

OBSERVATIONS OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST TEACHING OF A PRE-ADVENT  
INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

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(Slightly revised. The original paper was written in 1979)

It was almost a year ago that I made the most difficult decision that I have ever had to make. In spite of my love for my church, my work and above all my family and friends, I felt myself compelled by conscience to withdraw from the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The main reason why I took this traumatic, heart wrenching step was because I had come to disbelieve my church's fundamental teaching of a pre-advent investigative judgment. My reasons for rejecting this central Adventist doctrine are outlined in this paper.

I write this paper not as a polemic against the Adventist church but in the sincere hope that adequate answers might be forthcoming. I continue to love and admire much of what constitutes Adventism and I still consider myself open to alternative viewpoints.

I know that my objections are, in the main, not new and that answers to these objections have been suggested in the past. However there is a difference between an answer and a convincing answer. Most of the answers I have considered so far I have found to be unconvincing, else I would not have taken the step that I have. However it is possible that there are weighty answers which I have not yet considered or, having considered, have not discerned the fullness of.

If anyone who reads this paper thinks that I am astray in my conclusions and feels that there are convincing reasons to demonstrate why this is so please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be happy to find Adventism right and myself in error. What follows constitutes my main objections to the investigative judgment teaching.

THE ADVENTIST TEACHING OF THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT OF THE  
PROFESSED PEOPLE OF GOD IS FOREIGN TO THE CONTEXT OF DANIEL, CHAPTER  
EIGHT.

According to Adventists the "cleansing of the sanctuary" of verse 14 is an investigative judgment of the professed people of God. A study of the context of this verse reveals nothing to support this unusual interpretation.

The symbolism of Daniel 8 centres in the notorious little horn which is described as performing a number of horrific acts. Among other things he is said to take away the daily sacrifices, pollute the sanctuary and persecute the people of God. After witnessing these terrible events in vision Daniel hears two angelic beings speaking to each other. One asks the question, "For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgressing that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" verse 13 (All quotations in this paper are from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated). Verse 14 is the answer to this question "Unto 2300 days then- shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (K.J.V.). It is clear then that the "cleansing of the sanctuary" must involve the destruction of the little horn and the restoration of the sanctuary. The Adventist interpretation totally ignores this context and switches to the theme of an investigation of the professed people of God. This exegesis fails to answer

the-question of verse 13 and is completely irrelevant to the context of the entire chapter. There is however a simple, straightforward and convincing alternative.

#### AN ALTERNATIVE EXEGESIS OF DANIEL CHAPTER EIGHT.

The little horn of Daniel 8 is interpreted by the angelic commentator to be "A KING OF BOLD COUNTENANCE" (verse 23). Almost all commentators have understood the little horn of Daniel 8 to be a symbol for Antiochus Epiphanes, an erratic Greek king who worked havoc on the Jewish people and religion for a brief but terrible period in the second century B.C.(171-164 B.C.) There are substantial reasons why they have arrived at this conclusion.

One of the most obvious reasons is the fact that the horn is said to emerge from a horn which is said to sit upon a beast which is clearly said to be a symbol of the GREEK empire (verse 21) It is important to note that there is no following beast to represent the Roman empire as there is in chapter 7. It would seem clear that the prophecy concerns events which would at least have their initial fulfilment in the time of the Greek empire.(1)

The prophecy indicated that the little horn would arise from one of the fourfold divisions of the Greek empire after the death of Alexander the Great. Antiochus Epiphanes did arise from one of these fourfold divisions (Rome did not) and he fulfilled to a remarkable degree most of the other specifications of the prophecy.

Antiochus subjected the Jewish people to probably the most intense period of persecution they had hitherto endured. In his bloody attempt to eliminate the religion of the Jews he tortured and murdered thousands, suspended the sacrifices and ceremonial, poured swine broth around the temple and set up a substitute altar to Zeus Olympias. This terrible period of intense persecution was brought to a sudden close by the valiant action of Judas Maccabaeus.

Judas led the Jews in a remarkable revolt which resulted in the tyrant being routed and the temple cleansed and rededicated. It is clear that in the horrific acts of Antiochus Epiphanes and the heroic revolt of the Maccabees with its resulting restoration of the sanctuary and its ritual the prophecy of Daniel 8 finds a remarkable fulfilment. This, however, is not to deny that the prophecy would have further fulfilments.

#### DANIEL CHAPTER EIGHT IS APOTELESMATIC IN FULFILMENT.

Undoubtedly the prophecy of Daniel 8 is not limited exclusively to events which transpired in the second century B.C. Most conservative commentators agree that the symbolism reaches beyond the events of the second century B.C. to events which will transpire in the final "time of the end" shortly preceding our Lord's return(2). At this time one, of whom Antiochus is a type, will arise to exterminate the faithful people of God. Antiochus is thus seen to be a fitting type of the final anti-christ. Not only this, it would appear that the prophecy has had recurring fulfillments throughout the Christian age.

It would seem that our Lord applied the prophecy to the pagan armies of Rome in their desolation of the city of Jerusalem (Matt 24:15). The apostle Paul would appear to have applied this prophecy to the persecuting papacy of the Dark Ages.(2 Thess. 2). The final fulfilment is yet future and would seem to be enlarged upon in Revelation chapter 13. Although early Adventists, and most since, strongly opposed the Antiochus interpretation there are a number of Adventist scholars of more recent times who would concur with the

idea of recurring fulfillments, the initial fulfillments to be found in Antiochus (e.g. Desmond Ford and George McCready Price). It would appear to the present writer that the apotelesmatic (recurring fulfilment) interpretation would rule out the possibility of the traditional Adventist linear interpretation of the 2300 days stretching from 457 B.C. to 1844 A.D. I am in agreement with the apotelesmatic fulfilment of Daniel 8 but I fail to see how one can hold this view and maintain the traditional Adventist interpretation of the 2300 days. If the little horn is apotelesmatic then why should the 2300 days not be apotelesmatic? If the 2300 days is apotelesmatic then an interpretation which postulates a linear fulfilment stretching through the ages of Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome and stretching into modern times would appear to be untenable.

#### IS THE LITTLE HORN PRIMARILY SATAN?

Desmond Ford calls attention to the apocalyptic nature of Daniel and suggests that the little horn is primarily a symbol for Satan. "The question of Daniel 8:13 thus becomes, 'How long shall Satan be permitted to oppose the work of Christ and to oppose the saints through the earthly counterfeit powers? How long will it be before God intervenes?...The ultimate fulfilment of such requests is the final judgment of God ...'"(4). However the interpretation given by the angel will not allow us to arrive at the conclusion that the little horn is primarily Satan.

The interpretation makes it plain that the little horn is an earthly power. The horn is plainly said to be "a king of bold countenance" (v. 23). This king is said to arise "at the latter end" of the fourfold division of the Greek empire. Did Satan arise in the second century B.C.? Undoubtedly the power of Satan worked through Antiochus Epiphanes but the little horn is not Satan. The little horn is clearly an earthly power. To suggest otherwise is to venture beyond the inspired interpretation.

#### WHO DEFILES THE SANCTUARY? IS IT CHRIST AND THE SAINTS OR THE LITTLE HORN?

According to Adventists it is the confessed sins of the people of God which defile the sanctuary. "As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred in fact to the heavenly sanctuary." (5) "In the type, the sins of the Israelites defiled the sanctuary and on the Day of Atonement, it was cleansed of all these sins. ... In the sanctuary in heaven, the record of sins is the only counterpart of the defilement of the earthly sanctuary. ... It is the expunging, or blotting out, of these sins from the heavenly records that fulfils the type set forth on the Day of Atonement. In that way the sanctuary in heaven can be cleansed from all defilement." (6)

In contradiction to this however the book of Daniel makes it plain that IT IS THE LITTLE HORN WHO DEFILES THE SANCTUARY (Dan.8: 11, 12 and 11:31). The eighth chapter of Daniel depicts the saints and Christ as suffering along with the sanctuary. The thought that the saints and Christ defile the sanctuary is the exact opposite! This is some of the confusion into which a faulty exegesis can lead its proponents, even the unfortunate confusion of Christ and his people with the antichrist!!

Adventist scholar Gerhard Hasel attempts to explain how the little horn could be said to have a part in the defiling of the sanctuary according to the Adventist scheme of things.

“The sins of trusting in and living on the basis of the counterfeit way of salvation introduced by the little horn power, but confessed to by those who had turned to Christ’s way of salvation, are forgiven by Him and transferred to the heavenly sanctuary as are all other sins. In this way the little horn power in its religio-political phase has a part in the defiling of the heavenly sanctuary.” (7) I find this explanation entirely unconvincing. At best this would account for only some of the defiling. The angelic interpretation of Daniel 8 allows for no confusion of the little horn with the saints.

#### WHAT PERIOD OF TIME IS ENCOMPASSED BY THE 2300 DAYS?

In vision Daniel witnesses the horrifying work of the little horn. He sees it exalt itself, cast down sanctuary and truth to the ground and cruelly persecute the people of God. As he witnesses these terrible events he overhears an angelic being echoing the question of his own heart. “How long will this blasphemous power be allowed to continue its evil work?” The answer is given that after 2300 days the sanctuary will be restored to its rightful state. It would appear then that the 2300 days is the period of the desolating work of the little horn. If this be so it is difficult to agree with the Adventist teaching that the 2300 days began in the time of Medo-Persia.

According to the traditional Adventist position the little horn is a symbol of Rome; first in its pagan phase, later in its papal phase. If the 2300 days encompass the period of Rome’s persecution of the people of God it is hard to see how this could possibly have begun before the time of Rome’s emergence as a world power in the second century B.C.? According to the Adventist interpretation the 2300 days began centuries earlier in the time of the Medo-Persian empire!

In support of their position the Adventists point to the question of verse 13 “How long shall be the vision ... ” Thus, they say, the question involves not just the persecution of the little horn but the period of the entire vision which commenced in the time of Medo-Persia. At least two things should be said about this suggestion.

First, it is clear that this vision centers on the rapacious work of the little horn. The details of the ram and the he goat are purely background to this central figure (It is significant that no reference is made to the decree to restore and build Jerusalem when the ram is described), it is highly unlikely that the question of verse 13 would concern mere background figures.

Second, the word “vision” in verse 13 is qualified by several terms which make it plain that the question concerns not the period of the entire vision but that central portion which concerns the work of the little horn. “For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?” The comments of the much-respected Lutheran scholar Leupold should be noted carefully. “To make his inquiry more specific ... the angel adds several explanatory terms that are in apposition with the general term ‘vision’. ... Four things are in apposition to the word ‘vision’. ... Therefore he practically wants to know how long the suffering of the saints and the humiliation of the sanctuary, will last.” (8)

Consider one further point. The 2300 days would appear to be the period of “the suffering of the saints and the humiliation of the sanctuary.” In contrast to this the Adventist interpretation would have us commence this period with a decree to *liberate* the saints and *restore* the sanctuary!

DID CHAPTER EIGHT END PREMATURELY AND IS CHAPTER NINE ITS CONTINUATION?

The theory that Daniel 9 is a continuation of chapter 8 is critical to the Adventist position on the 2300 days because it is from Daniel 8:25 that Adventists derive the commencing date for the 2300 days. There are weighty reasons for rejecting this idea. Consider the following. (a) At least 10 years separate the two visions. In the days of William Miller the time between the two visions was thought to be small. However the best scholarship is now agreed that the vision of Daniel 9 followed at least 10 years after that of chapter 8. If the vision of Daniel 8 was truncated because of Daniel's sickness then one would expect that Gabriel would have returned to continue his explanation soon after Daniels recovery from his illness.

(b) According to Gabriel's own words he received the message of the ninth chapter only at the time that Daniel set himself to seek God in that wonderful prayer that constitutes the first half of the chapter. "AT THE BEGINNING OF YOUR SUPPLICATIONS A WORD WENT FORTH and I am come -to tell it to you. ... " (9:23) The "word" (Hebrew 'dhabar') of verse 23 is not a command to Gabriel to go to Daniel (as in K.J.V.) but rather the very message itself that Gabriel is about to share with him. Note carefully almost every modern translation of verse 23 and also Dan. 10:1 where the 'dhabar' is clearly the revelation itself.

(c) Adventists assert that the word "understanding" of Daniel 9:22 has reference to the vision of the eighth chapter. However a reading of the context reveals that this "understanding" has reference to the 70 years of desolation predicted by Jeremiah. Daniel was not seeking to understand his previous vision but rather the prediction of Jeremiah regarding the 70 years of captivity in Babylon (see Dan. 9:1, 2). The suggestion by some Adventist commentators that Daniel was fearful that the vision of Daniel 8 implied an extension of the 70 years would appear to be untenable because the vision of chapter 8 clearly indicated that the 2300 days desolation would transpire at a much later time, even in the time of the Greek empire. Instead of implying an extended desolation, the eighth chapter implied a successful restoration followed some time later by a further desolation in the time of the Greek empire.

(d) Daniel 8 is complete in itself. The fact that no specific starting date is given for the 2300 days is not necessarily significant. In the seventh chapter no specific starting date is given for the period referred to as "a time, two times and half a time" (Dan.7:25) and none is felt to be required. The 2300 days is simply the period of the desolation of the sanctuary and the trampling of the host.

(e) Adventists point to the final words of chapter 8 where Daniel says he did not understand the vision. In this they find evidence that the vision was truncated, later to be continued. However Daniel's statement that he did not understand the vision should not be taken too precisely. He probably meant that he found it difficult to grasp all that he had witnessed in the vision (This would not be surprising in view of the fact that the vision encompassed the period of two great world empires and one of the most fearful persecutions ever endured by the Jewish people!). Undoubtedly there were many elements of this vision about which the aged seer would have desired further information. At the close of the book we find that he is still seeking further understanding (12:8).

(f) Even if we accept the Adventist contention that chapter 9 is a continuation of chapter 8 we are still faced by the fact chapter 9 does not explain that portion of chapter 8 that Adventists claim was left unexplained i.e. the 2300 days and the "cleansing of the

sanctuary.” Daniel 9, according to the traditional Adventist interpretation, deals almost exclusively with events which transpired only during the initial 490 year segment of the 2300 days. The theme of Daniel 9 is the glorious work accomplished by the Messiah. This is not the theme of Daniel 8. In view of the fact that the life and death of the Messiah is hardly hinted at in Daniel 8 it is hard to see how chapter 9 could be its continuation.

(g) The command to Daniel towards the close of chapter 8 to “seal up the vision, for it pertains to many days hence” (verse 26) appears to be a concluding statement. It is unlikely he would be told to do this if the vision were not complete.

In view of the above factors it would seem that there is little justification for the idea that the vision of Daniel 8 was cut short later to be continued in chapter 9. If Daniel 9 is not the continuation of chapter 8 then there is no reason to conclude that 457 B.C. is the commencement date for the 2300 days. If the 2300 days did not begin in 457 B.C. there is no reason to conclude that an investigative judgement began in 1844.

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT FAILS TO SUPPORT THE ADVENTIST TEACHING OF AN INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT.

There is very little, if any, New Testament support for a pre-advent investigative judgment as taught by Adventists. One would expect that if this doctrine were of such vital importance, as Adventists claim, there would be considerable New Testament support. A close examination of the main New Testament passages used to buttress this teaching indicates that such support is lacking.

Rev.14:7 The fourteenth chapter of Revelation depicts three angels flying in mid heaven proclaiming messages of warning to a destruction bent world. Seventh-day Adventists believe that they have been raised up by God to proclaim these messages to a wicked world and an apostate Christendom.

Much is made of the aorist tense of verse 7 where the first angel declares that “the hour of His judgment HAS come”. This is said to be a clear reference to an investigative judgment which is now sitting. However a close examination of the following chapters shows clearly that the judgment here spoken of is not an investigative judgment in heaven which began 130 years ago but rather the executive judgments of God which are about to be poured out upon the wicked in the form of the seven last plagues shortly before the second coming of Christ. This “hour of judgment is described in great detail in the following chapters.

It is not accidental that the chapters describing the seven last plagues follow immediately upon the warning of chapter 14. Time and again in the following chapters these plagues are described as the “JUDGMENTS” of God (see Rev. 16:5, 7; 18:8; 19:1, 2). Later, after the plagues have been poured out, it is said, “Alas! Alas! Thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! IN ONE HOUR HAS THY JUDGMENT COME.” (Rev. 18:10) The “hour of judgment” referred to in Rev. 14:7 is the period of the seven last plagues. What could be plainer??

Other New Testament passages which are said to support the investigative judgment doctrine include Rev.22:11 and 1 Peter 4:17. It is extremely doubtful that either of these passages has anything to say about an investigative judgment as the Adventists conceive it. Revelation 22:11 is said to be the pronouncement made at the close of the investigative judgement. However this passage was addressed to the apostle John and it applied to

people living in his day as much as it does to people living today. “And he said to me (i.e. John ). ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.’” (Rev 22:10, 11) Our Lord was simply telling John that each person is free to do as he pleases. In effect he is saying that He uses no compulsion; as a man chooses so he determines his destiny (cf. verse 17 ). The reference to the time being “near” should not lead us to apply this passage to a future close of probation. The book of Revelation, and indeed the entire New Testament, continually depicts the coming of Christ as being close at hand ( see Rev 1:3; 22:12, 20 ). The early Christians lived in the anticipation of a speedy return of their Lord.

The passage in the first letter of Peter has nothing to do with an investigative judgement. The context reveals that the “judgement” Peter refers to is the chastisement of Christians living in *his* day. “... if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God. For the time has come for judgement to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:16,17 ).

Does the twentieth chapter of Revelation imply a pre-advent judgement? The two resurrections of Rev. 20, one of the righteous and one of the wicked separated by 1,000 years, are said to imply a pre-advent judgement. It is said that there must be an investigation before the second coming of Christ to determine who are worthy to have a part in the first resurrection. “... there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. ... This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people: for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Rev.22:12” (9) “This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgement, the closing work in the sanctuary above.(10)

In the first place it should be pointed out that conservative Christian scholars are greatly divided in their understanding of the highly symbolic twentieth chapter of Revelation. Almost every aspect of this unique passage of scripture is strongly disputed. The nature of the resurrections, the literalness of the period, the meaning of the binding of the devil and many other details have been subject to a variety of interpretations by capable scholars of conservative viewpoint. (11) Not all of these scholars are agreed that the millennium follows the second coming of Christ. Scholars favoring the a-millennialist viewpoint have included Hengstenberg, Shedd, Warfield, Barnes, Fairbairn, Clarke, Lightfoot, Allis, Hendricksen and Hoekema. *In view of the highly disputed nature of the symbolic twentieth chapter of Revelation it is highly tenuous to find in this passage a key evidence for the investigative judgement.*

Even if one accepts a pre-millennialist concept of two literal resurrections separated by 1,000 years one is not necessarily compelled to accept a pre-advent judgement. To insist that God be required to investigate book of record to “determine” who are worthy of a part in the first resurrection is to deny His omniscience and invest Him with human limitations.( I am aware that many Adventists would not thus limit God. However the statements by Ellen White quoted above would seem to indicate that she held this concept.) Scripture assures us that the Lord knows them that are His and therefore needs no investigation to determine who are ready for heaven and who are not.

Adventists today say that the main function of the investigative judgment is the vindication of the character of God before a watching universe. I stand to be corrected, but I am of the opinion that this is a relatively recent modification. It would seem that the early Adventists saw the function of the investigative judgment as a simple sorting out of who was ready for heaven and who was not.

To stress the main function of the investigative judgment as the vindication of the character of God involves the danger of mitigating that which was accomplished at Calvary. The implication is that the cross did not finally vindicate God. He is still "on trial" so to speak, and only via the processes of an investigative judgment can He finally be vindicated.

The New Testament is clear that God was decisively vindicated at calvary's cross. If the sacrifice of His own Son cannot convince a watching universe what else can? "For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross." At Calvary "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in Him." (Col.2:15).

Because of Calvary God does not have to convince a watching universe. The universe has been convinced ! The case has been won! The accuser of the brethren has been cast out and God is no longer on trial. His integrity is not jeopardised in any way when He resurrects and bestows immortality on those who have believed in Christ and then publicly demonstrates the depth of His wisdom in a judgment that follows the resurrection.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES THAT THE BELIEVER WILL APPEAR IN PERSON IN A JUDGMENT WHICH FOLLOWS THE SECOND ADVENT.

The Adventist teaching of an investigative judgment necessitates the believer being tried in absentia. According to the Adventist scheme of things the believers of all ages will either be sleeping in the graves or alive upon the earth when their cases are being conducted in heaven. Mrs White says, "The righteous dead will not be raised until after the judgment at which they are accounted worthy of 'the resurrection of life'. Hence they will not be present in person at the tribunal when their records are examined and their cases decided." (12) This contradicts the plain word of scripture.

The following passages clearly teach the personal appearance of the believer in the judgment. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ..." (2 Cor. 5:10) "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God ... so each of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. 14:10-12).

That this judgment will follow the second coming of Christ is also clear. "When the Son of man comes in His glory...then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all nations, and he will separate them one from another..." (Matt.25:31,32). Paul warned the critical Corinthians, "...do not pronounce judgment before the time, BEFORE THE LORD COMES, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. THEN every man will receive his commendation from God." (1 Cor. 4:5). It is clear that for Paul the time of judgment would take place at our Lord's return.

That the judgment will take place at our Lord's coming is further evident because it is called "the judgment of the great day" i.e. the day of our Lord's return. This is almost certainly the day that Paul was referring to when he warned the Athenians, "The times of ignorance God



overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness ...” (Acts 17:30,31).

## DOES THE JUDGMENT SCENE OF DANIEL 7 SUPPORT THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT THEORY? WHAT OF THE FINAL VISION OF DANIEL?

The main support for the investigative judgment theory is derived from the Old Testament book of Daniel. Much is made of the judgment scene of Daniel 7:9, 10 which is said to parallel the “cleansing of the sanctuary” of chapter 8. Does Daniel 7 really teach an investigative judgment of the lives of all believers of all time?

The vision of chapter 7 centres on a little horn which is depicted as wreaking havoc on the saints of God. Adventists (and some Protestant commentators) have seen in this horn a symbol of the Papacy. It is in connection with the persecuting work of this power that the judgment scene is introduced. The meaning of this judgment is clearly stated in verses 22 and 26. It is to take away the little horn's dominion and it is in favor of the saints who are being trampled underfoot by this power. NOTHING MORE THAN THIS IS INDICATED IN THE PASSAGE. To find an investigative judgment of all the professed people of God, of all time, is reading something into the passage which just isn't there!! “This judgment is not indeed, like that in Revelation 20, the general judgment ... it is rather the judgment on the fourth beast ... and more especially the ‘little horn’ whose pride, persecution and blasphemy are the special occasion of it.” (13).

The final vision of Daniel covers the same ground as that of chapter 8 and therefore acts as a guide and a safeguard in our interpretation of the symbols of that chapter. It is extremely significant that one can search this vision in vain for explicit evidence of a pre-advent judgment. However Desmond Ford sees a pre-advent judgment implied in 12:1 where a reference is made to those whose names are “found written in the book”. The fact that their names are “found” is said to imply a prior investigation.(14). He also sees significance in the final verse where Daniel is promised that he will stand in his “allotted place at the end of the days”. This is understood to mean that Daniel will stand in the investigative judgment at the end of the 2300 days! (15) A number of things should be said in connection with these suggestions.

Firstly, as I have already said, the final vision does not clearly teach a pre-advent judgment as we would expect if the Adventist exegesis were correct. Secondly, the two passages which are said to imply this teaching can be understood quite naturally apart from the investigative judgment concept. Daniel 12:1 is simply stating that those whose names are written in the book of life will be delivered in the final crisis. The process of investigative judgment is not referred to. Daniel 12:13 is simply saying that Daniel will receive his reward at the final day. The “days” are not said to be the 2300 days (which are referred to as ‘evening mornings’, not ‘days’, in the original Hebrew of Daniel 8:14). This expression probably means simply the end of time.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper I have attempted to present as clearly as I can my main objections to the investigative judgment theory. Truth has nothing to fear from investigation and I challenge

my Adventist friends, to whom this paper is addressed, to weigh carefully and honestly the things that I have written.

Either an investigative judgment began in heaven in 1844 or it didn't. If it can be convincingly shown that it did then it would go some way towards confirming the Adventist claim that they are in a special sense God's remnant people and if true would be important news to be trumpeted to the whole world. On the other hand if the things that I have written are founded in truth then it behoves Adventists to eliminate this doctrine from their fundamental beliefs and cease their claim that they have been raised up by God to do a special work in the world.

## APPENDIX

### WAS THE MILLERITE TEACHING REGARDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE YEAR 1844 SO CLEAR AS TO MAKE THOSE WHO REJECTED IT GUILTY OF COMMITTING THE UNPARDONABLE SIN ?

In view of the foregoing material I feel justified in concluding that the investigative judgment doctrine is far from what could be called a "crystal clear" teaching. If it is truth it is not clearly so. It is in relationship to this very point that we come into conflict with several statements from the pen of Mrs White which indicate that she was of the opinion that the Millerite position regarding 1844 was so clear as to make its rejectors guilty of committing the unpardonable sin!

In her first vision of December 1844, a short time after the Great Disappointment, Mrs White describes those who had abandoned their faith in the divine origin of what was known as "the Midnight Cry" or "the seventh month movement" (these terms were applied to the final evangelistic thrust of the Millerites and were based on the setting of the specific date Oct.22 for the day of Christ's coming). Mrs White saw in her first vision regarding those who fell away after the great disappointment, "Others rashly denied the light behind them, and said it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled off the path down into the dark and wicked world below. It was just as impossible for them to get on the path again and go to the City. as all the wicked world which God had rejected." (16)

In 1883, in answer to the charge that she had taught that the world's probation had ceased on October 22, 1844 she explained what she had meant in the above statement. "All who saw the light of the first and second angel's messages and rejected that light were left in darkness. And those who accepted it and received the Holy Spirit which attended the proclamation of the message from heaven, and who afterwards renounced their faith and pronounced their experience a delusion, thereby rejected the Spirit of God, and it no longer pleaded with them." (17) Of this same group she said, "These might have a form of godliness, and profess to be followers of Christ, but having no living connection with God, they would be taken captive by the delusions of Satan." (18)

It is clear what Mrs White is saying. Those who heard and rejected the Millerite message were guilty of committing the unpardonable sin as were those who initially accepted it but later rejected it at the time of the great disappointment. The implication is that the scriptural

evidence was so heavily in favor of the Millerite position as to make those who rejected it guilty of so grieving the Holy Spirit that He no longer pleaded with them.

This assumption that the chronological aspects of the Millerite message were so buttressed by scriptural and historical evidence as to make them impregnable occurs a number of times in Mrs White's writings. In the book The Great Controversy she says of the Millerites, "... the ablest of their opponents had not succeeded in overthrowing their system of prophetic interpretation." (19) Again she says, "... the scriptural proof was clear and conclusive ." (20) In view of the multitude of exegetical problems which beset the Millerite interpretation of Daniel 8 (some of which have been outlined in this paper) I am of the opinion that there would be very few unbiased students of scripture who would feel Mrs White to be justified in this conclusion. It is even harder to accept that the rejection of such exegetical hypothesising would involve the rejectors in the committing of the unpardonable sin! Apart from the lack of scriptural support for Miller's chronological computations there were other very good reasons why those who experienced the great disappointment should reject their former position.

Of great significance is the sad fact that most of these earnest souls had experienced not just one but three disappointments! The dates March 31 and April 16 of the year 1844 had also had their times of anguish (21). One can only wonder that so many persisted for so long. There was also the fact that the Midnight Cry with its setting of the day October 22 had been instigated by one of the less stable elements of the movement. Samuel Snow would later abandon his faith in Millerism completely and claim himself to be Elijah the prophet! The more stable leaders, especially Miller himself, had been initially reticent to espouse a definite date. They were the last to support Snow's idea and were the first to abandon it when the coming of the Lord failed to eventuate.

After the great disappointment the great mass of Adventists followed the example of these leaders in abandoning the position that the seventh month movement had been divinely instigated. The minority who continued to see significance in the October date persisted in holding to extreme views such as the idea that the world's probation had closed and there was no more mercy for sinners. (22)

In view of the above it would seem to me that those Adventists who rejected the seventh month movement as a mistake should be worthy of our commendation for their good sense rather than our condemnation for what is said to be their lack of faithfulness.

## ENDNOTES

- (1) "In view of the brevity with which the prophecies in chapters 2 and 7 dismiss the second and third kingdoms, it is only natural that in this chapter these two kingdoms should be particularly dealt with" O..T. Allis : Prophecy and the Church, p.128 " Chapter 7 lays its emphasis upon the fourth world empire; chapter 8 upon the third" E.J. Young: A Commentary on Daniel, p. 178
- (1) e.g. See the commentaries by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown; E.J. Young and H.C. Leupold.
- (2) The vision of chapters 11 and 12 appear to confirm this interpretation. This vision covers much the same ground as chapter 8 and therefore acts as a guide and a safeguard in our exegesis of the eighth

- (3) Desmond Ford: The Judgment and the Kingdom of God. p. 11
- (4) E.G. White: The Great Controversy. p.421
- (5) Questions on Doctrine, pp 434, 435
- (6) Gerhard F. Hasel: Christ's Atoning Ministry in Heaven, p.28c
- (7) H.C. Leupold: Exposition of Daniel, pp.351, 352
- (8) E.G. White: The Great Controversy, p.422
- (9) *ibid.*, p. 428
- (10) See for instance "The Meaning of the Millennium" editor R.G. Clouse
- (11) E.G. White, *ibid.*, p482
- (12) T. Robinson: "Daniel" in The Preachers Homiletic Commentary, p.136 (Quoted in Questions on Doctrine, p.425
- (13) Desmond Ford: Daniel, p. 280
- (14) *ibid.*, p. 283
- (15) E.G. White: A Word to the Little Flock p.14 quoted in Ellen G. White and Her Critics p.211 See also Early Writings pp. 14, 15. Note that in Early Writings the underlined sentence has been omitted.
- (16) E.G. White: MS. 4, 1883 quoted in Ellen G. White and Her Critics p.245
- (17) *ibid.*
- (18) E.G. White: The Great Controversy p. 405
- (19) *ibid.* p.402
- (20) Spalding: Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists.
- (21) See F.D. Nichol: Ellen G. White and Her Critics, the chapter entitled "A Sketch of Early Adventist History".