

## **THE LONG FIGHT**

The Whites had been traveling again. That was not at all unusual, for it seemed every church group wanted to hear both of them speak. Rumors of the marvelous messages they gave and of special blessings the hearers received kept the speaking invitations pouring in all the time.

It was spring of 1858, and James and Ellen White were at Lovett's Grove, Ohio, holding a funeral. Elder White spoke first, giving the funeral sermon, and then Mrs. White rose to add her own message of comfort for the family. She spoke of the resurrection at Christ's coming, and of the hope of seeing loved ones again.

All at once her message stopped as she seemed to be staring right through the ceiling. She was having a very special vision, a vision of the whole great fight between Christ and Satan. She saw the fall of Satan, the actual fighting between Satan and his angels and Christ and His angels. She saw Satan hurled out of heaven, then sitting on earth angrily trying to plot a way to get even with Christ. She watched as the world's history began and Satan tempted Eve and thus gained control of our planet Earth. She saw Cain kill Abel in the first murder.

Scene after scene appeared before her—the wars, the fights, the bombings, the persecutions—things that would happen to our planet until Christ came back to reclaim it. She had seen these pictures before, ten years earlier, but not in such detail. Now she was being reminded of every scene and was told, "Write it down! Write it all down! It will not

be easy. Satan doesn't want the story told. He will try to stop you, but God will send angels to keep back the evil forces. You just go ahead and write."

When the vision was over, people crowded around asking questions. Mrs. White told them briefly about what she had seen and promised to write it all out soon. Funeral tears dried up as the mourners realized that God had been right there with them and had promised to come again and raise the dead someday.

Two days later the Whites were on the train headed back to Michigan. On the way they discussed this latest vision and made plans to write it out and print it at once. Mrs. White could hardly wait to get started. It was such a fascinating story!

When they arrived in Jackson, Michigan, Mr. Palmer met them at the station and took them to his home. Mrs. White climbed out of the buggy and hurried into the house to greet Mrs. Palmer while the men put away the horses.

The two ladies were chatting, catching up on the news, when suddenly Mrs. White stopped talking. A surprised look swept over her face. Her tongue would not form words. It felt thick and heavy. A strange, cold feeling came over her right side, and she fell, unconscious.

When she began to wake up, Mrs. White heard voices around her praying earnestly. She tried to move her arms. They wouldn't move. She tried to lift her legs. She couldn't. For a while she thought surely she would die and never again see her children just 50 miles (80 km.) away! So near home to die!

Still the Palmers and Elder White kept praying. Gradually a prickling began in her arms and legs, the feeling of blood starting to circulate again. Her tongue began to feel

more normal, and soon she could talk and praise the Lord that she had not died. Still not well, she spent a miserable night with much pain.

In the morning she had regained some strength and decided to hurry on home to her children.

For several weeks after she got home she could not feel much. The children touched her arm, but she didn't know it. Her husband poured cold water on her head, trying to help her regain her sense of feeling. She didn't even know the water was there. Her balance was upset, too, and she staggered as she walked. Today we would call this kind of attack a "stroke."

In the midst of all this, something kept bothering her. It was the angel's command during that last vision. "Write it down, Ellen. Write it down. Satan will try to stop you, but write it down. Angels will help you."

All at once it became clear to her. Satan *had* tried to stop her. God hadn't let Satan kill her. She was still alive. She must write the vision.

At first she was so weak that she could only write one page a day and then she had to rest three days after that! As she kept at it the strength increased and she was able to write more. Soon she was writing 14 pages at a sitting, the words just rolling onto the paper.

That June, during another vision, the Lord showed Ellen White that Satan had tried to kill her before she could write the story of his great rebellion against heaven. The angels had surrounded her and saved her life. She could see right then that publishing this book wasn't going to be easy. And she was right.

It's no easy job to write the story of the whole world including what happened before Creation and what will happen after the end of the world! But slowly the book took shape. When the first copies came off the press, there was great rejoicing in the Whites' household.

Mrs. White continued to write more on this story throughout her life. She enlarged that original little book to tell the story more fully. In working on those later editions, many times she would forget what she had seen and have to think hard and pray about it before she could remember. Other times the Lord would show her again in a night dream some scene that she couldn't quite recall. Sometimes she would look through history books to find a description of the scene, and if it helped to express what she had seen, she would include that writer's account in her own story.

It has been almost one hundred fifty years since Ellen White first made so plain the truth about the fight between Christ and Satan. Thousands of copies of the enlarged book *The Great Controversy* have been spread around the world in many languages. Satan knows that this book will change lives because it is filled with truth from God. Even today he hates to have people read that book. It shows him up for what he really is—a liar and a murderer. It makes the reader love God and hate the devil. Is it any wonder that he tries to get rid of *The Great Controversy*?

Again and again Satan has tried to stop the sale of that book, but God has protected it and put it in the hands of those honestly seeking for truth.

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