

Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

Proprietor of Ellen G. White Publications

February 10, 2000

"Keeping the Vision Alive"

Pastor Mike Brazington
PO Box 291
Fulton, NY 13069

Dear Mike,

Thank you for contacting our office this week in regard to the allegation that the White Estate now admits that there is no truth to the story of Ellen White picking up the large, family Bible while in vision.

This rumor apparently traces to an incident Wallace Slattery tells in his book, *Are Seventh-day Adventists False Prophets?*, published in 1990. He relates a conversation between an aide of his and her mother who worked at the White Estate. Whatever was said in the conversation (and we have only the aide's recollection as told by Slattery), it must have been clearly misunderstood as there is no question in the minds of the White Estate staff that this miracle occurred.

Possibly the confusion is due in part to the fact that the White Estate agrees that the event cannot be "validated" in the sense of proven in a court of law. That is because none of the witnesses had the remotest thought of signing affidavits at the time the miracle occurred. It happened during a meeting in her parents' home, in Portland, Maine, in the winter of 1844/45, and was observed by those present. It was not until Elder J. N. Loughborough set out to write the first history of the SDA movement (published in 1892) that the incident was recorded. He tells the story "as related to me by Mrs. White's father and mother, by her sister Mrs. Sarah Belden, and others" (*Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 103). Loughborough interviewed those present and thus provides authoritative testimony, although it comes to us second-hand. He also appears to merge minor details about this miracle (whether it was held open or closed) with other known instances when Ellen White picked up Bibles in vision. W. C. White, Ellen White's son, also confirms the incident as told to him by his parents.

The White Estate has no reason to disbelieve the testimony of those witnesses recorded by Loughborough, or W. C. White. We have the 18-pound family Bible on display in our vault, as it was passed down through the family. The staff reminds visitors that this miracle was an evidence of the supernatural in Ellen White's early ministry—not a proof of her divine inspiration. The Bible nowhere makes miracles a test of the prophetic gift, but the fact that a frail, 80-pound 17-year-old girl, uplifted this Bible while in vision helped to single her out at a time when several others were claiming to receive messages from the Lord. To me, it is also a remarkable illustration of her prophetic role in uplifting the Scriptures and the One who speaks to us through that Word.

Sincerely,

Tim Poirier
Associate Director/Archivist
Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters