



Schedule of Events in the Time of Trouble

Benjamin F. Gregory, M.D.

March 1, 1963

[PDF download](#)

Table of Contents

Foreword	—4
Chart— <i>The Time of Trouble</i>	—4
The Chart	—5
Time After Probation Closes	—7
Meaning of 'It Is Finished'	—11
Deliverance at Opening of Plagues	—12
Plagues Not Consecutive	—14
Real or Spiritual Darkness?	—16
Time of the Persecution	—18
The Deliverance of the Saints	—20
The Sunday Laws and the Edict	—22
Who Will Issue the Edict?	—27

Foreword

In this pamphlet there are two theses presented that I have not found taught by others. The first thesis is that the close of probation and the opening of the plagues are not coeval but are separated by a period of time and in that period of time neither the righteous, the wicked nor the devil know probation has closed, and in this period Christ makes atonement for the sanctuary and its furniture (GC 418-421).

The second thesis is that the time of the deliverance of the saints is at the opening of the plagues, and the plagues do not come consecutively but all seven at the same time. You will find a number of very positive statements in the Spirit of Prophecy that show this is true.

If one would understand the unfulfilled prophecies, and if one would have a firm foundation for much of his theology, one must have an accurate timetable of the events involved. Thus this pamphlet should be available to every Seventh-day Adventist. With your help possibly the next printing could be by one of our denominational publishing houses.

For your convenience all quotations are in italics.

The Time of Trouble

The Time Each Event Takes Place	The Little Time of Trouble		The Time of Jacob's Trouble Saints live without a mediator through this time	
	The edict is issued on this day.	Probation closes and Jesus says, <i>It is finished.</i> GC 613	Through this time saints and sinners do not know probation has closed.	Plagues start and the following 12 events occur this day.
The Periods	<i>Little Time of Trouble</i>		<i>Time of Ignorance</i>	<i>Time of the Plagues</i>
How long is each period?	A short period. EW 85		Tarry a moment in outer apartment. EW 280 7 days in days of Noah.	One hour prophetic time. Rev. 18: 17, 19 A number of days. (See E. G. White and Her Critics, page 625.)
What is Christ doing?	Mediatorial Work		Making Atonement for Sanctuary. GC 419-422	Coming to Earth.
What are the righteous doing?	Saints are persecuted, imprisoned and some slain, but Sunday laws drive them to more zealous soul-saving work.		Persecution continues but God will not permit martyrdom during these days. THE EDICT Saints cry for deliverance from death from day the edict is delivered. Saints will not obey the edict so they have the seal of God. GC 605:2	In this fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. GC 614
What are the wicked doing?	The wicked obey the beast. GC 605:2		Like the Jews after the crucifixion the wicked continue their senseless forms of religion. GC 615 The wicked obey the edict and thus have the mark of the beast. The wicked suffer the famine for the Word of God.	The wicked begin to kill each other. They accuse each other. EW 282 Some try to kill the saints. Some denounce God. EW 281 Some rush to the saints and beg to be taught. EW 281
What does the Devil do?	Personate Christ G. C. 624		He sees holy angels guarding the saints and he infers their sins have been pardoned. GC 618	He continues to accuse and tempt the saints.

The Chart

Let me call your attention to the chart on page four. It should help to correlate each event or period with every other event or period.

In the first horizontal row this time of trouble is shown to be divided into two periods of time, i.e., the little time of trouble, and the time of Jacob's trouble which the saints must live through without a mediator.

In the second horizontal row all the events of the time of trouble are shown to come at one of four points of time. This first point of time is the date that the edict is issued and this is in the little time of trouble. The next point of time is the day that probation closes and on that day the first *It is done* is spoken. The next point of time is the day that the plagues begin. The other events that occur on that day are (a) the second *It is done* is spoken, (b) wicked are awakened, (c) the first step in the deliverance of the saints takes place, (d) mercy's voice dies away, (e) the date in the edict is this date, (f) Christ leaves the sanctuary, (g) God says, *It is finished*; and to the angels with the plagues, Go, and gives the day and hour of Christ's coming, and (h) the saints are glorified at the voice of God.

The fourth date is the day of the second Advent and on this day the second step in the deliverance or final deliverance of the saints takes place.

In the third horizontal row the length of each period is shown. In the fourth row we see what Christ does in each period. And in the fifth horizontal row the doings of the righteous are presented. In the little time of trouble the edict is issued, and by the use of a dark line with an arrow on each end this edict is presented graphically. The first arrow is at the day on which the edict is issued, and the second arrow marks the day when the wicked would receive authority to kill the saints. But at the midnight at the beginning of this day the deliverance takes place before even one saint is killed. Those who obey this edict thereby have the mark of the beast, and those who refuse have the seal of God.

In the sixth horizontal row the doings of the wicked are charted. When the edict is issued they take their side against God and His people and this constitutes the final step in receiving the mark of the beast.

During the time of ignorance they continue their senseless forms of religion (GC 615). When the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the earth the wicked are plunged into the famine for the Word of God (Amos 8:11, 12). Today *There is a famine for the Word of God* (COL 228) but *In that day, multitudes will desire the shelter of God's mercy which they have so long despised. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. . . ." GC 629. But the wicked must hunger and thirst on. EW 281. Thus the wicked suffer the famine for the Word of God but the righteous have the Word of the Lord including their Bibles until the second advent.*

As you study this booklet you will find a *thus saith the Lord* for each point mentioned in this chart. If you find anything that makes it hard to accept, I would appreciate hearing from you or sitting down and studying with you.

We are living in perilous times, and it does not become us to accept everything claimed to be truth without examining it thoroughly; neither can we afford to reject anything that bears the fruits of the Spirit of God; but we should be teachable, meek and lowly of heart. —CW 35.

Increasing light is to shine upon us; for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." —Idem p. 35.

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. —Idem p. 35.

The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. —Idem p. 36.

—6—

The Time After Probation Closes and Before the Plagues Begin

In this chapter let us study the period of time after the close of probation and before the plagues start. This time could be called the time of ignorance, for we shall see that during this period of time the righteous, the wicked, and even the Devil do not know that probation has closed.

When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of Jacob's trouble will begin. PP 201-2. We know that when He ceases His mediatorial work He will stand up and say, "It is done. . . . He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." GC 613. And we are told: I was shown that the seven last plagues will be poured out after Jesus leaves the sanctuary. EW 52.

Now when Jesus pronounces the irrevocable decision and probation closes, He has not yet finished that part of the ceremony of the day of atonement in which all the sins are confessed over the head of the scapegoat, the atonement is made for the altar, and the sins are placed upon Satan. See GC 419, 422.

Concerning the time between the close of probation and the pouring out of the plagues we read: *When the work of investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: "He that is unjust, let*

him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state, —men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in, and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life, and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. “So,” says the Saviour, “shall also the coming of the, Son of man be.” Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man’s destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy’s offer to guilty men. GC 490-491.

In the days of Noah the wicked *knew not until the flood came*. Matt. 24:39. In those days there were seven days of ignorance both for the righteous and the wicked. They *knew not*. But when the rain started, the time of ignorance ceased. Then both classes knew their probation had ceased. And, we are told, *so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*. Matt. 24:39.

In the days of Noah there were seven days of ignorance. We do not know how many days of ignorance there will be at the coming of the Son of man. But as we study on we shall find many proofs that the wicked and the righteous will recognize the plagues when they begin, and thus they will know that probation has already closed.

—7—

Concerning this short period of ignorance between the close of probation and the pouring out of the plagues, we read the following: *In that fearful time, after the close of Jesus’ mediation, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. Every case was decided, every jewel numbered. Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place, were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment.* EW 280-281. (Emphasis ours)

In this statement the author says, *He tarried a moment*. As she saw it in vision it seemed a short time. From this study it seems this *moment* covers a number of days. Thus the close of probation and the pouring out of the plagues are not coeval or at the same moment of time, but separated by a number of days.

Concerning the time of ignorance when probation has closed and the righteous and wicked know it not, we read: *When God’s presence was finally withdrawn from the Jewish nation, priests and people knew it not. Though under the control of Satan, and swayed by the most horrible and malignant passions, they still regarded themselves as the chosen of God. . . . So when the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced, and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the earth will know it not. . . .* See GC 615, line 3 to end of paragraph.

Also concerning this time of ignorance we read the following: Noah was shut in, and the rejecters of God’s mercy were shut out. The seal of heaven was on that door; God had shut it, and God alone could open it. So when Christ shall cease His intercession for guilty men, before His coming in the clouds of heaven, the door of mercy will be shut. Then divine grace will no longer restrain the wicked, and Satan will have full control of those who have rejected mercy. They will endeavor to destroy God’s people; but as Noah was shut into the ark, so the righteous will be shielded by divine power.

For seven days after Noah and his family entered the ark, there appeared no sign of the coming storm. During this period their faith was tested. . . . PP 98. (Emphasis ours) In this quotation you will notice that Noah’s faith was tested. Evidently Noah did not know what was going on in heaven, and likewise on earth after the close of probation, the righteous Will not

know that probation has closed.

Also concerning this time of ignorance we read that the devil also will be ignorant that probation has closed. *He sees that holy angels are guarding them, and he infers that their sins have been pardoned; but he does not know that their cases have been decided in the sanctuary above.* GC 618.

This shows that during these days of ignorance the devil sees that angels have increased their protection of the saints so that none will be slain during these days after the close of probation.

We have another statement that throws much light upon this time of ignorance It appeared in the *Day Star* in 1846. You may find it in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* by Francis D. Nichol, page 625. Let me quote it here:

—8—

About four months since I had a vision of events all in the future. I saw the time of trouble, such as never was. Jesus told me it was the time of Jacob's trouble, and that we should be delivered out of it by the voice of God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword—nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion. Then we cried to God day and night for deliverance until we began to hear the bells on Jesus' garment. And I saw Jesus rise up in the Holiest, and as he came out we heard the tinkling of the bells and knew that our High Priest was coming out. Then we heard the voice of God which shook the heavens and the earth, and gave the 144,000 the day and the hour of Jesus' coming. Then the saints were free, united, and full of the glory of God, for he has turned their captivity. And I saw a flaming cloud come where Jesus stood. Then Jesus laid off his priestly garment and put on his kingly robe, and took his place on the cloud which carried him to the East, where it first appeared to the saints on earth—a small black cloud which was the sign of the Son of Man. While the cloud was passing from the Holiest to the East, which took a number of days, the synagogue of Satan worshipped at the saint's feet. (Emphasis ours)

You will notice here that Ellen G. White is discussing the time of Jacob's trouble and we know this time begins when probation closes. Thus she is presenting material concerning this time when the wicked and the righteous do not know probation has closed.

About a quarter of the way down in this paragraph she states that the saints cried day and night for deliverance. Of course this crying began when the edict was issued a short time before probation closed. Let me quote the sentence:

Then we cried day and night to God for deliverance until we began to hear the bells on Jesus' garment. And I saw Jesus rise up in the Holiest and as He came out we heard the tinkling of the bells and knew our High Priest was coming out. Then we heard the voice of God which shook the heavens (Emphasis ours)

Now inasmuch as in the foregoing Christ is in the Sanctuary, we know the plagues have not started yet, for the plagues cannot start while Christ is in the sanctuary. For she states, *I was shown that the seven last plagues will be poured out after Jesus leaves the sanctuary.* EW 52.

Note that she says that they cried *until* they heard the bells. From this we know that they stopped crying for deliverance when they heard the bells and knew He was coming out of the sanctuary.

In the sentence above she says, *I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds.* *Early Writings*, page 36 tells us that when the angels cease to hold the four winds the plagues will start. GC 635 tells us that the saints cry for deliverance till the day the edict is supposed to go into effect.

Also in this paragraph we are told that the saints ceased to cry for deliverance when they heard Christ leaving the sanctuary. Evidently they know that when He leaves the sanctuary probation has closed, and they know. They cannot be killed after probation closes.

But further, immediately the voice of God gives them deliverance. Thus the deliverance must come just as the plagues are beginning, immediately after Christ leaves the sanctuary.

Let us consider this voice that brings their deliverance.

Concerning the time of this voice, we have the following: *Then I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance. Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and man, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath on those who have rejected His Truth.* EW 36. Thus when Christ steps out of the sanctuary God keeps *silence no longer*. Now if He ceases to keep silence, what does he do? Why, He speaks. And when He speaks, what does He say? We are told that voice says, *It is done* (GC 636 last line), and inasmuch as this instant the angels cease to hold the seven last plagues, we know the plagues must begin; so we know this voice must say, to the seven angels that have the seven last plagues, *Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth* (Rev. 16: 1), for those angels must await the command of God to pour out the plagues. We are also told in this paragraph that the voice *gave the 144,000 the day and hour of Jesus' coming*. Thus here God speaks three sentences. Concerning these three sentences we have the following: *And as God spoke the day and the hour of Jesus' coming, and delivered the everlasting covenant to His people, He spoke one sentence, and then paused, while the words were rolling through the earth.* EW 285.

Thus in these paragraphs we are told that the saints begin to cease to cry for deliverance as they hear Christ leaving the temple in His priestly robes, and at that instant the plagues begin to fall and the voice of deliverance brings deliverance to the saints. In GC 637 we are told that it is darkness that brings deliverance.

This is in perfect agreement with the statement in *Early Writings*. *As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth.* EW 280. *And as mercy's sweet voice died away, fear and horror seized the wicked.* EW 281.

There is another point of interest in this paragraph. In *Ellen G. White and her Critics*, page 625, we read: . . . *we heard the tinkling of the bells and knew our High Priest was coming out*. The fact that they knew the High Priest was coming out shows that they knew probation had closed, for He could not come out till after probation had closed. Before this they did not know probation had closed. They evidently also knew that when He stepped out the plagues would begin. Thus at this point the saints are no longer ignorant, but up to this point the saints are ignorant of Christ's movements in the sanctuary and thus were ignorant that probation had closed. —10—

The Meaning of *It IS Finished*

In connection with the work of atonement the expression, *It is finished*, or *it is done*, occurs three times. We are told the meaning of this expression in EW 281, as follows: *All heaven had united with Jesus, as they heard the fearful words, 'It is done. It is finished.'* The plan of salvation had been accomplished, *but few had chosen to accept it.* (Emphasis ours)

Thus when we read the words, *It is finished*, in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy, we may know that some part or stage of the *plan of salvation* is finished at that point of time.

When Christ died on the cross He said, *It is finished*. John 19:30. This point of time finished the sacrificial part of the work of atonement. The Lamb had been slain.

Then when man's opportunity to avail himself of the benefits of this atonement ceases, i.e., at the close of probation, we have this comment: *He lifts His hands, and with a loud voice says, "It is done;" and all the angelic host lay of their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."* GC 613.

Then when Jesus completes the atonement service and cleanses the altar in heaven by confessing the confessed and forgiven sins over the head of the scapegoat and turns it over to the fit man, we have this comment: *In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying, It is done.* GC 636, last 4 lines.

Joel prophesies of this voice in the following: *The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.* Joel 3:16. This voice is commented on in Heb. 12:25-27. And in *A Word to the Little Flock*, page 19, the author speaks of this voice of God and at the bottom of the page she gives these two references, so that we can see the source of this teaching. Let us quote just one sentence: *But there was one clear space of settled glory from whence came the voice of God like many waters which shook the heavens and the earth. . . . A Word to the Little Flock, 12.* Thus the voice is one of the very high points of all Bible prophecy, and inasmuch as the voice said, *It is done*, something very important must have just finished in heaven, and what could be more important to the universe than that Jesus had finished the work of atonement and laid off His priestly robes and steps out of the sanctuary, which actually has been in progress for six thousand years?

The heavens have gathered blackness, and are only illuminated by the blazing light and terrible glory from heaven, as God utters His voice from His holy habitation. IT 354.

Speaking of this moment of time when Jesus completed this atonement service we have the following: *As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth.* EW 230.

—11—

There is one more reference in Revelation where we find the words, *It is done.* *It is* Rev. 21:6. Some have thought this referred to the finishing of the re-creation of the new earth, for it is in the chapter describing the new earth, but the Spirit of Prophecy helps us to locate the time when this *It is done* is spoken.

The end of all things is at hand; the sands of time are fast running out, soon in heaven it will be said: "It is done," (Rev. 21: 6). "He that is holy, let him be holy still," "he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." (Rev. 22:11). 2SM 376-377.

This shows that this *It is done* applies to the close of probation, and not to the completion of the New Earth.

Thus each time the words *It is done* are spoken, it denotes that some stage of the plan of salvation is finished.

The Deliverance Is at the Opening of the Plagues

In the following chapters many proofs will be presented that the deliverance of the saints is at the opening of the plagues and that the plagues will all begin at the same time. These two facts stand or fall together. Any proof that the deliverance is at the opening of the plagues is also a proof that the plagues all begin at the same time. Also, any proof that the darkness is real is also a proof that the plagues all begin at the same time. Also, in the chapter on The Time of the Persecution, we find proof that the persecution ends when Christ steps out of the sanctuary, and

this is an added proof that the plagues all start on the same day.

Possibly the simplest proof that the deliverance is at the opening of the plagues is found in *Early Writings*, page 36. Here we read, *Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and man, and God will keep silence no longer. . . . EW 36.* Now if God keeps silence no longer, what breaks His silence? Why, it breaks when He speaks. We know that Christ steps out of the sanctuary when He has finished making the atonement for the sanctuary and for the altar. When He steps out, the Father breaks His silence or speaks. And what does He say? He says, *It is finished*, and what is finished? The work of atonement is finished. See *EW 281*, lines 21-25. And we know that when God says, *It is finished*, the saints are delivered. See *GC 636-637*. Also, we are told that when Christ steps out of the sanctuary the plagues will begin. See *EW 36*. So is it not crystal clear that the deliverance of the saints is at the opening of the plagues?

From the following quotation we know that the awakening of the wicked and the deliverance of the saints are at the same time. *When the voice of God turns the captivity of His people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life. GC 654.*

The second proof that the deliverance is at the opening of the plagues is found in the statement given in the book, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, by Francis D. Nichol, page 625. This originally appeared in the *Day Star* in 1846. Let me quote a few sentences from it.

—12—

About four months since I had a vision of events all in the future. I saw the time of trouble, such as never was. Jesus told me it was the time of Jacob's trouble, and that we should be delivered out of it by the voice of God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword —nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion. Then we cried to God day and night for deliverance, until we began to hear the bells on Jesus' garment. And I saw Jesus rise up in the Holiest, and as he came out we heard the tinkling of the bells and knew that our High Priest was coming out. Then we heard the voice of God which shook the heavens and the earth, and gave the 144,000 the day and hour of Jesus' coming.

Note that the author states that they cried for deliverance *until we began to hear the bells on Jesus' garment*. Jesus must be in the sanctuary for it is the sanctuary robe that has the bells on it.

Thus they cried until Christ left the sanctuary, and we are told that the plagues will fall when He leaves the sanctuary.

We know that the saints cry for deliverance until they are delivered. So is it not clear that the saints are delivered when Christ leaves the sanctuary, or at the opening of the plagues?

The third proof that the deliverance is at the opening of the plagues is found in *GC 654-656*.

If one reads *GC 654-655* carefully and thoughtfully, he will see that we are told that the opening of the plagues comes at the time of the deliverance of the saints. I am herewith quoting some statements from these pages. Page 654 lines 1-4:

When the voice of God turns the captivity of His people, there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life. While probation continued they were blinded by Satan's deceptions, and they justified their course of sin. . . . Now they are stripped of all that made them great, and are left destitute and defenseless. (Emphasis ours) The "Now" in this sentence means at the time the deliverance of the saints and the awakening of the wicked takes place. In the next three pages the author repeats this now ten times, and always it means the same time. I shall quote a few of these now.

Page 654 lines 16, 17: . . . their pleasures are now turned to gall.

—lines 33, 34 The minister . . . now discerns. . . .

Page 655 lines 23, 24 This is the view that now appears. . . .

Page 656 lines 1, 2 Now, in their despair, these teachers confess. . . .

—lines 8-10 *The swords which were to slay God's people, are now employed to destroy their enemies.*

—lines 18, 19 *Now all have made their decision the wicked have fully united with Satan in his warfare against God.*

—lines 27-32 *Now the angel of death goes forth, represented in Ezekiel's vision by the men with the slaughtering weapons, to whom the command is given: "Slay utterly old and young both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." (Emphasis ours)*

—13—

Says the prophet, "They began at the ancient men which were before the house." The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall. There are none to pity or to spare. Men, women, maidens, and little children perish together. Page 657 lines 4-5: And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem. GC 657

In the Revelation we are told that those who do not have the seal of God will suffer under the seven last plagues. In Ezekiel's vision those who do not have the *mark* (seal) would suffer death at the hand of the men *with the slaughtering weapons*. Thus are we not right in concluding that the men with the slaughtering weapons are the counterpart of the seven angels who have the seven last plagues? GC 656, line 27 calls it *The angel of death* and in line 33 it is called *the plague*. So can one doubt she means *the seven last plagues*?

Thus, here in GC 656 line 27, she tells us Now at the time that the deliverance of the saints and the awakening of the wicked takes place, the angels with the seven last plagues go *forth* (present time) at this time. She is here depicting the opening of the plagues, for she says, *The false watchmen are the first to fall* or die by these slaughtering weapons.

If you have any doubt that the men with the slaughtering weapons portend the seven last plagues, please read the *SDA Commentary*, Vol. IV, pp. 605-607. Also read the references given at the bottom of page 607 and the quotation found on page 1161.

There is a fourth proof that the awakening of the wicked is at the opening of the plagues. It is found in *Early Writings*. *And as mercy's sweet voice died away fear and horror seized the wicked. EW 281.* This must be the awakening of the wicked, and it says it comes as *mercy's sweet voice died away*

Now when does mercy's sweet voice die? It is before the plagues, for the plagues are unmixed with mercy. Mercy has folded her wings and flown before the plagues begin.

The Plagues Are Not Consecutive

Let me present the following reasons from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy for believing that the plagues will not follow one after the other but will all come at the same time.

First, the Bible categorically states, *Therefore shall her plagues come in one day* (Rev. 18:8) and *For in one hour is thy judgment come* (Rev. 18:10). We have changed this to read, *Her plagues shall continue one day*, and reckoning a day for a year, we have taught that the plagues will last a year.

If you will consult the *SDA Commentary*, Vol. 4, page 272, you will find that the prophecies of Isa. 47 and Rev. 16 to 19 are presented as parallel prophecies. In Isa. 47:9 we read: *But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: . . . and*

—14—

... *desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, . ! .* Isa. 47: 11. (Emphasis ours) The language here is even clearer than in Rev. 18. Isaiah says these things shall come to or come unto thee. Come to or come unto means arrive where you are. Thus Isaiah presents the plagues or judgments as arriving where you are *in a moment, in one day*.

In the quotation from the *Day Star* quoted in *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, page 625, we note the following: *Then Jesus laid of his priestly garment and put on his kingly robe, and took his place on the cloud which carried him to the East, where it first appeared to the saints on earth—a small black cloud which was the sign of the Son of Man. While the cloud was passing from the Holiest to the East, which took a number of days, the synagogue of Satan worshipped at the saint's feet.* From this we can see that it is only a number of days that the plagues are falling.

Revelation 18 tells us that the plagues will last two weeks. Let us study it. In Rev. 18:8 we are told that they are *her plagues*. Now if they are destructive plagues and *her plagues*, would you not expect that they would bring about her destruction? Rev. 18:8,10 tells us how the plagues COME, that is, they come in a day or in one hour. But Rev. 18: 17,19 tells us how long it takes for these plagues to accomplish their destructive work. *For in one hour so great riches is come to naught.* Rev. 18:17. . . . *for in one hour is she made desolate.* Rev. 18: 19.

Thus in these two verses we are told specifically that it will take the plagues *one hour* prophetic time or two weeks. Thus this tells us how long the plagues will last, namely, two weeks. This agrees with what we saw in the Spirit of Prophecy, i.e., *a number of days*.

Now we have used Rev. 18:8 to prove that the plagues will last a year. Thus is it not evident that we are wrong in so applying this prophecy? And if this is not the meaning of the prophecy' what does it mean. The most natural thing is to think that it means exactly what it says, *The plagues shall all COME in a day*.

Revelation 15 and 16 teach that the plagues all come at the same time. Let us read, *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; . . .* Rev. 15:1. *And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.* Rev. 16: 1. John saw seven angels standing and each angel held a vial. Then these seven angels heard one voice saying to the seven angels: Go. So each angel received the command *Go* at the same time. We are told that in heaven God's voice is obeyed instantly. So every angel must have obeyed instantly, and if so, all seven plagues would be poured upon the earth at the same time.

We have the following from the Spirit of Prophecy which teaches that the plagues will all come at once: *While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when He stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed, and Satan had entire control of the finally impenitent. It was impossible for the plagues to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is finished, and His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the wrath of God, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner who has slighted salvation and hated reproof.* EW 280. (Emphasis ours)

—15—

Yes, *it breaks with fury* and *there is nothing to stay* the plagues. If the plagues are consecutive, there must be something staying the later ones.

I have heard five objections to the thesis that all seven of the plagues begin the same day. Let me answer each one. Some point out that in Revelation 16 the plagues are numbered one to seven as proof that they are consecutive. But of course this does not prove that they are consecutive. For, however they come, when one wants to discuss the plagues he must have some kind of nomenclature, and this is just a natural one. You will notice that the Bible does not say, And then *the second*, etc.

The second objection is, The plagues in Egypt were consecutive, therefore these must be. But let me point out that the reason the plagues in Egypt were consecutive is that God is a god Who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked and He sent one plague after another until Pharaoh let His people go. In other words, God had a purpose and He sent one plague after another until His purpose was accomplished. But in the seven last plagues God does not have such a purpose. Thus from the nature of God one can expect God to send all the plagues at once.

There is a third objection to this thesis. This objection is based on the statement in GC 628, *In the plague that follows*. . . . If one reads the whole page he will see that Ellen G. White had her Bible before her as she presented the first three plagues, and then when she starts on the fourth she says, *In the plague that follows* [on the page]. . . . Certainly one would not build a doctrine on a statement with this ambiguity if the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy elsewhere clearly teach differently.

The fourth objection to this thesis is due to a misunderstanding of the nature of the plagues. They ask, How can there be darkness and men being scorched with fire at the same time? GC 635, 636 shows that this darkness lasts a short time, possibly an hour or so, so this would not be incompatible with the statement that the wicked are scorched with fire.

The fifth objection is, We have always taught that they are consecutive. The Spirit of Prophecy answers this objection with the following: *The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair.* CW 35.

One objection to the teaching that the plagues last but to weeks is this: They ask how can the famine develop in two weeks? This may be the answer: Today we are told that half the world is hungry but today this famine is mixed with mercy. Mercy prompts others to provide food. But as time goes on the famines become worse, and finally, when the plagues begin, large sections of the world may be starving, and there will then be no promptings of mercy

Is It Real or Spiritual Darkness?

We read, *When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth* (GC 614) and *As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as he left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth.* EW 280. Since we have shown the voice of God is at the time Christ leaves the sanctuary, I believe
—16—

the following quotation describes this darkness better. *The heavens have gathered blackness, and are only illuminated by the blazing light and terrible glory from heaven, as God utters his voice from his holy habitation.* IT 354.

Is this spiritual darkness or physical darkness? This is a very important question.

Great Controversy chapter 39 has the title, *The Time of Trouble*. In this chapter the author presents the factors and the reasons for the events of this time spoken of as the time of trouble. Among other events in this chapter she states, *When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth.* GC 614. We have shown that He leaves the sanctuary a few days after the close of probation. Chapter 40 has the title, *God's People Delivered*. In this chapter she discusses only God's people and the steps in their deliverance. She opens the chapter with God's people living under the threat of the edict. Thus in this chapter we follow God's people to the end of the little time of trouble, and on to the deliverance and on to the time of the events of the resurrection morning and finally into heaven. Of course she would have to tell us what happened to God's people when they pass through this time of darkness mentioned in chapter 39, which she does very graphically.

With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens, and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. The objectives of their murderous rage are forgotten. With fearful forebodings they gaze upon the symbol of God's covenant, and long to be shielded from its overpowering brightness.

By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, "Look up," and lifting up their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted. . . . GC 635.

Let me give the following additional reasons for believing that it is physical darkness.

First: the tinkling of the bells was physical, so it is natural to think that this is physical darkness.

Second: this darkness was not present before Christ stepped out of the sanctuary, but when *He* stepped out it *covered* the inhabitants of the earth. In other words, a few minutes before there was no darkness and then in a matter of minutes every man on earth was covered by this darkness. The time this covering took place was the time Christ was leaving the *sanctuary*.

Third: spiritual darkness comes gradually as man closes his mind to spiritual light. For years before Christ leaves *the sanctuary* spiritual darkness will be gradually enveloping the earth, and *the* spiritual darkness one hour before Christ leaves the sanctuary will not be different than *that* a few minutes *after He* leaves. *But* here we are told that something happened: *darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth*.

The fourth proof that this is physical darkness is found in the word *cloud*. She calls it a cloud of darkness. A cloud would imply that it had

—17—

limits or limitations. For example, a cloud might be limited temporally, i.e., it might last for a time and then pass away or it might just come on a small area and thus be called a cloud.

But this darkness covers every person in the world, so it must be world wide. But this could be called a cloud because it lasts just for a short time. It comes and as a cloud passes away. Spiritual darkness after probation will never pass away, thus this cannot be spiritual darkness.

Thus, are we not driven to the conclusion that this is physical darkness? And since it comes at the time that He leaves the sanctuary, it must be at the beginning of the plagues.

In the *Index to the Writings of Mrs. E. G. White* the darkness in GC 614 and EW 280 are listed under the heading: *Spiritual Darkness*.

I asked one why he taught that this was spiritual darkness and his reply was, *If it is physical darkness it does not fit in with our schedule of events in the time of trouble.*

Now if it does not fit in with one's schedule of events, would it not be wise to abandon that schedule and find one that it does fit in with?

The Time of the Persecution

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

The followers of Christ know little of the plots which Satan and his hosts are forming against them. But He who sitteth in the heavens will overrule all these devices for the accomplishment of His deep designs. The Lord permits His people to be subjected to the fiery ordeal of temptation,

not because He takes pleasure in their distress and affliction, but because this process is essential to their final victory GC 528.

By God's mighty cleaver of truth we have been taken from the quarry of the world and brought into the workshop of the Lord to be prepared for a place in His temple. In this work the hammer and chisel must act their part, and then comes the polishing. Rebel not under this process of grace. You may be a rough stone, on which much work must be done before you are prepared for the place God designs you to fill. You need not be surprised if with the hammer and the chisel of trial God cuts away your defects of character. He alone can accomplish this work. And be assured that He will not strike one useless blow. (Emphasis ours) Signs of the Times, Nov. 5 1902.

God has shown me that He gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them. This bitter cup can be sweetened by patience endurance, and prayer, and it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus receive it, and God will be honored and glorified. *It is no small thing to be a Christian and to be owned and approved of God.* See EW 47.

. . . His grace is sufficient for all our trials; and although they are greater than ever before, yet if we trust wholly in God, we can overcome every temptation, and through His grace come off victorious. . . . We must have on the whole armor of God, and be ready at any moment for a conflict

—18—

with the powers of darkness. EW 46. These quotations may be found in *The Faith I Live By*, by Ellen G. White, page 317.

From this we see that God has a definite plan for His people and He will not strike one useless blow. Also knowing He will not lead us other than we would choose to go, let us study the prophecies of the persecution before us. One of these prophecies is found in 5T 473-475. Let me present some of the high points:

The persecution is pictured in the following quotations:

The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness must be removed that the image of Christ may be perfectly effected; unbelief must be overcome; faith, hope, and patience are to be developed. . . .

But the anguish and humiliation of God's people is unmistakable evidence that they are regaining the strength and nobility of character lost in consequence of sin. . . .

While Satan was urging his accusations, and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God. 5T 474-476.

The fact that they are *regaining the strength and nobility of character lost*, and the fact that while they were suffering, *holy angels . . . were placing upon them the seal of God* shows that this persecution is in the little time of trouble and before the close of probation.

But when probation closes the saints and sinners do not know it. So this persecution will continue until the saints are delivered a few days later.

But we are told that the martyrdom ceases at the close of probation (GC 634) for after that time martyrdom could accomplish no good. The persecution outwardly appears to carry on to the time of their deliverance. But after the close of probation God sends angels to protect them for these few days. We are told, *He [Satan] sees that holy angels are guarding them, and he infers that their sins have been pardoned; but he does not know that their cases have been decided in the sanctuary above.* GC 618, line 22.

This protection given to God's people is of such magnitude that it causes Satan some thinking, and so *he infers* it possible that their sins have been forgiven.

In GC 621 we have a picture of a persecution which must be this same persecution for in each presentation of this persecution it is pointed out that *all their earthliness is consumed* when they go through their persecution And certainly all their earthliness could not be consumed twice. Thus we must conclude that this persecution in GC 621 is in the little time of trouble. Let me quote this description:

Jacob's history is also an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been deceived, and tempted, and betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. While Satan seeks to destroy this class, God will send His angels to comfort and protect them in the time of peril. The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to

—19—

consume them; but the Refiner will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial, is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected. GC 621: 1.

Now in GC 621, in the next paragraph, there is an ambiguous sentence that has caused some difficulty in some minds in accepting this persecution as being in the little time of trouble. Let us notice this ambiguous sentence: *The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time.* (Lines 22, 23.) What does the author mean by *that time*? It could mean that time of persecution in the previous paragraph. Thus she would be saying, *Probation is granted to prepare for that time of persecution described in the previous paragraph.*

But by a thoughtful reading of the whole of chapter 39, one sees that the author is discussing the time of Jacob's trouble. In fact in the very next sentence she tells us how Jacob prevailed. So the author could mean, *The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that time of (Jacob's) trouble.*

This agrees with our theology concerning the purpose of the time of probation. That is, probationary time is granted us to develop a character strong enough that we would be prepared to live without a mediator, i.e. prepared to live through the time of Jacob's trouble.

Thus is it not logical to read this, *The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for the time of Jacob's trouble?* So, with this reading, this persecution in GC 621: I would be in the little time of trouble. This thought that the saints would have any earthliness after the close of probation is quite disconcerting. But if we see this persecution as in the little time of trouble and carrying over through the time of ignorance when the saints do not know probation has closed, we have no difficulty.

Now, as one reads *Great Controversy* chapter 39 it is clear that this persecution runs on to the date set in the edict, and at midnight as that day arrives, darkness covers the earth and the wicked are stopped in their attempts to kill the saints and the saints are delivered.

A few days before the date set in the edict arrives, the time of Jacob's trouble begins, and the saints begin to live without a mediator. As this fateful date in the edict comes closer and closer, the feeling on both sides becomes more and more intense. The wicked can hardly wait for the day and some will actually go out to kill the saints, but their swords break. The righteous see the determination of the wicked and pray earnestly with tears for deliverance from death.

When probation closes the saints do not know it has closed so they continue to cry for deliverance on through to the time of their deliverance.

The Two Steps in the Deliverance of the Saints From the Time of Jacob's Trouble

The deliverance of the saints from Jacob's trouble includes deliverance from the wrath of men who are determined upon their destruction, and secondly, deliverance from their accuser, the Devil, who is determined to break
—20—

their faith in God and make them sin. When the plagues begin, the Devil knows the saints are living without a mediator so he is the more determined to make them sin during the plagues. This deliverance is spoken of often as though it were one event that occurs at one instant. But a careful study will show that God accomplishes this deliverance in two stages or steps.

This deliverance includes deliverance from death. The first step takes place at the opening of the plagues. At the time of the second step in their deliverance the righteous are delivered from the grave to immortality and the living saints on that morning are delivered from mortality to immortality. This second step is at the close of the plagues.

Let us take up the two steps in the deliverance together. It will save time and make the contrast clearer. The first step takes place when God says, *It is done*. GC 636. Let us call this the first step in the deliverance. The final step will be at the time of the Advent. GC 628 line 3 calls it the *final deliverance* and states that it comes after the seven last plagues.

The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel, were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people. (Emphasis ours) GC 627, 628.

Before the first step of their deliverance the saints cry to be delivered from the heathen round about them. They cry to be delivered from death at the hands of the wicked: *I heard them crying unto God earnestly. Day and night their cry ceased not: "Thy will, O God, be done! If it can glorify Thy name, make a way of escape for Thy people! Deliver us from the heathen around about us. They have appointed us unto death. . . ."* EW 272:1.

In the first step of their deliverance they are delivered by the voice of God, and after the first step the wicked begin killing each other. *After the saints had been delivered by the voice of God, the wicked multitude turned their rage upon one another. The earth seemed to be deluged with blood. . . .* EW 290:0.

In the first step of their deliverance God answers their prayer to deliver them from the heathen by causing an intense blackness to come upon the world. (GC 637.) The heathen turn from their intention to kill the saints and use the same weapons prepared for the saints to kill each other.

Concerning the time between the two steps in the deliverances, i.e., after the first step has been accomplished and until the time for the second step to be accomplished, we have the following very clear statement: *When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of God without an intercessor.* GC 614. We have the following concerning the final step in their deliverance: *Then Jesus will have the sharp sickle in His hand, (Rev. 14:14) and then the saints will cry day and night to Jesus on the cloud, to thrust in His sharp sickle and reap. This, will be the time of Jacob's trouble, (Jer. 30:5-8) out of which, the saints will be delivered by the voice of God.* (Emphasis ours) *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 12.

From the above we learn concerning the final step that the saints will cry for God to *thrust in His sharp sickle* and also that the saints will be
—21—

delivered by the voice of God and this voice will deliver them from *the time of Jacob's trouble*.

After the first step in their deliverance the wicked will kill each other but after this step there

will be no killing one another for all the wicked are *killed by the brightness of His coming*. See II Thess. 2:8.

The first step of their deliverance takes place at midnight, the night the edict should have gone into effect, and in the first step in their deliverance the saints are delivered from the time of Jacob's trouble that they see in the wrath of the heathen round about them.

The first step of their deliverance is at the instant the special resurrection takes place. See GC 631-637. After this step the wicked begin killing each other. All the events related in GC 654-657 take place after the special resurrection has taken place and before the final deliverance.

This first step in their deliverance has nothing to do with living without a mediator. In this first deliverance the saints are delivered from martyrdom and from persecution at the hands of the wicked.

The time of Jacob's trouble runs on after the special resurrection has taken place until the time of the second Advent when the saints are delivered from *the time of Jacob's trouble*. *A Word to the Little Flock*, p. 12.

Thus those in the special resurrection must *endure the anguish of the time of Jacob's trouble*, and live without a mediator through the plagues, for a number of days or possibly a number of weeks before they are finally delivered from the time of Jacob's trouble.

The Sunday Laws and the Edict

Today we have Sunday laws in many places. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that these Sunday laws will become worse and the penalties will become heavier. But these Sunday laws do not place an extremely serious problem on God's people, for all these laws enjoin is that one *must not work on Sunday*.

Under these laws God's people will not work on Sunday but will use the day for missionary work. Concerning these Sunday laws we are told: *The law will be invoked against commandment keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment and some will be offered positions of influence and other rewards, and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is, "show us from the word of God our error," the same plea that was made by Luther. Those who are arraigned before the courts, make a strong vindication of the truth and some who hear them are led to take their stand to keep all the commandments of God. Thus light will be brought before thousands who otherwise would know nothing of these truths.*

In these Sunday laws the nation does not . . . *repudiate every principle of its constitution as a Protestant and Republican government*. . . . 5T 451. You will notice that the offenders are brought to court and have a trial.

The Edict

But we are told of a different kind of law. It is called the *edict* or *the decree* in the Spirit of Prophecy. This is not a Sunday law but an anti

—22—

Sabbath law. This law enjoins that if any shall keep the Sabbath anyone who finds them can put them to death after a certain date. *This argument will appear conclusive, and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty after a certain time to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and Apostate Protestantism in the New World will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts.*

The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described

by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. GC 616.

Under this decree there is no opportunity afforded of a trial by jury. The saints are declared the enemies of society and they lose their rights as citizens and they are hunted as one would hunt foreign enemies in time of war. Thus when the edict goes into effect it can be said that our country has repudiated every principle of its constitution as a republican government. See 5T 451.

GC 615-616 states that after this edict goes into effect the saints will be plunged into the time of Jacob's trouble and the time of Jacob's trouble begins when probation closes, so we know that this edict is issued in the little time of trouble, before the close of probation, and before the opening of the time of Jacob's trouble.

Sundaykeeping is not yet the mark of the beast, and will not be until the decree goes forth causing men to worship this idol Sabbath. MS 118, 1899. See SDA Com., VII, p. 977.

In GC 622:1 we are told that there is *danger of falling under the decree* so we know it is before probation has closed, for after probation has closed there can be no danger of the saints falling.

Thus this edict will be a sign to the Sabbath-keepers just as the approach of the Roman armies was a sign to the Christians in Jerusalem in the first century. Upon this sign many will flee to the mountains. We are given a very graphic description of this time:

Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment-keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall as powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men of war. GC 631: 1.

Four times in the book *Early Writings* the author has presented material she saw in vision concerning the time the saints learn of the *edict*. Let us study each statement, for each time she presents it she adds some material that is not included in the other presentations.

Let us first study EW 272. For your convenience I will quote the page in full: *Great power was with these chosen ones. Said the angel, "Look ye!" My attention was turned to the wicked, or unbelievers. They were all astir. The zeal and power with the people of God had aroused and enraged them. Confusion, confusion, was on every side. I saw measures taken against the company who had the light and power of God. Darkness thickened around them, yet they stood firm, approved of God, and trusting in Him. I saw*

—23—

them perplexed; next I heard them crying unto God earnestly. Day and night their cry ceased not: "Thy will, O God, be done! If it can glorify Thy name, make a way of escape for Thy people! Deliver us from the heathen around about us. They have appointed us unto death; but Thine arm can bring salvation." These are all the words which I can bring to mind. All seemed to have a deep sense of their unworthiness, and manifested entire submission to the will of God; yet, like Jacob, every one, without an exception, was earnestly pleading and wrestling for deliverance.

Soon after they had commenced their earnest cry, the angels, in sympathy, desired to go to their deliverance. But a tall, commanding angel suffered them not. He said, "The will of God is not yet fulfilled. They must drink of the cup. They must be baptized with the baptism."

Soon I heard the voice of God, which shook the heavens and the earth. There was a mighty earthquake. Buildings were shaken down on every side. I then heard a triumphant shout of victory, loud, musical, and clear. I looked upon the company, who, a short time before, were in such distress and bondage. Their captivity was turned. (Emphasis ours)

This picture opens with the saints very zealous and presenting the truth everywhere. This is

before the close of probation, for in the second paragraph we are told: *The will of God was not yet fulfilled* in the saints. She states in the first paragraph she *saw* measures taken against the saints. When the saints learned of these measures, *darkness thickened around them*. She explains this darkness as perplexity.

I saw them perplexed. Next ;I heard them crying day and night without ceasing. So we know that this edict causes them to cry to God and not cease till they are delivered.

We learn in this presentation concerning the *measures* that the saints pray, *They have appointed us unto death*. So we know that this edict includes the death penalty.

Early Writings 282-285 gives a second presentation of the events connected with the saints learning of the decree. *Then I saw the leading men of the earth consulting together, and Satan and his angels busy around them. I saw a writing, copies of which were scattered in different parts of the land giving orders that unless the saints should yield their peculiar faith, give up the Sabbath, and observe the first day of the week, the people were at liberty after a certain time, to put them to death. EW 282-283.* Here we are specifically told the wording of the edict and it is plain to see that this is a death decree and the people are given authority to put the saints to death after a certain date.

It was an hour of fearful, terrible agony to the saints. Day and night they cried unto God for deliverance. EW 283, lines 30-32. This cry does not cease till they are delivered.

In these pages we are told whose decree it is. *God would not suffer the wicked to destroy those who were expecting translation, and who would not bow to the decree of the beast or receive his mark.* (Emphasis ours) *EW 284, lines 23-26.*

Early Writings 33-34 gives us another presentation of that period of time when the saints learn of the decree. *And at the commencement of the time of trouble, we were filled with the Holy Ghost as we went forth and*

—24—

proclaimed the Sabbath truth more fully. This enraged the churches and nominal Adventists, as they could not refute the Sabbath truth. And at this time God's chosen all saw clearly that we had the truth, and they came out and endured the persecution with us. I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed.

In the time of trouble we all fled from the cities and villages, but were pursued by the wicked, who entered the houses of the saints with a sword. They raised the sword to kill us, but it broke, and fell as powerless as a straw. Then we all cried day and night for deliverance, and the cry came up before God. *EW 33-34.*

In this presentation of the decision to kill the Sabbath-keepers (*rid the earth of them*), two reasons are presented for their anger. (1) They could not answer their Sabbath logic. (2) The judgments of God in the form of sword, famine, pestilence and great confusion. See *EW 34.*

They cried day and night for deliverance, and until deliverance came, for she says, . . . *the cry came up before God*, and then mentions the dark heavy clouds and other physical phenomena that are part of the deliverance of the saints. So they cried till the deliverance came.

Concerning these judgments we have the following two statements: *He [John] saw the vials of God's wrath opened, and pestilence, famine, and death come upon the inhabitants of the earth. (RH, Jan. 11, 1887) SDA Com., VII, p. 982.*

The vials of God's wrath and the sprinkling of them are already coming. What is the matter that we do not discern it? 2SM 51.

The judgments in the world today, pestilence, famine, sword and death' are the sprinkling of the vials of God's wrath. Thus this statement, *EW 34*, first three lines, might be worded thus

without doing violence to the thought of the author: *I saw the sprinkling of the vials of God's wrath in the land. The wicked thought we had brought judgments upon them and they took counsel to rid the earth of us.*

The fourth presentation of the making of this edict is in *EW* 36-37. *I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble. Then all the saints cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God.*

Students of the Spirit of Prophecy have pondered this prophecy. They have recognized that all the statements in the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the *edict* seem to place it before the close of probation. But this statement sounds as if it is after the close of probation and during the plagues.

One explanation was suggested, as follows:

1. The edict is before the close of probation.
2. The edict did not have teeth in it; i.e., it did not have the death decree in it.

—25—

3. And so this degree is the *death decree* and until this decree is issued the wicked are not permitted to slay the Sabbath-keepers.

Let me suggest another solution. The difficulty in this vision is in an ambiguous sentence. The sentence is: *These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous.*

If one reads the whole chapter in *Early Writings* (pages 36-38), he will notice that it has the title, *The Sealing*. At the time she had this vision some of the Adventists were teaching that the plagues were already coming. But in this vision she saw that the plagues had not started and that they would not start till Jesus' work was finished in the sanctuary.

She saw four angels holding or restraining these winds. Evidently God did not intend that these winds should be absolutely stopped. The angels were letting the winds slip a little, letting the *sprinkling of the vials of God's wrath* slip while they were restraining the large part of the plagues till Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary.

Thus this ambiguous sentence can be stated, *These plagues which I saw in my vision, and which the angels are holding and which they are letting slip and which will become the seven last plagues when probation closes, enraged the wicked against the righteous. . . .*

Now if this is an ambiguous sentence, who should say which is the correct reading? I suggest we go to the Spirit of Prophecy to find the answer.

First let me point out that she does not call this the *death decree*. That name others have put on it. Second, let me point out that throughout her writings she calls this *anti-Sabbath law* *THE decree* or *THE edict* as though it was just one. Never does she intimate that there are two.

Third, we have shown that the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy teach that the plagues all begin on the same day, and the deliverance of the saints is at the time of the *It is done* of the seventh plague, so must come when the seventh plague begins. And if the deliverance is at the opening of the plagues, the death decree could not be some time later during the plagues. This is possibly the strongest proof that this prophecy, *These plagues enraged the wicked*, *EW* 36, does not refer to the time during the seven last plagues.

Fourth, *EW* 271, last paragraph, tells us that the saints have the latter rain and are very successful in their winning of converts. *GC* 272, first sentence: *Great power was with the chosen ones* when all at once they learn of the *decree* (measures), and they are struck with consternation and start crying for deliverance and in their prayers they say, *They have appointed us unto death.*

Now if, say, six months later a *death decree* is added to this it certainly would not cause them any concern. They have already been condemned to death six months earlier. This second decree would have no effect upon them. But EW 37, first line says that this edict *caused them to cry day and night for deliverance*.

Fifth, this edict is a test by which the world is divided into two camps: those having the seal of God and those having the mark of the beast. 5T 451. Also GC 604-605. This test must come before the close of probation and thus the death decree must be a part of the issue. A decree without a death

—26—

penalty in it would not call forth the supreme sacrifice for truth. An edict after the close of probation could mean nothing to the choice, either for or against it.

Sixth, I believe that the author of these books answers the questions best in the book *Great Controversy*. In this book one finds only the discussion of the edict that is before the close of probation and this edict is specifically said to have the death penalty in it. In fact, if you leave out this one reference (EW 36), you can read all the books of the Spirit of Prophecy and not once find a suggestion of an edict during the plagues. Is this not satisfactory proof that Mrs. White understood this ambiguous sentence as I have presented it?

Who Will Issue the Edict?

In the following we are told who issues the anti-Sabbath edict: *As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandmentkeepers shall withdraw the protection of government, and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the most desolate and solitary places.* GC 626.

The dictionary gives us the following three definitions of Christendom: 1. Christianity. 2. The whole body of Christians; The church. 3. That portion of the world in which Christianity prevails or which is governed under Christian institutions, in distinction from heathen or Mohammedan lands.

If one would look up Christendom in the *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*, Vol. 1, p. 525, he would find that every time the Spirit of Prophecy uses the word she means the second definition: *The whole body of Christians; The church.*

Thus here we are told that the edict will be issued by the various rulers of the Christian churches. This of course would include the Pope and his prelates, the head of the Greek Orthodox Church and their bishops, and the heads of the Sunday-keeping Protestant churches.

Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 213 adds the following: *The decree has been passed by the highest earthly authority. . . .* Thus this must be the highest earthly authority *in the church*. Does this not seem to indicate that the edict will be issued by the Pope in council with Catholic rulers? At that time the Protestant and the Greek Catholic churches will have united enough with the Roman Catholic Church that they will accept this edict. The enmity of all Sunday-keepers for the Sabbath-keepers will make them willing to carry out the edict.

Early Writings adds this thought: *God would not suffer the wicked to destroy those who were expecting translation, and who would not bow to the decree of the beast or receive his mark.* EW 284.

This decree is a license for mob action. Every Catholic would accept this decree as from the highest authority on earth and would enter into the

—27—

mob violence. The Protestants in that day would follow suit, and the civil authorities would feel that there was nothing they could do to stay it.

By their tacit acceptance of this decree, and by their permitting the mob violence under the decree, the United States would *repudiate every principle of its constitution as a Protestant and Republican government*. . . . 5T 451.

In this connection we also read, *The same spirit which actuated Papists in ages past will lead Protestants to pursue a similar course toward those who maintain their loyalty to God*. . . . *Through the land the Papacy is piling up her lofty and massive structures, in the secret recesses of which the former persecutions are to be repeated*.

Some have asked, What will happen in the Mohammedan countries to make those countries issue the edict? I believe this interpretation answers this question: All Catholics and Protestants in these lands will accept the decree as authoritative and the government will be powerless to stop the mobs. Thus the Sabbath-keepers in every land will become the object of the persecution, and of the death decreed by the head of the papal church. The Moslems could enter into this persecution because it lets them kill Christians.

Some have thought that this edict will seem so unnatural in America that it will take a long time before America would sink deep enough or so low as to issue such a decree and thus fulfill this prophecy. But the philosophy of this edict is not foreign to the thinking of the papal power. Many times in past ages this power has issued very similar edicts.

Today the mass of Americans are Catholics, Protestants, or Spiritualists, with a very small minority outside these churches, so actually it may not need much time for these prophecies to be fulfilled.

When the Papacy issues this edict she has reached the peak in her glory and esteem in the world. At that time she can say, *I sit a Queen*. At that time it can be said, *The whole world wondered after the beast*.

The date she puts in the edict is the day her plagues come, and with them her absolute destruction, so that at the end of the plagues, two weeks later, one might say, *Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour [two weeks] so great riches is come to naught*. Rev. 18:16, 17.

Concerning this destruction we have the following from *Great Controversy: The work of destruction begins among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the first to fall*. GC 656. *In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the wicked inhabitants of the earth, —priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low*. GC 657. If this destruction includes the *high and low*, would you not think that it would destroy the clergy, possibly even the Pope? If so, it would destroy the Papacy and all church organization, for the hierarchy is a government by and of the clergy. So if the clergy are killed the hierarchy will cease to exist.

—28—

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. . . . Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. —CW 37.

As a people, we are called individually to be students of prophecy. We must watch with earnestness that we may discern any ray of light which God shall present to us. We are to catch the first gleamings of truth; and through prayerful study, clearer light may be obtained, which can be brought before others. —Idem 41.

When a brother receives new light upon the Scriptures, he should frankly explain his position, and every minister should search the Scriptures with the spirit of candor, to see if the

points presented can be substantiated by the Inspired Word. —GW 303.

Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause. —1 SM 411.

—29—