Here is some technical data on this: Snow's position was based on the Karaite "true reckoning" for the sacred year. About a week before the Exeter camp meeting, Snow determined that the specific day of the expected advent would be October 22, which would be our calendar equivalent of the tenth day of the seventh month (the day of atonement) in the Karaite calendar year for that year (1844).

Based on Karaite data, in that year the first day of the seventh Jewish month, Tishri, fell on October 13. Therefore the 10th day of the seventh month (the day of atonement) would fall on October 22, as its civil equivalent—although technically beginning the previous sunset.

**So the true day of atonement in 1844 was from sunset October 21 to sunset October 22** (written October 21/22 by the Karaites). This is because every Jewish day, from sunset to sunset, always covers parts of two civil days (and civil days, of course, run from mid-night to midnight). But, since the greater part was on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, that was commonly spoken of as its civil equivalent.

***Now let us turn our attention to the event which marked the beginning of the Midnight Cry:***

#### **EXETER: THE MIDNIGHT CRY BEGINS**

**A five-day camp meeting began at Exeter, New Hampshire, on Monday, August 12, 1844. As scheduled, it ended on Friday, August 16.**

Exeter was only a few miles from East Kingston, where, in 1842, the first Millerite camp meeting had been held.

**"You are going to have new light here, some- thing that will give new impetus to the work." These words rang in Joseph Bates' mind** as he traveled by train to the Exeter, New Hampshire, camp meeting. The Lord was convicting him that something special was to occur. (He wrote of this only three years afterward, while the memory was still vivid.)

God knew whom to select to give this conviction to. Joseph Bates was a man of utmost integrity, who wanted to know and do right.

All those in attendance believed that, since April, they were living in the "tarrying" or "slumbering" time—after the close of [the Jewish year] "1843."

But they were also in a state of uncertainty and suspense.

**At this point, a significant question comes to mind, one which Millerite biographers do not discuss: On what day did the breakthrough at Exeter occur?** We really do not know. Here is the present writer's speculation on this point:

It could have been on any day between the 12th and 16th. We do know that fanatics in the Watertown tent had bothered those in James White's tent earlier. —but that could have been on the night of Sunday the 11th, just after tents were initially set up. Yet, perhaps to keep Sunday sacred, the people arrived in their tents on Monday and set them up that night. This would mean that Tuesday morning marked the first full day of meetings.

The people at the meeting were bored. This would not be likely to happen on the first morning of the meeting! Indeed, many might be outside, visiting with new-found friends. So these are additional reasons why Snow probably did not speak that first morning or, very possibly, the second.

The audience was bored. This may bring us to Wednesday, the 14th or Thursday, the 15th.

The above points imply that Snow did not begin speaking early in the week. There are also other reasons why he is more likely to have spoken later in the week, very possibly not until Thursday:

We know that Snow gave two more studies after that first one, given in a morning meeting. One would expect that the others were given that same day.

We would expect that, after that first morning meeting, the assembly would desire to hear almost nothing else but additional lectures by Snow. Yet he only gave a total of three. Why not four or six? Surely, in view of all the research he had done—and the need of the people to clearly understand it, so they could share it when they left the campground, —he would go over it more than three times.

This suggests that Snow arrived late, possibly not until Wednesday or Thursday, and only had time to give three lectures. Notice the fact that he arrived on a horse. He had brought nothing but a sleeping bag and a little food. Perhaps he did not hear about this camp meeting till late, and hurriedly rode there.

It is likely that there was only one brief, concluding meeting on Friday morning, the 16th, and then the assembly packed and went home. This possibility would indicate all the more strongly that Snow did most or all of his speaking on Thursday, the 15th.

The fanatics left as soon as Snow presented the light. The Watertown fanatics packed their tent and left immediately. They could have done that on Thursday afternoon.

So, in this study we shall have to content ourselves with dating the beginning of the Midnight Cry as August 12-16, 1844.

***Here now is what happened on this, the most important single meeting in the Millerite movement:***

One day that week, Joseph Bates, a leading Millerite was speaking, but interest lagged and the time dragged. (J.N. Loughborough later said Bates was speaking at a morning meeting; quoted in Review, August 18, 1921). His hearers were all too familiar with what he was saying. Bates was but repeating prophecies familiar to them. Trying to bolster their confidence and faith in the message, he was recounting prophetic evidences.

**Suddenly, a man rode up to the camp on horseback and dismounted. It was Samuel Snow.** Tying his horse to the railing, he entered the meeting tent, and sat down beside his sister, Mrs. John Couch, wife of one of the advent preachers who was seated at the edge of the crowd that filled the large tent.

**In whispered tones, Snow told her something. At this she became excited.**

What was it that he told her? We do not know. The present writer suggests that it had to be something new—for she was his sister. For months he had talked and wrote her about his fall dating theory. The present writer suggests that it was the fixing of the exact date, October 22, which he had only determined about a week earlier.

**At this, she could contain herself no longer. Arising from the chair, and in a ringing voice, she addressed Bates:**

"It is too late to spend precious time upon these truths, with which we are familiar, and which have been blessed to us in the past, and have served their purpose and their time."—Mrs. John Couch, quoted in James White, *Life Incidents*, 159-160.

The entire congregation turned to see who was speaking. **Then she added, "Here is a man with a message from God." Bates stopped speaking, as she continued.**

"It is too late, brethren, too late, brethren, to spend precious time as we have since this camp meeting commenced. Time is short. The Lord has servants here who have meat in due season for His household. Let them speak, and let the people hear them. 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.'"—Op. cit., 160.

Joseph Bates happened to be a man who was always a learner (keep in mind that he would be the first and only major Millerite leader to later accept the Bible Sabbath). He replied, "Let him come and deliver his message." **Then, in the informal manner back then, Bates sat down and Snow came to the front.**

**As Snow began, he traced through his position. His logical reasoning carried weight, and his conclusions seemed inescapable. The audience, preachers, and laymen were electrified by what he had to say.**

We know that he gave three lectures at Exeter, in which he fully explained his position. However, we do not know whether they were all given on this same day.

***What was Snow's message?***

**Samuel Snow had given a new interpretation of Daniel 8:14. That interpretation, in turn, led to a new understanding of the Bridegroom parable of Matthew 25.**

Since it was the "sanctuary" which was to be cleansed, **we should expect this "cleansing" to occur on the time of the year when the Biblical cleansing of the sanctuary**

**occurred!** That was the day of atonement, which was explained in detail in Leviticus 16, which repeatedly referred to this "cleansing."

Snow explained that, on the basis of the Biblical types, the Millerites had been in error in expecting Christ to return in the spring of 1844. He showed that, in A.D. 31, the feasts of Passover, first fruits, and Pentecost had been fulfilled by Christ at the exact time in the year as in the annual celebration. That was because "God is an exact timekeeper." Snow then pointed out that "those types which were to be observed, in the seventh month, have never yet had their fulfillment" (*Snow, True Midnight Cry, August 22, 1844; cf. Advent Herald, August 21, 1844*).

"The important point in this type is the completion of the reconciliation at the coming of the high priest out of the holy place. The high priest was a type of Jesus our High Priest; the most holy place a type of heaven itself; and the coming out of the high priest a type of the coming of Jesus the second time, to bless His waiting people. As this was on the tenth day of the 7th month, so on that day Jesus will certainly come, because not a single point of the law is to fail. All must be fulfilled."--*Snow, True Midnight Cry, August 22, 1844; cf. Advent Herald, August 21, 1844*.

"Snow then noted that the 2300-year prophecy ended in 1844, not 1843, therefore Christ would return on "the tenth day of the seventh month" of "the present year, 1844" -*ibid.*

**When would the day of atonement occur in 1844? According to the most accurate Hebrew reckoning, it would be October 22.**

**Snow also explained his view that, right now- August 1844--was the time for the "true midnight cry" to begin. Here is his reasoning:**

Disappointment had come in the spring of 1844, and now the virgins were sleeping while the Bridegroom tarried. But the parable declared that "at midnight" the cry was raised, "Behold, Bridegroom cometh." In prophecy, a 24-hour day symbolizes a year, therefore a "night" would be half a year. **"Midnight" would be midway in that six-month period, when the true cry should be sounded. —And the August camp meeting was close to three months before the October 22 date.**

George Storrs, who had accepted Snow's position, explained it this way:

"How long is the tarrying time? Half a year. How do you know? Because, our Lord says, 'at midnight,' while the Bridegroom tarried. The vision was for '2300 evening-mornings,' or days. An 'evening,' or night is half of one of those prophetic days, and is therefore six months. This is the whole length of the tarrying time." —*Advent Herald, October 9, 1844*.

"The tarrying time is just half a year. When did we go into this [tarrying] time? Last March or April. Then the latter part of July would bring us to midnight. At that time God put this cry into the hearts of some of His servants, and they saw, from the Bible, that God had given the chronology of the tarrying time and its length. There it is, in the 25th of Matthew. 'At midnight there was a cry made, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.*' Here we are—the last warning is now sounding. O heed it ye virgins. *Awake, awake, awake!*"-*Ibid.*

**Three years later, after describing the words that rang in his ears as his train sped toward the Exeter camp meeting, Bates wrote this recollection of the impact of that discovery:**

"There was light given and received there, sure enough; and when that meeting closed, the granite hills of New Hampshire rang with the mighty cry, *'Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him!'*" As the railroad cars rolled away through the different States, cities, and villages of New England, the rumbling of the cry was still distinctly heard. Behold the Bridegroom cometh! Christ is coming on the tenth day of the seventh month! Time is short! Get ready! Get ready!! . . . Who does not still remember how this message flew as it were upon the wings of the wind—men and women moving on all the cardinal points of the compass, going with all the speed of locomotives, in steamboats and rail cars, freighted with bundles of books and papers, wherever they went distributing them almost as profusely as the flying leaves of autumn."-*Bates, Second Advent Waymarks and High Heaps, 30-31*.

A few days after the Exeter meetings, Snow published a summary of his arguments in a four-page paper, entitled *The True Midnight Cry*.

George Storrs wrote vigorously in support of the message. According to him, the earlier call was "but an alarm, NOW THE REAL ONE IS SOUNDING" (*Midnight Cry, October 3, 1844*). **He noted that the tarrying time could not be more than six months in length, since the night of tarrying represented one-half of a prophetic day. Thus the tarrying time**

**(which had begun in March) would have end in the autumn' But the cry is to go forth at or about halfway through the tarrying time.** And thus:

"The present strong cry of time commenced about the middle of July, and has spread with great rapidity and power, and is attended with a demonstration of the Spirit, such as I never witnessed when the cry was '1843.' It is now literally, 'go ye out to meet Him.' "-*Storrs, Midnight Cry, October 3, 1844.*

**There had been set in motion at Exeter, New Hampshire, a movement within the movement—for the Millerite leaders were very slow to accept the argument for a definite time.** Although the principal leaders opposed the setting of a definite day, the bulk of the believers welcomed the message-and spread it rapidly.

"It swept over the land with the velocity of a tornado." —Advent Herald, October 30, 1844.

From Exeter, the message soon permeated the advent awakening, providing believers with a renewed "burden of the work of spreading the message.

**The power of the Holy Spirit was felt, and it caused fanaticism to evaporate.** There was a solemnity that put much of the earlier fanaticism to rest. According to James White, a "power almost irresistible" attended the preaching that Christ would come in October.

You will recall the earlier mention of how the fanatical occupants of the Watertown tent at the Exeter camp meeting hollered, clapped, and screamed. This was the same Exeter camp meeting to which Snow shortly after arrived and preached. As soon as he did, James White said later, the fanatics packed their tent and left!

**Another interesting fact is that it was Joseph Bates, a sincere man open to light, who was given the message as he traveled by train to Exeter, that he would there learn an important new truth. Then, in God's providence, he was the one preaching when Snow rode up on his horse,** dismounted, and entered the large meeting tent. If someone else had been the speaker, he might not have let Snow speak. But Bates was ready to listen.

**The Lord wanted the attention of the multitudes drawn to October 22, as the time when a very important event was to occur! Then, as the people heard and shared the news, the power of the Holy Spirit witnessed to the fact that October 22 was the day when, yes indeed, a very great event was going to happen!**

When nothing observable occurred on that day, the faithful knew that they dare not deny the work of the Spirit—so what was it that had happened on that day? They must restudy the Bible. Then the Lord told these faithful, waiting, praying ones.

**Everything dovetailed to enable a scattered "little flock" to be ready to accept the combined truths of the heavenly Sanctuary, the investigative judgment, the Bible Sabbath, the Spirit of Prophecy, conditional immortality, and the final annihilation of the wicked, when these truths were given to them.**

Before the crucifixion, the Lord guided that the triumphal entry would call attention to the great event about to happen. Though the people misunderstood the nature of the event, their attention was called to what did occur so they would afterward study it out in the Written Word.

It was the crucifixion of Christ, instead of His crowning and it led directly to the beginning of His ministry in the first apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary. The date of this event had been predicted in the 70 week prophecy (Daniel 9:26), as nearing the cutoff date for the first portion of the 2300-year period.

Now, 1,813 years later, the end of the 2300-year prophecy had occurred and God intended that this should be recognized also.

**Before Christ began His ministry in the second apartment of that great Temple in heaven, once again the Lord focused the eyes of the multitudes upon it—so they too would afterward study through to its meaning.**

Here is another intriguing fact: **After October 22, the Lord let everything drift to an immediate halt. All the excitement and enthusiasm was at an end. Yet the Jewish year, 1844, would not end until the following spring—and the Millerites knew that!** God's plan was that the attention of the faithful should be prepared to turn to the new light to be given them outside of the Millerite movement. If they had enthusiastically continued searching for new, different, better dates,—they would not have been prepared for the light which was to come on the October 22 date.

**AUGUST 16 TO OCTOBER 21, 1844**

**Ten weeks, minus three days, or 67 days—that was the length of time that the Midnight Cry was proclaimed! Everywhere the people went, carrying the message. Like a hurricane, it spread across the country. As noted earlier, an immense amount of literature was printed and circulated during this time.**

**As the midnight cry spread, the public press, as well as the rabble, became furious.** Satan goaded them on to untruthful statements and acts of oppression.

By the early part of October, mobs were becoming an increasing menace to the Millerites in some of the larger cities. **In Boston, on Saturday night, October 12, while the janitor was sweeping the Tabernacle,** preparing it for the next morning's meeting, a mob broke into the building. Police arrived and dispersed them. The next morning, as the believers were in the building for the service, a very large crowd gathered in the street outside. They decided not to hold their regular meeting that evening. When night came, the mob once again was milling around outside the building.

Himes then issued a notice, which was printed in several newspapers, in which he briefly stated their worshipful meeting, the action of the mob, and their forgiveness of what had taken place.

The news of this traveled quickly and was twisted by some other newspapers.

"In Boston, the scenes in reference to this delusion [of Millerism] are equally painful and wicked. The Post informs us that the excitement, at the Miller Tabernacle, produced by the second advent believers, rose to so high a pitch on Saturday that the principal authors of it became alarmed and announced that there would be no more public lectures there at present and advised their deluded followers to repair to their homes."—*Daily Eastern Argus (Portland, Maine), October 15, 1844.*

Yet the only "excitement" by Millerites that night at the Tabernacle was the sweeping of the lone janitor of the empty building.

Later in the month, the editor of another Portland newspaper wrote this:

"We have never before written a paragraph on this subject, and during the whole period of the agitation, but very few statements concerning it of any kind have been allowed a place in our paper. It has appeared to us that much of the newspaper gossip about it has been exceedingly idle, and not a little that is very mischievous. So far as related to the actual believers in the immediate advent, the remarks have been mostly of a ridiculous character."—*Portland Daily Advertiser (Maine), October 26, 1844.*

**In Philadelphia, the Millerites were ordered by the sheriff to stop holding meetings at night in their church, because of the mobs.**

"[The services at the Second Advent Chapel on Julianna Street] were closed last evening by order of the sheriff, in consequence of a large gathering of persons on the outside of the chapel. There will be no further evening services. Providence permitting, the chapel will be open daily at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m." —*Notice posted in Philadelphia Public Ledger, October 14, 1844; quoted in Midnight Cry, October 19, 1844.*

One citizen of the city was so irate about the matter that he wrote the newspaper.

"As fully convinced of the fallacy of the Millerite doctrine as yourselves, and having therefore no personal grievances to complain of in the closing of their place of worship in the evening by order of the sheriff, I would respectfully inquire by what authority this was done . . .

"In regard to the Julianna Street Church, I believe it is admitted, that, however much mistaken, the congregation had a full right to hold meetings. Why then, instead of protecting them in the exercise of that right, and dispersing or arresting their disturbers, were they ordered to close in the evening for fear of being still further disturbed? . . . No journal has ventured to express its opinion—not even your own; of which, judging from its whole course, permit me frankly to say, better things were expected by AN ANTI-MILLERITE."—*Philadelphia Public Ledger, October 21, 1844.*

**Many other mob attacks occurred. Sometimes windows were broken, sometimes bonfires were lit outside meeting places.**

A number of newspapers sent reporters to observe the proceedings at Millerite meetings, and provided objective reports on how sedate, logical, and respectable they were. Here is but one example:

"Very many persons believe that the deplorable delusion of Millerism is confined to persons in the humbler walks of life, to the ignorant and utterly uninstructed. This is a great mistake. There are to be found among the followers of Miller persons from almost every rank of society; from the educated professional man to the unlettered day laborer; and of women

attached to the doctrines of the pretended prophet might be selected many whose presence would grace a fashionable drawing room, and numbers who as wives and mothers are exemplary in every particular of womanly duty. In the public meetings of the sect held in this city addresses and prayers are made which in all points of rhetoric and requisites of correct declamation would not discredit many admired and popular pulpits. To hear these is to be convinced of the sincerity of the speakers and their auditory, and moved to the keenest pity by the manifestations of contrition and horror felt by the individuals of the assembly."— *North American (Philadelphia newspaper)*, October 16, 1844.

#### **THE LEADERS COME IN**

**From town to town and city to city, the believers carried the midnight cry message. But the Millerite leaders were slow to accept it.**

**Shortly after Exeter, the Advent Herald, gave it only a passing notice:**

"Brother Snow remarked with great energy on the time [Oct. 22, 1844] and displayed much research in his presentation of the evidence which, in his view, points to the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish sacred year, as the day of the Lord's Advent."—*Advent Herald*, August 21, 1844.

**But not George Storrs. He eagerly set to work preaching and publishing.** Here is but one example of the depth of his feelings:

"I take up my pen with feelings such as I never before experienced. Beyond a doubt, in my mind, the tenth day of the seventh month, will witness the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven. We are then within a few days of the event. Awful moment to those who are unprepared-but glorious to those who are ready. I feel that I am making the last appeal that I shall ever make through the press. My heart is full."— *Bible Examiner*, September 24, 1844.

**The seventh-month movement caught the established Millerite leaders by surprise. Himes and Miller were working in Ohio when the Exeter camp meeting took place, and they did not learn of what happened until they found believers spreading the message everywhere.** There is no indication that, with the exception of Bates and Storrs, any of the foremost Millerite lecturers accepted this grass-roots development until late in September. Most did not accept it until October.

This was partly due to the fact that a relatively minor figure had put forth the idea, but also because the leaders had never favored pointing to a certain day for the advent to occur.

In that August 21 *Advent Herald* comment, the editors cautioned that "we should hesitate before we should feel authorized to attempt to 'make known' the very day."

**Although the advent journals did not publish Snow's points until later, Snow's four-page paper, *True Midnight Cry*, published a few days after Exeter, was scattered by the thousands.**

As for Josiah Litch, that same issue of the *Advent Herald* included his attempt to pour cold water on the idea.

"I cannot see, for the life of me, how our dear brethren make it out so much to their own satisfaction, that the 2300 days end in that month . . . Many will be injured by their confidence in the Lord's coming [to occur] only at that time."— *Advent Herald*, August 21, 1844.

**By mid-September Apollos Hale, one of the Herald editors, was willing to consider the possibility** that there might be something to the idea. He remarked that it was "highly worthy of consideration."

"From a fair consideration of all the facts in the case, we must say, that if we should look to any one day, in preference to others, as the time for the Advent, we should be disposed to look to [the tenth day of the seventh month, October 22]."—*Advent Herald*, September 25, 1844.

The leadership dared not ignore it, yet they could not endorse it. They did not know what to do with the rising crescendo of enthusiasm. All they could do was hope that it would go away.

**By September 20, Himes and Litch were still planning to go on their missionary trip to Britain.** Himes said that he "dare not" alter his plans, even though he could not "reasonably expect assistance from the dear brethren who have strong faith in the seventh month [ibid.).

**Miller was back home, exhausted from his trip west.** He said he would "never be able again to labor in the vineyard as heretofore." He also mentioned that he had lost control of his church at Low Hampton [*Bliss, Memoirs of William Miller*, 268- 269).



(The church had been built on part of his farm. He had earlier given it to the believers there. But, while he was in Ohio, the majority of the members turned it over to an increasingly restive minority who did not accept the second advent message. Now he was experiencing problems in his home church, which other believers had been enduring—and leaving because of—for years.)

**Near the end of September, the leaders began accepting the date: Joseph Marsh's Voice of Truth on September 25; Nathaniel Southard's Midnight Cry on September 26.** In the first issue of October, Southard wrote:

"The weight of evidence that the Lord will come on the tenth day of the seventh month is so strong that I heartily yield to its force, and I intend, by the help of the Lord, to act as if there was no possibility of mistake—to act as if I knew that in less than one month the opening heavens would reveal my Saviour."—*Midnight Cry*, October 3, 1844.

**On September 30, Joshua Himes wrote a letter to Miller indicating that he was softening.**

"This thing has gone over the country like lightning. Nearly every lecturer has come into it, and are preaching it with zeal, and great success.

"[It had] done away [with] all fanaticism, and brought those who were given to extravagance into a sober discreet state of mind. '43 never made so great, and good an impression as this has done upon all that have come under its influence. The worldly minded have been quickened and made alive—and all classes have been blessed beyond anything we have seen in time past. With this view of the matter, I dare not oppose it, although I do not yet get the light as to the month & day."—*Himes, letter dated September 30, 1844, to Miller.*

**Himes concluded by admitting that the October 22 date might possibly be right after all. Therefore, he wrote, he was giving up his plan to go to England.**

On October 2, Himes wrote in the *Advent Herald*:

"While there is much evidence clustering around that day, sufficient to induce all who love the Lord's appearing, to hope He will then come, yet if the evidence may fail of making it a demonstration, why should any who are waiting for His appearing, feel to oppose the idea that the Lord may then come?"—*Advent Herald, October 2, 1844.*

**On October 3, Sylvester Bliss wrote Miller that he was accepting the date.**

"[I am] under the most solemn impressions that the Lord will be here in a few days . . . The Lord our God must be in this matter . . .

"We want you to look this question over . . . & give all the light possible . . . Give us your prayers that we may be guided aright in this important crisis."—*Bliss, letter dated October 3, 1844, to Miller.*

**On October 6, Himes stood before the congregation at the Tabernacle in Boston, and told them of his change of heart.**

"Brother Himes came out . . . & expressed his belief that the Lord would come on the tenth of the seventh month. A great sensation was produced. Many who had been hoping that he would not embrace the trying truth & that they in consequence would have an excuse to shelter them in the day of the Lord. These souls Brother Himes very emphatically shook off from his skirts. He then gave a summary of the work of arousing the world to judgment . . .

"Glory be to God! dear brother we shall soon meet in the kingdom—Till then a short farewell!"—*E. C. Clemens, letter dated October 10, 1844, to Miller.*

**Himes did not know that, on the same day, William Miller accepted the day also.**

"Dear Brother Himes, "I see a glory in the seventh month which I never saw before. Although the Lord had shown me the typical bearing of the seventh month, one year and a half ago, yet I did not realize the force of the types. Now, blessed be the name of the Lord. I see a beauty, a harmony, and an agreement in the Scriptures, for which I have long prayed, but did not see until today. "Thank the Lord, O my soul. Let Brother Snow, Brother Storrs and others, be blessed for their instrumentality in opening my eyes. I am almost home. Glory! Glory!! Glory!!! I see that the time is correct . . . "My soul is so full I cannot write. I call on you, and all who love His appearing [sic], to thank Him for this glorious truth. My doubts, and fears, and darkness, are all gone. I see that we are yet right. God's Word is true; and my soul is full of joy; my heart is full of gratitude to God. Oh, how I wish I could shout. But I shall shout when the "King of kings comes.

"Me thinks I hear you say, "Bro. Miller is now a fanatic." Very well, call me what you please; I care not; Christ will come in the seventh month, and will bless us all. Oh! glorious

hope. Then I shall see Him, and be like Him, and be with Him forever."-Miller, letter dated October 6, 1844, to Himes, in *Midnight Cry*, October 12, 1844.

**Miller had finally recognized that Snow's concept was but a supplement, or extension, of his own position.** In the above letter, you will note that Miller said "the Lord had shown me the typical bearing of the seventh month, one year and a half ago."

**That reference was to the letter, partially quoted earlier, which he wrote to Himes on May 3, 1843. Here is a more complete quotation from it:**

"If you will examine, you will find all the ceremonies of the typical law that were observed in the first month, or vernal equinox, had their fulfillment in Christ's first advent and sufferings; but all the feasts and ceremonies in the seventh month or autumnal equinox, can only have their fulfillment at His second advent.

"The atonement was made on the tenth day seventh month, and this is certainly typical of the atonement Christ is now making for us . . . When the high priest came out of the holy of holies, after making the atonement, he blessed the people . . . So will our great High Priest. Heb. 9:28. This was on the seventh month tenth day."- Miller, letter dated May 3, 1843, to Himes, in *Midnight Cry*, June 1, 1843.

**Upon receiving Miller's October 6 letter, Himes read it to a packed Tabernacle audience that evening.** The same day, Bliss wrote Miller in reply:

"Yours of the 6th just received . . . Praise God, praise God. May we all be ready to meet in the skies."-Bliss, letter dated October 9, 1844, to Miller.

**In the *Advent Herald* for the 9<sup>th</sup>, Himes said he had accepted the "seventh-month movement":**

"We are shut up to this faith, and shall, by the grace of God, look for the event and act accordingly."-Advent Herald, October 9, 1844.

That statement was also signed by Bliss.

**Rather quickly after Himes and Miller accepted the date, the rest of the leaders did also. Josiah Litch was apparently the last to accept it.**

On October 12, Litch wrote that His High Priest would soon be coming from the Holy of Holies of the heavenly Sanctuary to take His people home.

"I now lift up my head in joyful expectation of seeing the King of kings within ten days."-Midnight Cry, October 12, 1844.

**About the same time, Charles Fitch accepted the message also. He was lying ill in Buffalo at the time,** and a friend read to him the articles advocating the seventh-month view.

**Aside from Nathaniel Whiting, who never did accept the date, Josiah Litch held back the longest. It was not until October 12 that he fixed his hopes on October 22.**

"My difficulties have all vanished, and I live in joyful expectation of seeing the King of kings within ten days"-Midnight Cry, October 12, 1844.

**But two days later, Charles Fitch died. According to his daughter, here is how it happened.**

He was in Buffalo, New York, at the time when a large number of new believers requested baptism. Others had not yet fully made up their minds. Arrangements were made, and the company who were ready went with him to the shore of Lake Erie and were baptized in the chilly autumn water. A cold wind was blowing as Fitch started for home in his wet clothes.

But he was met by another group who begged him to baptize them also. So back they went to the lake. Returning, he was met by a third group which had at last made their decision. By the time he reached home, he was dangerously chilled.

Although ill, he rode several miles the next day in the cold wind to meet a speaking appointment. The result was a fatal illness, probably pneumonia.

The following week, a visitor found Fitch-

"Just alive. His soul, however, was full of hope and glory. He said that it was indelibly written on his soul, that the Lord would come on the tenth day of the seventh month, and if he went to the grave, he would only have to take a short sleep, before he should be waked in the resurrection morn" (*Midnight Cry*, October 19, 1844).

He passed away a few days later.

It was while he lay sick in bed that Storr's September 24 article was read to him. Fitch accepted the seventh-month movement, and his last triumphant words were "I believe in the promises of God!" (*Voice of Truth*, October 10, 1844).

**Charles Fitch died on the 14th, only 13 days before October 22,** confidently expecting to be reunited with his wife and children in little over a week.

**Unlike most of the non-Baptist Millerite preachers, Fitch believed in baptism by immersion. He also believed in conditional immortality** (having been converted on both points by Storrs).

Litch had brought Fitch into Millerism; and Fitch, in turn, converted Litch on baptism. In early September, 1844, after being baptized by Fitch, Litch walked to the shore and baptized his own wife.

**Charles Fitch, so much beloved by the advent people, is mentioned along with Levi Stockman in *Early Writings* (page 17) as being in the earth made new.** As mentioned earlier, Stockman died late in 1843, after heavy persecution, because of the Bath Resolutions, from the Maine Conference of the Methodist Church.

Why was Charles Fitch so utterly thrilled as he lay there dying? The answer is obvious: *He expected to sleep but a few days in death before being awakened by the Lifegiver at His coming in glory for His own. -Yet we too can praise and sing the glory song also!* Whether we live to be translated or die in the advent faith, we rest in His hands. If we die, in a twinkling of an eye (faster than a few days), we shall awake to newness of life when He comes in clouds of angelic glory! Rejoice, fellow believer!

### **THE CLOSING DAYS**

**The advent presses poured out literature on the subject in the closing days of the movement.**

The editor of the *Midnight Cry* declared that they were keeping "four steam presses constantly in motion" (ibid.).

The concern to share the message was intense.

"The Advent bands have been every where electrified by the proclamation of a definite time, viz. the tenth day of the seventh month of the present Jewish sacred year. This cry has gone on the wings of the wind, and has been with joy received by the great body of those who were looking for the immediate coming of the Lord, and also by most of those who are proclaiming His appearing."—*Advent Herald*, October 9, 1844.

### **On October 11, Miller wrote:**

"[I] have not seen among our brethren such faith as is manifested in the seventh month. 'He will come,' is the common expression. 'He will not tarry the second time,' is their general reply. There is a forsaking of the world, an unconcern for the wants of life, a general searching of heart, confession of sin, and a deep feeling in prayer for Christ to come."—Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*. 272.

Miller wrote these words to Himes on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Aware that the next day would be the first day of the seventh month, according to Karaite calendation, Miller added this:

"The seventh month begins tomorrow . . . I do not expect to see you again in this life, but I do hope to see you soon crowned in glory, and robed in the spotless garment of Christ's righteousness."—Ibid.

As has been noted earlier, fanaticism evaporated during this seventh-month movement.

**As for the advent leaders and believers, a sense of awe and solemnity was upon them. There was no great excitement, no shouting. They realized they were about to meet God.**

The following article was entitled, "*Take Heed to Yourselves.*"

"My dear brethren and sisters, we are in a solemn hour, when temptations will beset us, on every side . . . We are in great danger of letting our business and labors in warning others so occupy our hearts and minds, that we shall forget ourselves . . .

"Redeem time for secret prayer at any sacrifice, and maintain the spirit of prayer in all your labors. Beware of being drawn away from your duty to yourself, by exciting labors for others. Satan may tell you, and tell you truly, that you have not done your duty to your friends and neighbors, and your own family in times past. But the duty of yesterday you can never do, and your first duty today is, to see that all is right between yourself and God. Till that is settled, you may labor in vain for others. Don't run away from your first duty today, because you neglected your first and second duties yesterday . . .

"When you go into company, or go into the world, guard against the first approach to levity, but maintain a settled joy in God . . .

"Study the Bible much especially those parts which are most heart searching. Live out your faith, and your lives will preach."—*Midnight Cry*, October 10, 1844.

At that time, the *Midnight Cry* ran issues for three days in a row. This appeared on the twelfth: "How important it is, that we should meditate on His coming; that it should be the subject of our nightly prayer, the burden of our morning thoughts, and the theme of our

noonday conversation. It should occupy our sleeping, and our waking hours. How solemn the thought that the LORD COMETH! Those words should be in our hearts continually, and we should teach them diligently to our children; we should talk of them when we sit in the house, and when we walk by the way; when we lie down, and when we rise up,—and when we are about our daily occupation."—*Midnight Cry, October 11, 1844.*

These folk felt the impress of the Holy Spirit on their hearts. There was nothing in this counsel to incite to foolish or fanatical acts, or give any license to them. In the same issue, Himes wrote this:

"To our readers:

"We feel sensible of our many imperfections. Whilst we have contended for what we believe to be truth, we can see that pride of opinion and self, have arisen . . .

"We ask forgiveness of God and all men, for every thing which may have been inconsistent with His honor and glory; and we desire to lay ourselves upon His altar. Here we lay our friends and worldly interests, and trust alone in the merits of Christ's atoning blood, through the efficacious and sanctifying influence of God's Holy Spirit, for pardon and forgiveness and acceptance at the Father's mercy seat. May the blessing of God rest upon all of us; and that we may all meet in God's everlasting kingdom, is the prayer of your unworthy servant."—*Ibid.*

Just below that statement, which Himes signed, Southard added: "I heartily join in the prayer and confession expressed by Brother H."

**Statements which we find in the last (October 19) issue of the *Midnight Cry* before October 22, will provide us with a still further indication of the atmosphere surrounding the brethren at that time:**

In this article, believers are counseled to eat as healthfully as possible, so their bodies will be in as pure a condition as possible to meet their Lord at His coming. Why is it that we do not find such comments in our denominational publications today?

"Let us imitate Daniel, who would not defile himself with the king's meat. Let us abstain from every article of food which was unclean to the Jews, for the Lord had a reason for all His laws. Eating swine's flesh is mentioned as something abominable, in each of the last two chapters of Isaiah, the only chapters in the Old Testament which directly introduce us to the new heavens and the new earth. When Adam was in Paradise God gave him the best of food, and it consisted wholly of that which grew from the earth. We can lay down no rule for others, but hope our readers will all keep the body under, as Paul did, lest having preached the gospel to others, he him-self should be a castaway . . . Let us live every day on that food which is simplest, plainest, least exciting, and most easily prepared, and be very temperate."—*Midnight Cry, October 19, 1844.*

In the same final issue, was an editorial entitled, "*Finally, Brethren, Farewell.*"

"Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

"You are exposed to two opposite temptations, first to despair of yourself or, second, to presume on your safety . . .

"Trust as implicitly as if you expected all from God, and, in His strength, labor as earnestly as if you expected all from yourself."—*Ibid.*

**As the believers approached the end, two questions were in their minds: Should they give up their usual occupations, and should they dispose of their property?**

We have earlier noted the counsel written in the advent papers, to the effect that they should keep working. In the final issue of the *Midnight Cry* was an article with the title, "*Occupy Till I Come.*"

"These words of the Lord have been pressed into the service of Mammon, and they are now in the mouths of thousands to justify them for being wholly absorbed in the affairs of the world . . .

"Think for eternity! thousands may be lulled to sleep by hearing your actions say: 'This world is worth my whole energies. The world to come is a vain shadow.' O, reverse this practical sermon, instantly! Break loose from the world as much as possible. If indispensable duty calls you into the world for a moment, go as a man would run to do a piece of work in the rain. Run and hasten through it, and let it be known that you leave it with alacrity for something better. Let your actions preach in the clearest tones: 'The Lord is coming'—'The time is short'—'This world passeth away'—'Prepare to meet thy God.' "—*Midnight Cry, October 19, 1844.*

In a separate article, it was noted that the believers would, of course, wish to have more free time than usual in these final days before the end. But they should continue, on a reduced basis if possible, to provide for their needs (*ibid.*).

In an earlier issue was this brief news item:

"Many are leaving all, to go out and warn the brethren and the world. In Philadelphia, thirteen volunteered at one meeting (after hearing Brother Storrs) to go out and sound the alarm . . . In both cities [New York and Philadelphia], stores are being closed, and they preach in tones the world understands, though they may not heed it."—*Midnight Cry, October 3, 1844.*

On October 11, the Philadelphia Public Ledger mentioned a man, named Richard Plumer, who owned a store in Newburyport, Massachusetts.

**Early that month, he had closed the store and placed a sign on it with these words:**

"This shop is closed in honor of the King of kings, who will appear about the 20th of October. Get ready, friends, to crown Him Lord of all."—*Philadelphia Public Ledger, October 11, 1844.*

**In some instances, believers sold their property to help pay for the publications** which were being printed and distributed as rapidly as possible. **Some Millerites who had no debts helped brethren pay theirs.** On October 3, one Millerite editor wrote this:

"If any human being has a just pecuniary claim against me, he is requested to inform me instantly."—*Midnight Cry, October 3, 1844.*

A newspaper in New York City mentioned **the owner of a dry-goods store who offered his inventory for sale at low prices,** for this reason:

"My only object in offering my goods for sale, is that I may meet all obligations to my fellow men as far as possible, before that day arrives. All persons indebted, will oblige by settling the same immediately—and all to whom I am indebted will please send their accounts for settlement."—*New York Spectator, October 19, 1844.*

**A Philadelphia advent paper told of a believer who brought a bill he owed, for \$22, to a Millerite meeting,** showed it to the brethren, and told them he could not get it paid before the 22nd. They all chipped in and paid it for him (*Spirit of the Times, October 15, 1844*).

**In a few instances, believers gave away the stock in their stores, or even their property.**

John Dowling, the author of a very respected rebuttal of Roman Catholicism in the present author's library, was one of Miller's most vigorous intellectual opponents. Yet Dowling wrote this:

"Were this doctrine of Mr. Miller established upon evidence satisfactory to my own mind, I would not rest till I had published it in the streets, and proclaimed in the ears of my fellow townsmen . . . "THE DAY OF THE LORD IS AT HAND!" Build no more houses! plant no more fields and gardens! FORSAKE YOUR SHOPS, AND FARMS, AND ALL SECULAR PURSUITS, and give every moment to preparation for this great event! for in three short years this earth shall be burned up, and Christ shall come in the clouds, awake the sleeping dead, and call all the living before His dread tribunal."—*John Dowling, 1840, quoted in Advent Herald, November 6, 1844.*

**In the final days before October 22, and in the weeks following it, the most scurrilous material appeared in the public press, ridiculing Millerism and uttering a variety of false charges.** Especially flagrant were the cartoon sketches.

On October 15, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* ran a lengthy article trying to disprove the possibility that the world could be destroyed by fire, or any other way. The editor declared there was no chance from spontaneous combustion, volcanoes, or colliding stars, and then asked, "From what other source can the destruction proceed?"

Himes' *Advent Herald* was a weekly which was issued every Wednesday. On the front page of the last issue, prior to October 22, was this statement:

"As the date of the present number of the Herald is our last day of publication before the tenth day of the seventh month, we shall make no provision for issuing a paper for the week following . . . We feel called upon to suspend our labors and await the result."

The last words were being said by the Millerites. And their opponents also were bringing on their last arguments.

**On the edge of the end, the Boston Post reported that "the Tabernacle is crowded night and day with Millerites who express a perfect confidence that the judgment day will be here by the 22nd" (Boston Post, quoted in Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 23, 1844).**

**But Joshua V. Himes was not with them. He had journeyed to Low Hampton to be with William Miller when Jesus should return.**

**Many of the believers held almost continuous meetings in their halls or with families and groups in their homes. They were awaiting the coming of the King.** How sweet were these gatherings, as God's people awaited His coming.

"My heart was full of glad expectation . . . We united as a people in earnest prayer for a true experience and the unmistakable evidence of our acceptance with God."-*Ellen White, 1 Testimonies, 54.*

## **-SECTION SEVEN -**

### **THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT**

**October 21 -22, 1 844**

#### **THE DAY OF WAITING**

**October 21-22, 1844**

**Throughout much of the eastern United States, the morning of October 22 dawned bright and clear. Adventist groups gathered quietly in homes or meetinghouses to wait out the last hours of earth's history.**

**Perhaps as many as 100,000 waited in calm expectation** of a most glorious event—the return of their precious Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Many gathered in churches, but in some cities they dared not do so because of mobs in the streets outside them.

"[They gathered] themselves into small parties at their several houses, to comfort and bear each others company in their anticipated trip; where private prayer meetings were held, in consequence of the authorities interfering in closing their meetinghouses to prevent disturbance."- *New York Herald, October 23, 1844.*

**Many waited at their meetinghouses awake, throughout the night of Monday, the 21st.** (You will recall that Snow had pointed out that the Hebrew day, "October 22," went from sunset, October 21, to sunset, October 22. The present author discovered that, on October 21, 1844, in the Boston area, sunset occurred at 5:11 p.m. ET. On October 22, it occurred at 5:10 p.m.) **One individual, who arrived at the Cincinnati meetinghouse about 9 a.m. on the 22nd, said it was about two-thirds full, and many had been there all night.** [M.P Gaddis, *Footprints of an Itinerant, 362-364.*]

"Our second advent friends watched for the coming at the Tabernacle most of last night. Their meetings have been kept up today."-*Baltimore Sun, October 22, 1844.*

**Gradually the hours of Tuesday, the 22nd passed. Most of the believers waited expectantly until the clock tolled midnight.**

A reporter went to the meetinghouse of the believers in Cincinnati. It held about 1,500 and was full.

"Considering the crowd, the meeting was very orderly. Two or three attempts were made by a set of rowdies outdoors to raise a breeze by noise and clamor, but the assertion of the preacher, that a strong police was present, calmed the multitude, and he was enabled to proceed with what he at the close said was, in his opinion, his last warning to a sinful world . . . Before nine o'clock the benediction was pronounced, and the people advised to go quietly home and await the awful coming, which not unlikely might transpire at the hour of midnight, while most of us were wrapped in sleep. Notwithstanding all this, day- light, yea, a most splendid day of sunshine, is again upon us."—*Cincinnati Chronicle, quoted in United States Saturday Post, November 9, 1844.*

### **THE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT**

**October 22-23, 1844**

But, by midnight, the believers, in little groups and companies scattered here and there, were confronted with the fact that their precious Jesus had not returned.

"I waited all Tuesday [October 22], and dear Jesus did not come;—I waited all the forenoon of Wednesday, and was well in body as I ever was, but after 12 o'clock I began to feel

faint, and before dark I needed some one to help me up to my chamber, as my natural strength was leaving me very fast, and I lay prostrate for two days without any pain—sick with disappointment."—*Henry Emmons, Day Star, October 25, 1844.*

**Hiram Edson, one of the most prayerful of the many believers, expressed the feelings of all.**

"Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept, and wept, till the day dawned."—*Hiram Edson, manuscript fragment, Andrews University Heritage Room.*

The next paragraph continued with these words:

"I mused in my own heart, saying, my advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my christian [sic] experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my christian [sic] experience worth? Has the Bible proved a failure? Is there no God—no heaven—no golden home city—no paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hopes and expectation of these things? And thus we had something to grieve and weep over, if all our fond hopes were lost. And as I said, we wept till the day dawn."—*Ibid.* [We will reprint this entire fragmentary manuscript later in the present study.]

**Young James White expressed his feelings in these words:**

"[The thought of turning] again to the cares, perplexities, and dangers of life, in full view of the jeers and revilings of unbelievers who now scoffed as never before, was a terrible trial of faith and patience . . .

"[When Himes visited Portland soon after October 221 and stated that the brethren should prepare for another cold winter, my feelings were almost uncontrollable. I left the place of meeting and wept like a child." *James White, Life Incidents, 182.*

**Another believer also wept.**

"That day came and passed, and the darkness of another night closed in upon the world. But with that darkness came a pang of disappointment to the advent believers that can find a parallel only in the sorrow of the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord. The passing of the time was a bitter disappointment. True believers had given up all for Christ, and had shared His presence as never before. The love of Jesus filled every soul; and with inexpressible desire they prayed, 'Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly,' but He did not come. And now, to turn again to the cares, perplexities, and dangers of life, in full view of jeering and reviling unbelievers who scoffed as never before, was a terrible trial of faith and patience . . . I wept like a child."—*Washington Morse, "Remembrance of Former Days," Advent Review, May 7, 1901.* (The phrasing of the above paragraph had been given earlier by James White.)

## **THE DISAPPOINTMENT CONTINUES**

**On October 24, Litch penned a letter to Miller that opened with these words:**

"It is a cloudy and dark day here—the sheep are scattered—and the Lord has not come.—Litch, letter dated October 24, to Miller.

**Luther Boutelle also recalled the experience.** He had been a Millerite preacher from Groton, Massachusetts. He later became a leader in the Advent Christian Church, which, after 1844, became the largest non-Sabbathkeeping group to emerge from the Millerite movement. The following recollection was published nearly 50 years later in his 1891 autobiography:

"But the end of October passed, making unspeakably sad the faithful and longing ones; but causing the unbelieving and wicked to rejoice. All was still. No Advent Herald; no meetings as formerly. Everyone felt lonely, with hardly a desire to speak to anyone. Still in the cold world! No deliverance—the Lord did not come! No words can express the feelings of disappointment of a true Adventist then. Those only who experienced it can enter into the subject as it was. It was a humiliating thing, and we all felt it alike. All were silent, save to inquire, "Where are we?" and "What next?" All were housed and searching their Bibles to learn what to do. In some few places they soon began to come together to watch for some development of light, relative to our disappointment.

"Not quite content with being housed, after such stirring times, I went to Boston. Found the Advent Herald Office closed and all still. I next went to New Bedford. Found the brethren in a confused state. Had a few meetings; comforted those who came as best I could, telling them to hold fast, for I believed there would be good come out of this matter. Returning from New Bedford to Boston, I found the office of our [Advent] Herald open, and Brother Bliss there. He said he had hardly been from his house since the time passed. He inquired if there were any

meetings being held. I told him there was to be one in the city that evening and that in other places they were coming together to comfort one another. Some fanaticism was seen, but the many were sober watchers for their Lord.

"I learned of a company that had come together to stay until the Lord came. I felt like visiting them. Accordingly I took a carriage ride to the place. I found about seventy believers in a large house, living there and having meetings daily. They had put all their money in a milk pan, and when they paid for anything they took the money from the pan. All was common stock. We held a meeting with them and advised them as best we could to keep the faith and separate, and see to their individual interests, and those of their families, which advice they kindly took, and very soon separated, going each to his or her calling." —*Luther Boutelle, extract from his autobiography, Sketch of the Life and Religious Experience of Elder Luther Boutelle.*

**Both the public and the media had a field day, ridiculing the Millerites and the apparent failure of their predictions.**

"The world still hangs fire. The old planet is still on track, notwithstanding the efforts to 'stop 'er.'" —*The Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 30, 1844.*

As William Miller walked down the street, a man came up to him and demanded, "Why didn't you go up?" to which Miller replied, "And if I had gone up, where would you have gone?"

In a letter to a friend a few days later, Miller wrote of the "solemn time" just before October 22, when "even the wicked scoffers stood mute." But, he added:

"It passed. And the next day it seemed as though all the demons from the bottomless pit were let loose upon us. The same ones and many more who were crying for mercy two days before, were now mixed with the rabble and mocking, scoffing, and threatening in a most blasphemous manner."—*Miller, letter dated December 13, 1844, to J. O. Orr, M.D.*

**Two days after the Disappointment, N. N. Whiting wrote Miller of mob action in New York City:**

"The excitement against us here already begins to die away. We were in some danger from the mob last Sabbath [October 20], at Franklin Hall. The mayor, however, offered to put down the mob with strong hand if a meeting should be held in the evening. Our brethren conclude to close the house."—*Whiting, letter dated October 24, 1844, to Miller.*

Three churches in New York State illustrate the problem: **In Dansville, their temporary tabernacle was tom down. In Ithaca, the Millerite church was burned to the ground. In Scottsville, the worshipers were driven out, and then the benches were hauled outside and burned.**

Over in Troy, "the wicked . . . paraded the streets, clad in white, blew a trumpet and cried, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'" —*Voice of Truth, November 7, 1844.*

In late November, Miller wrote Himes:

"Some are tauntingly inquiring, 'Have you not gone up?' Even little children in the streets are shouting continually to passersby, 'Have you a ticket to go up?' The public prints, of the most fashionable and popular kind, in the great Sodoms of our country, are caricaturing in the most shameful manner the 'white robes of the saints,' Rev. 6:11, the 'going up,' and the great day of 'burning.' Even the pulpits are desecrated by the repetition of scandalous and false reports concerning the 'ascension robes,' and priests are using their powers and pens to fill the catalogue of scoffing in the most scandalous periodicals of the day."—*Miller, letter dated November 18, to Himes, in James White, Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller, 310-311.*

**Reports of persecution also came from other parts of America and Canada.**

**With the passing of October 22, 1844, the single road we have followed throughout this entire study breaks into two. With the passing of time it would continue to diverge.**

**We will first briefly overview what happened to the groups which did not accept the light on the Sanctuary and Bible Sabbath. Those groups never really knew what happened on October 22, yet they were puzzled to know how to refute the date.**

**Then we will return and follow along the path of discovery by the other group which led to great light.**

**-SECTION EIGHT-**

**AFTERMATH: THE NOMINAL ADVENTISTS**

**After October 22, 1844**



## **BREAKUP OF THE MILLERITES BEGINS**

**This section is something of a study in confusion. One person said this, and another said that; several groups pulled off by themselves, and fanaticism reasserted itself.**

**Himes, always the busy organizer—now really set to work!** If he had not labored hard enough before, he really had his hands full now.

**His primary aim was to rouse the believers to faith and unity of belief and action.** Himes well-knew that positive efforts to help one another would be beneficial to them in this hour of tragedy.

"We must not permit . . . [destitute believers] to be dependent upon the world, or that portion of the professed church, who scoff at our hope . . .

Some among us still have this world's goods, and can render present aid to the destitute. I doubt not all will do their duty."—*Midnight Cry*, October 31, 1844.

**Within a week after October 22, the *Advent Herald* and *Midnight Cry* were turning out papers again.** In spite of decreasing finances, they continued on. In early 1845, the *Midnight Cry* was renamed the *Morning Watch*. In July 1845, that publication was united with the *Advent Herald*.

**Prior to October 22, evangelism was the watchword; after that date, the objective was simply to keep the movement from falling apart.**

**But Himes also took time to reply to the public press.** Disgusted with the malicious stories printed about him in the newspapers of the land, on November 1, he issued a statement to the press which was widely printed in the newspapers:

"I have been represented as dishonest, speculating out of the fears of the community, a disturber of the peace, as duping the unsuspecting, and obtaining money under false pretenses,—soliciting it for public purposes, and appropriating it to private uses. I have been reported as having absconded, not only to England, but also to both Canada and Texas; and also as being liable to arrest under warrants already issued, as having been arrested and confined in Leverett [street jail, and as having committed suicide; and it has also been said that I have accumulated great wealth, have sold vast quantities of jewelry, and possess farms and hold money at interest . . .

"[To those charges] I would say, that if I have wronged or defrauded any man, I will restore him four-fold . . . [I am asking any persons whom I have wronged] to make their case known to the public."—*Himes, statement dated November 1, 1844; released in the Advent Herald and reprinted by many newspapers (Boston Post, November 2, 1844, etc.)*.

Himes' lengthy statement was filled with names of people, places, dates, and detailed discussion of transactions with various people. It was not the kind of reply a guilty man makes.

**This was such a sensible, open statement that it tended to greatly cool the accusations against Himes. By November 13, the *Advent Herald* reported that the public press had begun treating the advent believers more civilly.**

**In the middle of November, a statement was published in both the *Advent Herald* and *Midnight Cry*.** The title was '*Address to the Public: Our Confession—Defense of Our Course Opposition*.'

Acknowledging that Christ did not return on October 22, the statement went on to say:

'As great a paradox as it may be to our opponents, yet we can discern in it the leadings of God's providence; and when we are reviled and censured by those to whom the world look as the Gamaliels of our age, we feel that they are only speaking evil of the things they understand not.'—*Advent Herald*, November 13, 1844, and *Midnight Cry*, November 21, 1844.

It was stated that God had permitted the October 22 experience to occur in order to test His people.

"We as much believe that we have done the will of God in thus sounding the alarm, as we believe that Jonah did when he entered into Nineveh a day's journey, and cried, saying, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.' Nineveh was not then overthrown; nor has the Lord yet wrought deliverance in the earth, or the inhabitants of the earth fallen. Was Jonah a false prophet when he preached the time of Nineveh's destruction? No; he had only preached the preaching that God had bid him . . . We thus have an instance on record where God has justified the preaching of time, although the event did not occur as predicted. And the men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment against this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; but this generation have not repented."—*Ibid*.

"We now find ourselves occupying a time, beyond which we can extend none of the prophetic periods, according to our chronology and date of their commencement . . . We admit that it is proved that we do not yet know the definite time; but we have seen no evidence yet to disprove that it is at the very door, that it cannot be long delayed, and that the events are those for which we look."-*Ibid.*

**If the Millerites had remained with this position that God had guided in the 1844 movement, they would have been more open to additional light in the following months. But, unfortunately, the majority of them eventually rejected any divine hand in the October 22 date at all!**

**That same month, William Miller wrote this statement:**

"Although I have been twice disappointed, I am not yet cast down or discouraged. God has been with me in spirit, and has comforted me. I have now much more evidence that I do believe in God's Word; and although surrounded with enemies and scoffers, yet my mind is perfectly calm, and my hope in the coming of Christ is as strong as ever. I have done only what after years of sober consideration I felt to be my solemn duty to do. If I have erred, it has been on the side of charity, the love of my fellow men, and my conviction of duty to God . . . I had not a distant thought of disturbing our churches, ministers, or religious editors, or departing from the best Biblical commentaries or rules which had been recommended for the study of the Scriptures . . .

"The time passed, and the Adventists were humbled; and thus we see that our God was wise and good, in the tarrying of the vision, to humble, purify and prepare us for an admittance into His blessed kingdom."—*Miller, letter dated November 10, 1844, to Himes, in Midnight Cry, December 5, 1844.*

Miller concluded his statement with these words: "Brethren, hold fast; let no man take your crown. I have fixed my mind upon another time, and here I mean to stand until God gives me more light.—And that is Today, TODAY, and TO-DAY, until He comes, and I see HIM for whom my soul yearns."-*Ibid.*

**Waiting for Jesus, Miller in December wrote Himes:**

"I cannot sit down to write, without the reflection that this letter may never reach its destination.—Yet I believe in occupying until Christ shall come . . . I have never enjoyed more calmness of mind, nor more resignation to the holy will of God, and patience of spirit, than I have within a few weeks past."—*Miller, letter dated December 3, 1844, to Himes, in Advent Herald, December 18, 1844.*

And, regarding the obviously Divine Providence which guided in the preaching of definite time for October 22, Miller added:

"It is to me almost a demonstration, that God's hand is seen in this thing. Many thousands, to all human appearance, have been made to study the Scriptures by the preaching of the time; and by that means, through faith and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, have been reconciled to God."—*Ibid.*

**Among the believers, there was turmoil and disorientation.** For a time, many continued to look daily for the immediate fulfillment of the 2300-year prophecy and the coming of Christ.

On October 24, Nathaniel Whiting, the only leader who had not accepted the October 22 date, wrote Miller to publicly apologize.

Yet, **for several months, Himes, Miller, and several others, continued to maintain that the date was correctly set. The powerful moving of the Holy Spirit and the clear evidences of Biblical and historical chronology could not be discounted.**

"In view of all the circumstances attending this movement, the blessed effect it has produced on the minds of God's children, and the hatred and malice His enemies have displayed, we must still regard it as the true midnight cry. And if we have a few days in which to try our faith, it is still in accordance with the parable of the ten virgins; for when they had all arisen and trimmed their lamps, there was still to be a time when the lamps of the foolish virgins would be going out. This could not be without a passing by of the 10th day; for till that time their lamps would burn . . . A little delay is therefore no cause for discouragement, but shows how exact God is in the fulfillment of His Word."—*Advent Herald, October 30, 1844.*

**But the situation deteriorated. By November 7, Storrs totally repudiated the October 22 date. The reason why he accepted it, he said, was because he had been "mesmerized."** This, obviously, was a serious charge, for he was attributing the moving of the

Holy Spirit to Satan. Storrs said the seventh-month movement came from "an influence not of God."

**By mid-November, Himes admitted they had passed all their dates** and there was no more "tarrying time" [Advent Herald, November 13, 1844]. Yet, as we shall learn below, early the next year, Himes and Miller were still considering the possibility that Jesus might come by that spring.

**A tidal wave of uncertainty and discouragement was settling over the believers. Yet there were some who kept studying God's Word and trusting that He would work out everything for the best. Remember that, dear brother and sister, when you encounter problems!** God is the best Friend you can have; trust your case to Him and He will always see you through to the end. As Himes wrote at the end of October:

"We have found the grace of God sufficient to sustain us, even at such a time as this."—*Advent Herald, October 30, 1844.*

As the months passed, the unity of the advent movement began to erode. Some thought that Christ's coming was near and that it could be discovered in Scripture. **Miller and Litch thought it would occur before the end of the Jewish year "1844," which was the spring of 1845. Marsh expected it in 1846. By early 1845, Himes and Miller began counseling against settling any further definite time.** They were cheered by the fact that the various chronological systems of the past did not always agree with one another.

**Joseph Marsh, in his *Voice of Truth*, declared that something did indeed happen on October 22; that it was a divinely appointed date. But what that event was, Marsh did not know.**

"We cannot yet admit that our great High priest did not on that very day accomplish all that the type would justify us to expect. We now believe He did."—*Voice of Truth, November 7, 1844.*

**For a time, Marsh was so very close to the truth. But later, as noted above, he decided that the advent would occur in 1846.**

**In January 1845, two Millerite editors, Apollos Hale, in the *Advent Herald*, and Joseph Turner, in *Hope of Israel*, introduced what came to be known as the "shut-door" theory.** According to this, everyone who had not accepted the message prior to October 22 was eternally lost; their probation closed. This position was the most widespread of a number of interpretations which were accepted here and there.

**In Ohio, J.D. Pickands and J.B. Cook advanced the idea that Christ was now seated above on a cloud** and that, through crying day and night, we might bring Him down.

Later Pickands decided that Christ had already come "spiritually," and those who had accepted Him were already "immortal and incorruptible."

**Some theorized that believers must greet one another with a "holy kiss."** Of those who practiced this, some thought it included men and women kissing; others said it did not.

**There were those who advocated a "no work policy,** stating that they were already in Christ's thousand-year kingdom.

**Then Pickands and Enoch Jacobs, editor of the *Day Star* (formerly the *Western Midnight Cry*), proclaimed that "spiritual wifery" was what the faithful needed.** Everyone must abandon his relatives and spouses and seek new partners; but there should be no more marriage. Jacobs eventually led his followers into a Shaker colony.

**In order to counteract the growing confusion, several Millerite leaders issued a call for a "Mutual Conference of Adventists" to be held at Albany, New York, beginning April 29, 1845.**

Many attended and a resolution was drawn up, denouncing fanaticism and (in light of the shut-door theory) appealing to believers "to continue in obedience to the great commission to preach the gospel to every creature."

Their appeal, as presented in an "*Address to the Brethren Scattered Abroad*," was quite balanced:

"The present state of our faith and hope, with the severe trials which many of us experience, call for much brotherly love, forbearance, patience, and prayer. No cause, be it ever so holy, can exist in this present world, without its attendant evils. Therefore, it becomes necessary for all who are connected with this cause, to exercise great charity; for charity covers a multitude of sins.

"The cause we advocate calls upon all men to read the Word of God, and to reason, judge, compare, and digest for themselves. This is certainly right, and is the privilege of all

rational members of the community. Yet this very liberty may become a stumbling-block to many, and without charity, be the means of scattering, dividing, and causing contention among brethren . . .

"We are commanded to be sober and hope to the end, for that grace which is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Our disappointment as to the time should have no effect upon our hope. We know that Christ has not yet been revealed, and the object of our hope is yet in the future. Therefore, if we believe in God's Word, as we profess, we ought to be thankful for the trial of our faith."—*Advent Herald, May 14, 1845.*

**The Albany Conference helped stabilize the faith of many of the believers, for a number of years to come.**

**The fact that such men as Miller and Himes continued to travel and preach also greatly helped.**

Himes, Litch, and Galusha led out in a series of advent conferences in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore during May 1845. Joined once more by Apollos Hale and J.B. Cook, they tried to hold the splitting believers together.

**But, in their efforts to hold the faithful together, these men gradually departed farther and farther from Miller's original teachings on prophecy.** Incredibly, they eventually abandoned the belief that there was any connection between the seventy-week and 2300-day prophetic periods! Increasingly they became leaders without followers as more and more advent believers either accepted the views of those who held to the validity of the October 22 date or returned to their former denominations.

**Although the Albany Conference maintained, as the Millerites always had in earlier years, that they were not trying to start a separate denomination; yet, by the spring of 1846, they were starting to do just that.** An executive committee was established, and placed in charge of supervising the work and salaries of ministers.

**That same year, Himes went to England and crowds gathered to hear him, and he established several congregations.** But as soon as he returned to America, the work petered out.

**In August 1845, Miller published his 36-page Apology and Defense, in which he gave a brief autobiographical account of his life.** It has been frequently quoted in this present study.

In the book, **Miller made this significant comment: He declared himself in opposition to "any of the new theories" that originated after October 22, which attempted to explain why Christ had not come on that date. He declared that October 22 was not "a fulfillment of prophecy in any sense."**

In the book, **he also opposed the teaching (of Storrs and the late Fitch) that the dead lie unconscious in their graves until the resurrection, and the wicked will finally be totally annihilated.**

Recognizing that he was aging fast, Miller concluded the booklet with a significant sentence:

"Let your conversation be in heaven, from whence you look for the blessed hope . . . Be not many masters; all are not competent to advise and direct. *God will raise up those to whom He will commit the direction of His cause.*"—*Apology and Defense, 36 [italics ours].*

Only eight months before, in Portland, Maine, God had indicated the chosen vessel, through whom He would direct the future course of His work (*Early Writings, 13*).

In the spring of 1849, William Miller tried to write a letter. Perhaps it was to Himes; we do not know.

"Dear Brother. I cannot refrain from writing a word or two, although I cannot see. All is well. The Bridegroom [Christ] is coming; no mistake . . . The King must come. Lift up your head, be of good cheer, be not faithless but believing. We shall soon see Him for whom we have looked and waited."—*Unfinished manuscript letter, dated April 10, 1849.*

We have followed so far along through the earthly life of this child of God, that it almost brings tears to our eyes as we read these words. Miller was nearing his end. Surely, Jesus looked down lovingly upon him.

The remainder of the letter consisted of some suggested revisions of his positions. He was still confident that Jesus was soon to come, and that some minor error in chronology—regarding the 2300 years—was the problem.

**Miller's health failed rapidly after April 1848. Sensing that the end was near, Joshua V. Himes journeyed to Low Hampton and spent the last few days with his beloved friend.** "Elder Himes has come," he whispered. "I love Elder Himes."

**On the final day, December 20, 1849, Himes was seated beside the bed** of his friend. Miller made no conversation; but, from time to time, he would break forth in expressions like "Almighty to save!" "O, I long to be there!" "Victory, victory!"

**A little after 3 o'clock in the afternoon, William Miller passed to his rest. He was 68 years old.** In December 1839, Himes had made a solemn compact with Miller that he would stand by his side to the end, to promote and publish his views to all America and beyond. Joshua Himes had fulfilled his pledge.

William Miller was buried in a little graveyard about half a mile from his old home. Above his name on the grave stone are carved these words: "At the time appointed the end shall be." Below his name are these words: "*But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of days.*"

Undoubtedly, Miller had selected those words. Faithful warrior, to the end he trusted God and looked forward to the coming of His precious Saviour.

The next month, another epitaph was penned about this man of God by the editor of a prominent literary journal:

"We heard 'Father Miller' preach on this great subject [of the second advent] to an immense audience one night in Philadelphia. His evident sincerity, earnestness and simplicity attracted to him our greatest respect. We think the success which marked his labors . . . arose from his bringing prominently forward a neglected truth. And it is to be feared that his confident and ill-founded predictions as to the time, will throw temporary discredit upon the great burden of many prophecies—the second coming of Christ."—*Littel's Living Age, January 19, 1850.*

And then there was this simple summary of Miller's life and work:

"Perhaps the simple secret of Mr. Miller's wonderful success, was his bringing prominently forward a somewhat neglected but vividly important truth."—*R. M. Devens, The Great Events of Our Past Century, 310.*

**Miller's death marked the last tie to bind the advent believers together.**

"His death removed a genuine barrier to fractionalism, strife, and the advocacy of new doctrines and structured organizations."—Clyde Hewitt, *Midnight and Morning*, 215 [Hewitt is a noted church historian of the Advent Christian Church].

**By the time of Miller's death in December 1849, in place of the strong unity existing in early October 1844, there were several different groups.**

**They were primarily divided on whether anything happened on October 22, the nature of man after death, the final punishment of the wicked, the timing of the millennium, continued time setting, and whether it was safe to organize.**

**Four of these groups were especially prominent by 1852:**

**THE FIRST GROUP** was centered in Boston, and was led by Himes, Bliss, and Hale. They claimed to have remained with the original Millerite faith, and now favored a strong church congregational structure. But, some men (such as Joseph Marsh) were opposed to all church organization; they were **not able to actually start a denomination until 1859, when they organized the American Evangelical Adventist Conference (AEAC).** This event horrified those advent believers who were opposed to all church organization, considering any form of it to be "Babylon."

All through these years and beyond, **the Advent Herald continued to be its official paper. Gradually this group developed close ties with several other denominations,** since (1) the AEAC was the only 'Adventist' group which **retained a belief in innate immortality** and (2) the other churches were slowly switching over from post- to pre-millennialism.

**THE SECOND GROUP, under Joseph Turner and his Second Advent Watchman, was centered in the Hartford, Connecticut-New York City area.** He and his followers believed the **millennium was already in the past.** Through George Storr's preaching in 1844, they had accepted the **"soul sleep" in death** concept, and the **final annihilation** of the wicked.

(The rise of modern spiritualism with the Fox sisters in Rochester, New York—and their claim that the departed dead were speaking to them—caused many to rethink their position on the nature of man in death. In addition, Storr's *Six Sermons* were being distributed by the tens of thousands.)

**THE THIRD GROUP** was located primarily in Rochester, New York, and supported Joseph Marsh and his Advent Harbinger and *Bible Advocate*, which strongly opposed any formal church organization.

They believed the **millennium was still in the future, during which, they maintained, the Jews would return to Palestine** and there would be a **second period of probation for everyone**. Because of their strong opposition to organization, these "**Age-to-Come**" Adventists were not able to form a strong denominational body. But **some of them eventually united with the *World's Crisis* group, below, in forming the *Advent Christian Church***.

**THE FOURTH GROUP**, under Miles Grant, had established a periodical, the *World's Crisis*, which declared that **Christ would return in 1854**. The *Crisis* also preached **conditionalism**. Although not a large group, and actually split among itself, it was at first called the "*timeists*."

When Christ did not return in 1854, that journal became a major organ for the conditionalists— since the *Advent Herald* had rejected conditional immortality.

This group was very **opposed to church organization**, with its attendant appointing of leaders, salaried ministers, naming the organization, or making a creed.

In July 1860, they called a conference to meet at Providence, Rhode Island, to discuss the problem. They needed to be able to support their ministers. On July 25, they elected officers and formed the Christian Association. The name was later changed to the Advent Christian Association, and still later they changed name to the Advent Christian Church—which became the largest non-Sabbathkeeping church.

In 1862, when Himes accepted conditional immortality and annihilationism, he separated from the AEAC and joined the Advent Christian Church—which ultimately became the largest non-Sabbathkeeping remnant of Adventism.

**THE FIFTH GROUP** initially consisted of believers scattered across Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and western New York. Most of them were laymen or minor advent lecturers. The only person among them who had earlier been a prominent Millerite leader was **Joseph Bates**. **This group eventually became the largest of the Adventist bodies: the Seventh-day Adventist Church.**

The key beliefs which initially welded it together were the **Bible Sabbath**, the **Sanctuary message**, and the **Spirit of Prophecy**. Also important were conditional immortality, the **annihilation of the wicked**, and the **investigative judgment**.

We cannot take the space here to discuss how all these special beliefs came to be accepted by this group, although it is a fascinating one.

**We now need to return to the Great Disappointment. It is time to follow along the second path:**

- SECTION NINE -

**AFTERMATH:**

**THE FAITHFUL BELIEVERS**

After October 22, 1844

**HIRAM EDSON'S DISCOVERY**

October 23, 1844

**Hiram Edson was a highly respected Methodist steward, in 1843, when he accepted the advent message** during an evangelistic effort. He lived at Port Gibson, New York, on the old Erie Canal, midway between Syracuse and Buffalo.

**On the very night that he accepted the message, Hiram was convicted that he must go to the home of a dying neighbor and pray for him.** Edson did not care for this, believing that divine healing ended with the Apostles, but he obeyed. Making his way by candlelight to the man's bedside, he prayed for him. Immediately, the man threw off the covers, sat up and walked around the room praising God. Soon everyone else in the house was up, praising God.

**That same evening, Hiram seemed to hear a command telling him to go witness to his neighbors about the advent message. He struggled with this for days, and then obeyed.** From one home to another, he went, witnessing to the truth. Then he started meetings in his home, and cooperated with other believers in witnessing and sacrificing for the cause also. As with Ellen, later on, God had found a humble person of integrity who would obey Him.

**As a result of Hiram's visits and preaching, soon about 400 people in the area had become advent believers.** They met in homes and schoolhouses throughout the region.

**Edson's farmhouse, a mile south of town, became a frequent meeting place of some of the believers,** when other activities were held in the nearby district schoolhouse.

A glimpse into his character and courage is to be found in an episode which occurred shortly after the Disappointment. A sizeable group of believers had met at Edson's home, when it was surrounded by an irate mob of about 40, intent on attacking it. Edson, as leader, walked calmly out of the house, mingled with the mob fearlessly, and persuaded them to withdraw.

**As October 22 approached, the evening meetings in his home intensified.** They were opportunities to study together—and, especially, to pray for divine help.

**On the evening before, and on, that special day, believers met at Hiram's home to pray, give testimonies, and wait the coming of their Lord.**

As the hours passed, they reviewed the evidences of their faith:

- The 2300 years stretching from the fall of 457 B.C. to the fall of 1844.
- The advent awakening as a fulfillment of the first and second angels' messages.
- The "tarrying time" after the spring disappointment.
- The "midnight cry" which began at the Exeter camp meeting in August.
- The message of Samuel Snow which declared that the cleansing of the sanctuary would occur on October 22, 1844, the anti-typical day of atonement.
- They discussed the fact that, on this very day, Jesus was completing His final work of atonement in the most holy place of the heavenly Sanctuary, and would then leave that place and come to earth that day.

Edson later wrote:

"We confidently expected to see Jesus Christ and all the holy angels with Him, and that His voice would call up Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the ancient worthies, and near and dear friends which had been torn from us by death. . . Our expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled twelve at midnight."—*Hiram Edson, Undated manuscript.*

**But then the day passed, evening came, and finally midnight. Nothing had happened. Jesus had not returned.**

"We looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled midnight. The day had then passed, and our disappointment became a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. . . We wept, and wept, till the day dawned."-Ibid.

Edson knew that God had blessed in his life and in this work. He had personally seen abundant evidence of it. Hundreds of people had been converted. A wonderful peace had filled his heart.

***What was the problem?***

**Surely, Hiram Edson thought, we must pray through this to a solution! They wept and prayed all night.**

As the darkness of night was beginning to end,

**Hiram said to those who were present, "Let us go to the barn." Bidding good-bye to some who needed to leave, Edson and a few others went out to his barn. Entering the granary, they there pled with the God of heaven for answers.**

The call out of Egypt began in a basket in a river. The *first* advent began in a barn in a small Near Eastern town. The truth about the investigative judgment, and Christ's work in the two apartments of the heavenly Sanctuary found its origin in another barn.

Over the years, the present writer has heard disrespectful comments by high-placed Adventist thought leaders about the fact that Adventism "was born in a barn." But so was Christianity! Despise not the day of small beginnings.

**The little group in the granary continued their pleadings until the conviction came over them that God was going to give the light needed to resolve the problem.**

"We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayer was accepted, and that light should be given, our disappointment be explained, and made clear and satisfactory."-Ibid.

**Returning to the kitchen, they ate breakfast. It was time for the group to separate; and, as they did so, Hiram suggested to one of his friends, O.R.L. Crosier (according to J.N. Loughbough), that they visit some of the Millerite neighbors whom they**

had helped win to Christ, so they could encourage them that God was going to answer their prayers for guidance.

**Who was Crosier?**

Owen Russell Loomis Crosier (1820-1913) had been an orphan youth whom Edson and a friend, Dr. Hahn, had befriended. Between them he had been provided with a home, and had developed into an earnest Bible student and promising writer. (Dr. Franklin B. Hahn was a physician of Canandaigua, New York, by Lake Canandaigua and about 15 miles from Port Gibson.)

**So the two started off. Before they had gone far, they passed through a cornfield.**

It has been commonly said that they went through the field to avoid speaking with people. That may be, but Edson was definitely not one to ordinarily avoid conversing with anyone! It may well have been a shortcut to the homes of some believers. In those days, there were many winding dirt roads and people were accustomed to walking across fields to shorten foot travel. It has also been said that Edson was actually taking a shortcut across the cornfields on his own farm, before entering a dirt road which would take them to the homes of neighbors. Loughborough related that they struck off across Edson's own field, where the corn was still in the shock and the pumpkins on the vines (*Loughborough, Advent Experiences, No. 7, 4*). Edson, himself, said it was "mid- way" in "a large field."

The two walked along silently almost oblivious to one another, each meditating on his own thoughts.

**Suddenly Edson stopped, stone still. Thoughts and Scripture passages were suddenly flowing through his mind. He stood there, deep in thought, And there it was, all spread before him.**

"Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly Sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that Sanctuary; and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth. That He came to the marriage at the time; in other words, to the Ancient of days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and we must wait for His return from the wedding; and my mind was directed to the tenth chapter of Revelation, where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie; the seventh angel began [sic] to sound; we had eaten the little [sic] book; it had been sweet in our mouth, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being. That we must prophesy again, etc., and that when the seventh angel began to sound, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament, etc."-Ibid.

In the above discovery, Daniel 8:14 (the 2300 year prophecy) was connected with Leviticus 16 (the day of atonement cleansing in the second apartment), Matthew 25 (the parable of the marriage), Revelation 10 (the little book), and Revelation 11 (the temple in heaven opened).

**Hiram Edson was astounded; yet, with the revelation, a wonderful, sweet peace came over him.**

**Just ahead, his companion had continued walking a short distance, and then, sensing that Edson was not near him, turned around** and called out.

"While I was thus standing in the midst of the field, my comrade passed on almost beyond speaking distance before missing me. He inquired, why I was stopping so long. I replied, 'The Lord was answering our morning prayer; by giving light with regard to our disappointment.' " *Ibid.*

There is a point here which the present writer does not believe anyone else may have caught: how long it took for the concept to be placed in Edson's mind. When Hiram stopped, his companion had kept walking.

"While I was thus standing in the midst of the field, my comrade passed on almost beyond speaking distance before missing me."—Ibid.

How long would it take to walk that far? half a minute at the most? Probably not longer than that.

*In that period of time, a panoramic view of the Bible passages, with a connecting explanation was given to Hiram Edson by the God of heaven! Thank the Lord! The Lord giveth these things to us that we may do all the words of this law.*

Read again the very lengthy one paragraph by Edson, quoted above, in which he touches the main areas of the revelation. It fills nearly half a column.



That connected insight was given him in a few seconds.

**Edson saw that there were two phases to Christ's ministry in heaven. There was a Sanctuary there, of which the earthly was but a copy.**

"Instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly Sanctuary . . . , He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that Sanctuary and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth."-Ibid. [emphasis ours].

**Edson saw that we must await Christ's return from the wedding. And it was now clear that the sanctuary to be cleansed was the heavenly Sanctuary, not this earth.**

Edson could now see that the vision had spoken; it did not lie! The advent experience had indeed been as honey in the mouths of the faithful, but now it tasted bitter (Revelation 10:9-10). According to that prophecy, they must testify again. But would anyone listen?

**Then there was that point about the temple being opened in heaven, and the ark of His testament seen [Revelation 11:19]. What were they to learn from that view?** The prophetic fulfillment of this is beautifully explained in Great Controversy, 433-435. The scattered remnant would discover the importance of the holy Ten Commandment law of God, with the Fourth Commandment shining more brightly than all the rest!

*Oh, what a glorious insight of truth was suddenly imparted to Hiram Edson!*

**Why did the Lord select this one man to give this light to?** Hiram Edson had been tested and proven to be a sincere, humble man of God, who loved God's Word, obeyed it as fully as he understood it, and would obey orders from heaven. He had earlier been tested and found that he would share the light given him.

Immediately he began doing so, to both his walking companion and to others he met.

#### **RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION**

**Edson went with Crosier to their friend, Dr. Hahn, and the three agreed to begin careful Bible studies into this matter.**

They studied the entire system of Mosaic types and shadows, carefully noting the information in Hebrews and Revelation. **This group study continued on for a number of months.**

**Since Crosier was the best writer among them, he was the one chosen to set their conclusions down on paper.**

**They found that there were no errors in the chronology.** It did lead directly to October 22, 1844.

**But it was the event, predicted to occur on that date, which was different than what had earlier been thought. That event was the cleansing of the Sanctuary.** They now realized that this is what Daniel 8:14 had said. It did not say "the burning of the earth," and it did not say "the second advent of the Messiah." It said, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days, and then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed."

**The typical service in the earthly tabernacle was carefully studied. It culminated on the annual day of atonement,** when the high priest was to "make an atonement for the sins of the children of Israel." This involved "cleansing" the sanctuary.

**They also found that the book of Hebrews explained that the earthly tabernacle was only "a copy and type of things heavenly." In the earthly type, or symbol, the sins were forgiven by the merit of the blood of the lamb, as they were transferred day by day into the tabernacle. But, on the day of atonement, they were, in figure, blotted out.**

**It became obvious that these types were to be later fulfilled, in reality, in the heavenly Sanctuary.** The rituals of sacrifice and atonement, lambs and goats, turtledoves and bullocks, clearly represented Christ our Sacrifice. And the **entire work of the earthly priesthood was symbolic of the actual mediatorial work of Jesus, our great High Priest.**

**The ark, in the most holy, enshrining the Ten Commandments, represented the government of God.** The mercy seat covered the ark, and represented the place where God met with His people, blending justice, righteousness, and mercy. The types and shadows represented great realities.

**The sanctuary service represented the complete work of redemption.** The service in the first apartment symbolized the mediation of Christ for His people. **The final service, in the second apartment, symbolized the concluding judgment-hour phase of Christ's ministry, leading up to the final blotting out of sin.**

Christ Himself is the Lamb of God which dies for the sins of men. **The scapegoat, they discovered, symbolized Satan, the instigator of sin, who after the atonement was**

**finished, bears his share of responsibility for all sins**, and is banished at last into the abyss of oblivion.

**The three men also studied, in Revelation 10, how the sweetness of the midnight cry message was turned into bitter disappointment.** But this was followed by the message, "Thou must prophesy again." Apparently God still had a work to be done on earth; there was a message for His people to give. This was a work of sharing this great truth of the Sanctuary and the soon-to-be-discovered importance of the law of God in the ark of the covenant.

The first and second angels' messages had been given. **It was now time to give the message of the third angel. But Edson, Crosier, and Hahn were not yet prepared to give that message, for they did not yet know the truth about the law of God and the Bible Sabbath.** That light would soon come to the faithful through others.

**The three men continued their studies into the spring of 1845 when, by that time, they had a fairly well-balanced understanding of the matter.** It explained the concluding event of the 2300- year prophecy, gave significance to the work of the Millerites, and would become the basis of a powerful, growing movement.

**Wondering how best to share this light, Hiram Edson suggested that they print it in Crosier's occasionally released *Day-Dawn*.** Those early Day-Dawn articles (few of which are now available) appeared in 1845 (*portions of which were later reprinted in the Review and Herald of May 5, 1851, with later comment in the Review of March 17, 1853.*)

**These 1845 articles in the Day-Dawn fell into the hands of Joseph Bates and James White, both of whom accepted the message gladly.**

**Enoch Jacobs, editor of the Day-Star in Cincinnati, Ohio, encouraged them to write out a fuller systematic exposition,** covering 'fifty foolscap sheets,' which were then circulated widely.

**Ten months later, an amplification was printed in the *Day-Star Extra*** of February 7, 1846. 'Extra' meant extra large: it was a double number with twice as many pages. This article was signed by Crosier, with endorsement by Edson and Hahn. The three shared the expense of its printing and distribution. Mrs. Edson even sold her set of silver spoons, a wedding present, to help provide the needed money. Both Joseph Bates and James White were deeply pleased with this Extra.

**The next major step in expanding the present truth message was the Port Gibson Conference.** This gathering of the "scattered remnant" was appointed to be at Edson's place, and the Eastern brethren were invited to be present. Both Bates and White started for the conference, but James White had to return for a funeral and missed the gathering.

**At this important conference, Joseph Bates presented the new Light he had recently received: the truth about the Bible Sabbath.**

**Here, very briefly, is the story about how Bates learned that truth: Mrs. Rachel Oakes** of Washington, New Hampshire, urged **T. M. Preble** (a Millerite preacher) to accept the Bible Sabbath. Studying into the matter, he accepted the Bible Sabbath and became the first advent believer to publish on it: an article in the *Hope of Israel* (an advent publication) of February 28, 1845, which was reprinted in tract form in March. This tract won several people to the Sabbath truth, including Edward Andrews, father of J.N. Andrews; two young women who later became the wives of J.N. Andrews and Uriah Smith; and Joseph Bates. **In his own studies, Bates had then connected the Sabbath to the Sanctuary message.**

**As he stood in front of the assembly and concluded his explanation of this, Hiram Edson could not be contained. He jumped to his feet, and declared, "That is light and truth! The seventh day is the Sabbath, and I am with you to keep it!"**

**Edson had already caught certain glimpses of the Sabbath through his study of the sanctuary, the ark, and the Ten Commandments; but, up to this time, he had not seen its true importance. Dr. Hahn accepted the Sabbath truth at this time also.**

**This was the first public instance in which the Sanctuary message and the Sabbath truth were joined.**

#### **THE COMPLETE HIRAM EDSON STATEMENT**

Hiram Edson was an important figure in the transition from the Millerite movement to the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. For that reason, although we have quoted from it earlier, **it is well to quote in its entirety an undated documentary fragment which is now located in the Heritage Room at Andrews University Library, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. It is a fragment because the concluding pages are missing.** Here are the pages which the Heritage

Room now has. Unfortunately, it ends in mid-sentence. The manuscript is doubly valuable, since Edson was not one to spend time writing. **This is the only written statement we have from him about that extremely important event.**

We reprint it exactly as is. You will note that he wrote very lengthy paragraphs:

"I began to muse on this wise; if all this is the fruit of the new doctrine, the evidence is clear that it is from heaven; for it is written, 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit,' and thus this question was settled with me.

"In this incident of my experience I also learned an additional lesson, namely, that God was ready and willing to hear and answer prayer for the sick, and to stretch forth His hand to heal and raise them up, and restore them to health. Since which time, I have shared in, and witnessed many incidents of like character.

"The next morning the physician came to visit his patient, and to his great astonishment found him out of doors walking up and down the lane, praising God with a loud voice. He gazed and listened with wonder and astonishment at the narration of what God had wrought. Pale and trembling, he returned home, relating what he had seen and heard, his residence being but a few doors from the church where the lectures were given.

"When Monday evening came [both?] our [ families?] went to the prayer meeting, appointed the night before at the close of the lectures. The meetinghouse, though large, was filled to overflowing as it had been during the lectures. It was judged best to have a short sermon and then a season for testimonies. The brother who had been healed and myself bore our testimonies: what God had wrought for us; which had its influence on the minds of the congregation. Before the close of the meeting, our preacher very hesitatingly gave a faint invitation, that, if there were any in the congregation who felt like seeking the Lord, and desired prayer for them, if they would make it manifest by rising on their feet we would engage in prayer for them; when some eighty at once arose, without being urged. And thus I saw literally fulfilled, what was presented before me the night before, when in prayer before the manger. But the voice which said, 'Go talk the truth to your neighbors, and fellow men,' and my promise to do so, was lost sight of, and did not come into mind.

"I was endeavoring to walk carefully before the Lord. I did not want to loose [sic] the victory, the liberty, and freedom I had been sharing. But not withstanding all my efforts darkness was stealing over me; the heavens became as brass, and I could find no answer from God—I knew not why, until I sought the Lord in persevering secret prayer, and, in earnest, to know what intervened and hid His face from me. At length while in prayer in the forest, my mind was carried back to the voice which said, 'Go talk the truth to your neighbors,' which I had promised to do, and that I could not share the light of His countenance or freedom of His spirit, until I lifted that cross and discharged that duty. This seemed the heaviest cross which had ever been presented for me to lift. It seemed more than I could consent to do; but no relief came, till, at length, I consented to make the effort. And not until I reached the third family did much victory or freedom return to me, but here the cloud seemed to break, and old and young, the grayheaded and youth, were melted to tears; expressing their desire for saving grace. As I moved forward in this work day times; and attending the evening meetings; for they were protracted, until it was claimed that between three and four hundred professed conversion, the cross grew lighter, or my strength increased in bearing it. There was one family I had passed several times without calling on them. The head of the family was dissipated, and I thought it would be but casting pearls before swine; so I passed them by.

"After laboring as above, night and day, I became worn and felt I needed rest. I decided not to attend the meeting that evening, also, not to make any more calls but go directly home and obtain rest. On passing the above named house I was stopped in the road opposite the house, by some unseen power, and could not make progress. I know not what was the cause, and began to ponder whether it was duty to enter the house. While thus waiting a shadowy form in human shape stood before me, and led toward the house, at which I said, Can there be duty to call here? The form repeated the lead toward the house twice, or thrice, and I followed, gathering assuredly that the Lord's angel was accompanying me and leading me in the way I should go. I entered the house, was received kindly, had a free time talking and praying with them, learned that they were backsliders, and were desiring to return unto the Lord. The above revival and ingathering of souls, being the result and legitimate fruit of the above lectures, was additional evidence that this new doctrine was from heaven; for it is a good tree that brings forth good fruit. 'A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.'

"During what is called the seventh month movement, in 1844, myself and several other brethren were engaged in circulating publications on the coming of Christ, day times, and holding meetings at my own private house evenings. As we were about to commence our evening meeting on one occasion, a two-horse wagon load of entire strangers came; and after preparing seats for them we commenced our meeting by singing, 'Here o'er the earth as a stranger I roam, Here is no rest, is no rest.' It was sung with the spirit and with the understanding, and the spirit which accompanied the singing gave to it a keen edge, and before the hymn was sung through, the entire company of strangers were so deeply convicted that rather than bear the reproach of being convicted or converted at a Millerite meeting, they all started to leave the house. One man and his wife succeeded in getting outdoors; but the third one fell upon the threshold, the fourth, the fifth, and so on, till most of the company were thus slain by the power of God. And such agonizing cries and pleading for mercy is not often witnessed. Some thirteen, or more, were converted before the meeting closed. The man and his wife who left the house labored hard to persuade the rest of their company to leave at once for home; but not succeeding, and rather than remain through the meeting they went home on foot in a dark night, a distance of five or six miles, carrying a child a year old. But this was not their heaviest burden. Their conviction was too deep to be easily shaken off; they were back again at the next evening meeting, and found pardon and peace in believing. And, 'so, mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.'

"Passing over other like manifestations of the power of God, we glance at our disappointment at the tenth of the seventh month, 1844. Having the true cry, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, on the tenth day of the seventh month, and, having been early taught by modern orthodoxy that the coming of the Bridegroom to the marriage would be fulfilled in the personal second advent of Christ to this earth (which was a mistaken idea), we confidently expected to see Jesus Christ and all the holy angels with Him; and that His voice would call up Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the ancient worthies and near and dear friends which had been torn from us by death, and that our trials and sufferings with our earthly pilgrimage would close, and we should be caught up to meet our coming Lord to be forever with Him to inhabit the bright golden mansions in the golden home city, prepared for the redeemed. Our expectations were raised high, and thus we looked for our coming Lord until the clock tolled 12 at midnight. The day had then passed and our disappointment became a certainty. Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before. It seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have been no comparison. We wept and wept, till the day dawned.

"I mused in my own heart, saying, my advent experience has been the richest and brightest of all my Christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my Christian experience worth? Is there no God—no heaven—no golden home city—no paradise? Is all this but a cunningly devised fable? Is there no reality to our fondest hopes and expectations of these things? And thus we had something to grieve and weep over, if all our fond hopes were lost. And as I said, we wept till the day dawned.

"A second glance over past experience, and the lessons learned, and how when brought into strait places where light and help was needed by seeking the Lord He had answered by a voice and other ways, I began to feel there might be light and help for us in our present distress. I said to some of my brethren, Let us go to the barn. We entered the granary, shut the doors about us and bowed before the Lord. We prayed earnestly; for we felt our necessity. We continued in earnest prayer until the witness of the Spirit was given that our prayer was accepted, and that light should be given, our disappointment be explained, and made clear and satisfactory. After breakfast I said to one of my brethren, 'Let us go and see, and encourage our brethren.' We started, and while passing through a large field I was stopped about midway of the field. Heaven seemed open to my view, and I saw distinctly, and clearly, that instead of our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly Sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that He for the first time entered on that day the second apartment of that Sanctuary; and that He had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth. That He came to the marriage at the time; in other words, to the Ancient of days, to receive a kingdom, dominion, and glory; and we must wait for His return from the wedding; and my mind was directed to the tenth chapter of Revelation, where I could see the vision had spoken and did not lie; the seventh angel began [sic] to sound; we had eaten the little [sic] book; it had been sweet in our mouth, and it had now become bitter in our belly, embittering our whole being. That we must prophesy again, etc., and that when

the seventh angel began to sound, the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament, etc.

"While I was thus standing in the midst of the field, my comrade passed on almost beyond speaking distance before missing me. He inquired, 'Why I was stopping so long?' I replied, 'The Lord was answering our morning prayer; by giving light with regard to our disappointment.' I talked these things to my brethren.

"In those days I was closely associated with O.R.L. Crosier and Dr. F. B. Hahn (Crosier making his home with me a portion of the time). He examined the Bible on the subject of the sanctuary. F. B. Hahn and myself connected with Crosier in the publication of the paper called, '*The Day-Dawn*.' Brother Hahn and myself held a consultation with regard to the propriety of sending out the light on the subject of the sanctuary. We decided it was just what the scattered remnant needed; for it would explain our disappointment, and set the brethren on the right track. We agreed to share the expense between us, and said to Crosier, "Write out the subject of the sanctuary. Get out another number of the *Day-Dawn*, and we will try to meet the expense." He did so, and the *Day-Dawn* was sent out bearing the light on the sanctuary subject. It fell into the hands of Elders James White and Joseph Bates, who readily endorsed the view; and it was shown in vision [to Ellen Harmon] to be light for the remnant. The number of the *Day-Dawn* opened a communication between us and these Eastern brethren. We appointed a conference of the scattered brethren to be held at my house and invited these, our Eastern brethren, to meet with us. Brother W. made the effort to come, but his way was hedged up. Father Bates came on. His light was the Seventh-day Sabbath.

"From my understanding of the opening of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven, and the seeing of the ark of His testimony, and a few lines I had seen from the pen of T.M. Preble, I had been looking at the subject of the Seventh-day Sabbath and talking it to my brethren. I had said to them, 'If we abide by . . .'—*Hiram Edson, Undated fragmentary document, Heritage Room, Andrews University Library.*

That concludes the undated document, penned by Hiram Edson. He was an ardent worker, but he was not one to spend much time writing. That fact, and his centrality in receiving light on the Sanctuary message, publishing it, and helping to unite the Sanctuary message with the Sabbath truth, is why this fragment is so extremely important. It is unfortunate that the concluding pages are missing.

## **-SECTION TEN -**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **HOW OLD WERE THEY IN 1844?**

As the present writer prepared this series, he could not help wondering how old these persons were at the height of the movement in the 1840s. Here is a list of the most significant individuals in the advent awakening, their life dates, and their age in 1844. (Some names are omitted because their life dates are unknown.)

William Miller (1782-1849) 62  
Joseph Bates (1792-1872) 52  
George Storrs (1796-1879) 48  
Joseph Marsh (1802-1863) 42  
Samuel Snow (1806-1870) 40  
Hiram Edson (1806-1882) 40  
Joshua I? Himes (1805-1895) 39  
Charles Fitch (1805-1844) 39  
Thomas Preble (1810-1907) 34  
Josiah Litch (1809-1886) 33  
Levi Stockman (1812-1844) 32  
Sylvester Bliss (1814-1863) 30  
O.R.L. Crosier (1820-1913) 24  
James White (1821-1881) 23  
Ellen Harmon (1827-1915) 16 (17 in Nov.)

#### **WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM LATER?**

**Samuel Snow**—Snow was deeply disappointed when nothing apparently happened on October 22. For a brief time he questioned as to whether a mistake had been made in the prophetic reckoning of the year. But soon he began to preach strange doctrines. One was that

everyone who did not accept his teachings was condemned to hell and unsavable. From March to August 1845, he published the *Jubilee Standard*. Gradually he went into extreme fanaticism—and finally declared he was Elijah the prophet. Separating totally from advent believers, he disappeared from the scene. It is known that he died in 1870 at the age of 64.

**O. R. L. Crosier**—After the Port Gibson Conference, Crosier kept the Sabbath for awhile, and advocated it in the *Day-Dawn* in December 1846 (cf. Review, May 6, 1852), but soon repudiated it, as well as his early sanctuary view. He joined the staff of Joseph Marsh's *Advent Harbinger* in 1847, remaining there until 1853. By this time, he said the three angels' message and the keeping of the Bible Sabbath would not occur until after the return of Christ. In 1850, he, Marsh, and others taught the "age to come" view of the millennium. In 1858, he was an evangelist for the Michigan Conference of the Advent Christian Church. Crosier died in 1913 at the age of 93.

**Dr. Franklin B. Hahn**—Hahn, a physician of Canandaigua, New York, was an active worker in the Millerite movement. It was at his home that Crosier wrote out their joint findings on the Sanctuary message.

Hahn paid for and published the *Day-Dawn*, which Crosier edited and produced from time to time. With Edson, Hahn financed the *Day-Star Extra* of February 7, 1846, which explained the Sanctuary discovery. He accepted the Sabbath at the Port Gibson Conference, when Edson did. But by 1851 he had apparently reverted to Sunday-keeping, since so many of his friends kept it.

**Hiram Edson**—The Lord knew who to select for his work. Edson was a solid, balanced Christian who remained so all the way to his death. He not only studied the Bible and held evangelistic efforts, but was self-sacrificing. His farm, where two early conferences of the Sabbathkeeping Adventists were held, he sold in 1850 to help defray the evangelistic expenses of Bates, Andrews, Loughborough, Holt, and Rhodes. His next farm, in Port Byron, he also sold in 1852; and, from the proceeds, he lent James White the money to purchase his first printing press at Rochester.

In 1848, one of the Sabbath Conferences (which helped crystallize the doctrinal content of Seventh-day Adventists) was held in Hiram Edson's barn—the same barn where he prayed in October 1844. (Decades later a different owner tore the barn down.)

In 1855, Edson was ordained to the ministry, and was awarded credentials in 1870. He was the one who helped young J. N. Loughborough get started preaching. He traveled with him on a circuit of churches early in Loughborough's ministry.

Hiram Edson always remained faithful to the message, and died in 1882 at the age of 76.

**Joseph Bates**— By 1844, Bates was 52 years old. He did not repudiate his faith when the Disappointment occurred. After reading T.M. Preble's booklet on the seventh-day Sabbath (published in February 1845) and checking the Bible evidence with his customary thoroughness, Bates made his decision to keep the Bible Sabbath. (Five years later his wife, Prudence, joined him in this.) Shortly after discovering this wonderful truth, Bates was met on a bridge with the question, "What's the news, Captain Bates?" To which he replied, "The news is that the seventh day is the Sabbath!"

In 1846, Bates published a 48-page booklet about the Sabbath, entitled, "*the Seventh-day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign.*" Later, he published five more, amplifying on this and similar doctrinal subjects.

In 1849, he was impressed to travel to the west. Arriving in Jackson, Michigan, he raised up a church. Then he went to Baffle Creek. Inquiring at the post office for the most honest man in town, he went to the home of David Hewitt, a Presbyterian notions salesman on Van Buren Street. When Hewitt opened the door, Bates said, "I have been directed to you as the most honest man in Battle Creek; if this is so, I have some important truth to present to you." Bates then hung up his chart and presented Adventist doctrines, focusing on the Sabbath truth. Hewitt was convinced and kept the following Sabbath.

As the years passed, he was an earnest worker, and held posts as head of several Adventist conferences. He was chairman of the conference in 1863, when the Seventh-day Adventist Church was officially organized.

In 1871, a year before his death, he held at least one hundred meetings. He died at the Health Institute in Battle Creek on March 19, 1872, at the age of 80.

**Thomas M. Preble**—Preble was the man who, discovering the Sabbath truth from Rachel Oakes, was instrumental in bringing it to Bates, who, in turn, brought it into the group which became the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Oddly enough, T. M. Preble only observed the seventh day until the middle of 1847. This was because he had such close attachments to members and leaders in the Sunday-keeping churches, that he did not wish to break from them.

In later years, he wrote against the Sabbath, in the *Advent Herald* and *World's Crisis*, and also against Ellen White and Seventh-day Adventists, in general, in the *Advent-Christian Times*.

Uriah Smith, J. H. Wagoner, and J. N. Andrews wrote replies to those articles. Preble seemed anxious to undo the effects of that earlier tract favoring the Bible Sabbath. He eventually wrote a book, *First-Day Sabbath*. Preble died in 1907 at the age of 97.

**Joshua V. Himes**— After leading out in the Albany Conference in 1845, and touring England in 1846, Himes continued editing the *Advent Herald*. In 1858, he sided with the Evangelical Adventists and their American Millennial Association (now defunct). He soon sold the *Advent Herald* to that group.

In 1860, Himes made several theological changes: He decided that Christ would return between 1866 and 1868, and he accepted the truth of unconsciousness in death and the final annihilation of the wicked.

When Christ did not return, Himes permanently gave up time setting. In 1863, he joined the Advent Christian Church, which held to his new views of the state of the dead and punishment of the wicked, and began editing one of their papers.

After a power struggle, in which another worker wanted Himes ousted, Himes quit the Advent Christian Church and, in 1879 was ordained in the Episcopal Church at the age of 75 as a minister. For the next 16 years he served in Elk Point, South Dakota.

The fiftieth anniversary of October 1844 (1895) found Himes in the Battle Creek Sanitarium, under J.H. Kellogg's care. He had cancer on his face. While there, Ellen White thanked him for his generous donations to Adventist mission work. Himes died that same year. He was 91 years old, and is buried in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, in a cemetery on a hill. Himes said "he wanted to be on top of a hill when Gabriel blows his trumpet." He had outlived every other major leader in the Millerite movement.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The present writer would mark Miller's conversion as the first major event, his decision to begin preaching as the second, his meeting with Himes as the third, and Exeter as the fourth. Next would come October 22, October 23, the first vision, and the discovery of the Sabbath truth.

### **Here are some notable statements:**

"But with so short a time to awake the slumbering virgins, and save souls, we must work; work night and day. God has thrust us out in haste, to give the last invitation, and we must labor in earnest, and compel them to come in, that His house may be filled. Why, I expect that God will shake the world with a moral earthquake before the close of '43. Strong men in Israel are rallying to our help. The midnight cry must yet be made to ring, and ring through every valley and over every hilltop and plain. An awful trembling must yet seize upon sinners in Zion, a crisis must come, before the door of mercy is everlastingly shut against them. They must be made to feel that it is now or never. And they will."- *L. C. Collins, letter dated May 23, 1842, to Joshua R Himes and Josiah Litch, printed in Signs of the Times, June 1, 1842 [emphasis his]*.

"Our work is one of unutterable magnitude. It is a mission and an enterprise, unlike, in some respects, anything that has ever awakened the energies of man . . . It is an alarm, and a CRY, uttered by those who, from among all Protestant sects, as Watchmen standing upon the walls of the moral world, believe the WORLD'S CRISIS IS COME!"—*Midnight Cry, November 17, 1842* [first issue of this weekly].

**May God help us each one to learn well the lessons of the advent awakening, for it has many lessons to teach us.**

**We are told that the light of the midnight cry shines all along the pathway** (*Early Writings, 14*).

In a special sense, we will find that light revealed in chapters 23-24, and 28 of the book, *Great Controversy*. Let us study it more closely. -Vance Ferrell

"At first the definite time was generally opposed; but there seemed to be an irresistible power attending its proclamation, which prostrated all before it. It swept over the land with the velocity of a tornado, and it reached hearts in different and distant places almost simultaneously, and in a manner which can be accounted for only on the supposition that God was in it . . .

"The lecturers among the Adventists were the last to embrace the views of the time, and the more prominent ones came into it last of all. It seemed not to be the work of men, but to be brought about in spite of men. The several advent papers came into the view only at a late hour; and this paper [*The Advent Herald*] was the last to raise its voice in the spread of the cry. For a long time we were determined to take no part in the movement, either in opposition, or in the advocacy of it . . .

"It was not until within about two weeks of the commencement of the seventh month [about the first of October], that we were particularly impressed with the progress of the movement, when we had such a view of it, that to oppose it, or even to remain silent longer, seemed to us to be opposing the work of the Holy Spirit, and in entering upon the work with all our souls, we could but exclaim, 'What were we, that we should resist God?' It seemed to us to have been so independent of human agency, that we could but regard it as a fulfillment of the Midnight Cry.' "—*Adventist Herald, October 30, 1844.*