“Fool Me Once …”

A book review by Steve Daily

Review of *Father Miller’s Daughter: Ellen Harmon White* (2022) and *Child of the Apocalypse: Ellen G. White* (2021), by Donald E. Casebolt.

Most of us are familiar with the phrase, “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.” But Seventh-day Adventists seem to have a very different take on this phrase when it comes to Ellen White. It goes something like this, “Fool me once-shame on EGW’s critics!” “Fool me twice - shame on EGW’s critics!” “Fool me 5,000 times - shame on EGW’s critics!” C’mon Daily, you know that is an exaggeration! No I don’t! Based on my years of study and research on the writings of Ellen White I have found literally thousands of examples where EGW fooled her SDA constituents by falsely attributing, things she plagiarized from others, to God. And after reading the excellent recent books of Donald Casebolt, I can say that this number has only been increased!

I don’t know if Donald still considers himself an Adventist or not, but if he does (and from his writing I suspect he does), I find him to be more honest and open in his historical analysis and documentation that any current Adventist historian I have read (and I’ve read the vast majority of them). This is all the more impressive, and embarrassing to the SDA historians, because Casebolt is a retired nurse practitioner, and not a trained Seventh-day Adventist historian. I don’t want to give the impression that I agree with everything in both of these books, because I don’t, and I will share my concerns at the end of the review. But for the most part, I believe that Casebolt has made an excellent contribution to Ellen White studies with regard to her role in Millerism, and that we owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for his efforts. He may not be thrilled to hear this from me, especially if he is still SDA, because it can be a kiss of death where the denomination is concerned.

Which raises the point as to why I have waited so long to publish my review of these books. Initially it was my intention to submit my review to both *Spectrum* and *Adventist Today,* as the two most likely SDA magazines to accept it for publication. But both of these publications have recently censored me in a manner that lacks all journalistic integrity, *Spectrum* refusing to publish my response to Jonathan Butler’s review of my psychobiography (which is now available as Appendix III in my book, *The White Estate Fraud*), and *AT* censoring the hour long interview that they themselves initiated and conducted with me, causing a major shake up in their administration. So I have really become a populist, taking my case directly to the people, rather than trying to work through the dishonest and unethical gatekeepers who are more concerned with their own power and control than they are with documentation and truth!

And I’m glad I’ve waited, because this has given me the opportunity to read the reviews of others and the author’s response to *Spectrum’s* review (at least in his case they allowed him to respond). I will come back to that later in the review, but for now let’s get to the meat of what Casebolt had to share, especially for readers who have not read or even heard of his books. The books are probably not likely to be widely circulated for at least three reasons. 1) The books are both quite expensive for their size. $16.89 paperback, for *Child of the Apocalypse* (98 pages-which is less controversial & and written in a more popular style-from here on *COA*), and $33.93 paperback, for *Father Miller’s Daughter* (318 pages-from here on *FMD*). 2) As the author himself admits, (*FMD,* p. xii) “when the reader has finished studying the first six chapters of the present work, I expect” him to be “puzzled and perplexed by Miller’s reasoning, saying …’I cannot comprehend how Miller got that interpretation out of that text” the work is not easy reading, but “tough schlepping through Miller’s interpretive labyrinth”! 3) Which is related to the second point, the book is written in a scholarly fashion and will probably find its greatest appreciation among academics and scholars as opposed to the lay population of the church. However, the implications revealed, primarily in the latter work, are quite profound for both Adventists and former SDAs in general.

I will try to synthesize and summarize both the valuable stated points (by Casebolt) and the unstated implications of this work, from my perspective, in this review.

1. *"The* [current] *crisis in Adventist eschatology is due to its reliance on Millerism's faulty methodology and falsified prophetic predictions."* (Back cover-*FMD)*. If you didn't know it before, after reading Casebolt's books, you will become well aware that SDA eschatology is a house built on sand, or a house of cards, whichever term you prefer. It is totally built on a false foundation of historicist misconceptions and misinterpretations which have been thoroughly refuted and debunked, but have been preserved by Adventism because of the false "testimonies" of Ellen White. This is Adventism in a nutshell, every false belief and false doctrine can be traced directly to the false "visionary" claims of EGW, when the assertions she was making can be traced to the errant human beings she relied on and copied from, rather than the God she claimed to represent. To quote Casebolt himself, "The predominant paradigm of SDA laity, clergy, and high-level administration regarding Ellen G. White's authority and fallibility is that she cannot be mistaken to any significant degree. Her 'I saw' statements identify 'hard facts' that she received through direct divine revelation, which must, by definition be authoritative. … Ellen G. White was plainly literarily and/or intellectually dependent on erroneous statements from human sources" (*FMD* pp. 19-20). This of course agrees with Numbers, Rea, myself and many others, but is here being admitted by a current SDA (as far as I know). And in contrast to SDA claims, it is indisputable that Ellen repeatedly makes such absolute claims for her writings, which I have listed in my books and on my website (See, *The White Estate Fraud,* pp. 216-218; authorstevedaily.com).
2. *Ellen was precocious, proud and ambitious as a child and reached a significant level of celebrity in the Millerite movement despite being a young teenager*. That Ellen was "precocious" as a child and one with "great ambitions" is not only documented by Casebolt (COA, p. 11) and in my psychobiography, but was even admitted by Arthur White himself (*EGW The Early Years,* p. 25). Ellen White even described herself as "naturally proud" in her own writings. But it is how we interpret this information that is significant for Adventism. Arthur, of course, wanted us to believe that Ellen was transformed into a humble servant-vessel of God. Casebolt places a great deal of emphasis on Ellen's "frontal lobe brain injury" (*FMD* p. 119f) resulting in "confabulation" or "false memories" that were responsible for her claims rather than "intentional deceptions." He claims, "She [Ellen] was still mentally disabled when she first encountered William Miller's fifteen mathematical proofs that Christ's Second Coming was divinely programmed for 1843-1844" (*COA* pp. xv-xvi). I am very impressed with how Casebolt handles the historical facts in his book, but much less impressed with some of his interpretations, such as this one, which I will address later in the review. But, Casebolt's very argument that Ellen was so negatively affected by her rock injury, does not seem to fit with the remarkable prominence she achieved in the Millerite Movement as a young teenager. While Miller and Joshua Himes, who led the movement, had "explicitly denounced contemporary prophets,"(*COA* p. 50) Ellen achieved great prominence in Portland, Maine, where the local leaders of Millerism gave her a strong platform and she became a "local celebrity" and was granted the high status of an "itinerant preacher." (*COA* p. 49). Which was it, was she brain damaged, or very capable for her age?
3. *Ellen's views on Millerism, date-setting, and eschatology can be directly traced to men like Thomas Brightman, Joseph Mede, William Miller, Joshua Himes, Josiah Litch, William Foy, Samuel Snow, Joseph Turner, O. R. L. Crosier, and Joseph Bates rather than to visions from God*. What Numbers did to Ellen White's claimed "visions" regarding health reform, and Rea did to Ellen's major works in general (with help from Veltman and McAdams), Casebolt has done to Ellen's specific role and connection to Millerism. I have checked out the documentation of each of these authors and found it to be very dependable, furthermore the false attacks of EGW & Adventism against Canright have now been exposed for the fraudulent claims they are, in *The White Estate Fraud*. So, the lifelong patterns of dishonesty and fraud that characterized Ellen's entire life are becoming more and more obvious with each passing study. Casebolt does a good job of documenting the extensive date-setting for Christ's Second Coming that occurred in Millerism (*COA* pp. 25ff; *FMD* pp. 8ff), repeated dates were set between 1839 and 1844, and Ellen claimed that God gave her "visions" confirming these dates. Ellen was even so convinced by her "visions" that Christ's coming was at hand that she insisted that some believers get baptized in near freezing water lest they be lost (Fred Hoyt, *FMD,* p. 117). In my psychobiography I show how this practice was continued by Ellen White for decades, after the great disappointment, including her 1849 appeal to believers to sell their homes & possessions and give the money to "the cause" (which James & Ellen controlled, greatly increasing their personal finances).

4. *The meticulous detail that Casebolt employs to demonstrate that Miller's methods were not correct, literal, commonsensical and easily understood by a child as Ellen claimed God showed her, but were convoluted, confused, arbitrary, allegorical, systematically erroneous and false, is important.* Even though it makes for cumbersome reading, I am glad that Casebolt went to the trouble of carefully documenting how outrageous (and far fetched- as even F. D. Nichol put it) Miller's methods were, and how these methods were not unique to him, but were buttressed by all his key followers, as well as by the leaders in the Advent movement that would produce the Seventh-day Adventist Church, all endorsed by EGW "visions"! How ironic, that Nichol would call them "far fetched," when he proved to be one of the most dishonest apologists the SDA Church has ever produced (Daily, *The White Estate Fraud* pp. 17-19; 208, notes 29-34). From the Lisbon earthquake on, which Ellen claimed was the fulfillment of Revelation 6:12, the cosmic and apocalyptic signs of Millerism and Adventism are exposed for the nonsense they are, even though I still have hard core SDA apologists trumpeting these outdated signs today on my Facebook thread, based on Ellen's false prophecies. As Casebolt put it, "just as Miller was dependent on centuries of flawed historicist interpretations" so Ellen White "was dependent on Miller for dozens of her allegorical-typological-historicist interpretations" (*FMD* p. 75).
5. *Casebolt provides helpful information which sheds important light on how a "visionary" like Ellen could gain prominence and position in Millerism when the official movement rejected contemporary prophets.* One of the reasons I didn't focus a lot on Ellen's relation to Millerism in my psychobiography was that I knew that Miller and his fellow leaders rejected contemporary prophets and therefore would not be impressed with the claims of EGW. I did spend more time addressing Ellen's involvement with Shouting Methodism and its fanatical practices, along with her relationship with Israel Dammon and his extreme fanaticism. But, Dammon did claim to believe in Millerism, and while Casebolt fails to unpack the significant influence that both Shouting Methodism and Dammon had on the young EGW, he does give some very helpful information about how EGW gained local prominence in the Millerite Movement, locally in Maine, while she failed to be officially recognized by Miller or his fellow leaders. This is interesting, because it involved local Millerite leaders in Portland, Maine, parting with the counsel and position of Miller and the other official leaders of Millerism. As Casebolt puts it, "For approximately twelve to fourteen months prior to October 22, 1844 Ellen Harmon frequently had ecstatic, visionary experiences. And these visions, *like Foy's,* convinced Ellen Harmon that the Second Coming was due by October 22, 1844. As she herself stated, 'I expected Jesus to come and make me immortal.' She made no record that the 'Spirit of the Lord' ever cautioned her not to believe in a specific date." (*COA,* p. 48*)*. This is important, because SDAs like to refer to EGW's December 1844 vision, as her first vision, ignoring the numerous false "visions" she claimed to have in the context of Shouting Methodism, Millerism, and the Dammon movement (even Israel Dammon would reject EGW as a false prophet). It is also important, because it shows how Ellen gained great prominence through her claimed visions in the Millerism of Portaland, Maine, even though she was not recognized as a prophet by Miller or his fellow leaders. Again, to quote Casebolt, "Meanwhile, in addition to her extensive and intensive, one-on-one missionary work with acquaintances, Ellen Harmon was becoming a local celebrity. James White recalls observing sixteen-year-old Ellen Harmon during the summer at Portland in 1844. He reported that 'her experience was so rich and her testimony so powerful that ministers and *leading men of different churches* sought her labors as an exhorter in their *several* [emphasis added] congregations'." (*COA,* p. 49; *Life Sketches,* p. 126). Casebolt also rightly points out that there was a progression into leadership that involved moving from "class leader, to exhorter, to local preacher, to itinerant preacher," and Ellen flew up this ladder in only a very few short months. "Her [Ellen's] rapid rise in status was eventually ratified by the Portland, Maine, Millerite 'church' parish under the leadership of Father John Pearson. She would very shortly reach the pinnacle of 'itinerant preacher' when the Father Pearson group endorsed her call to evangelize outside of Portland Maine. This was significant." (*COA,* pp. 49-50). Ellen became a rising star, and a big wig in the Portland Maine Millerite movement because of her claimed "visions" (which proved to be false.) Casebolt needs to be affirmed for admitting what other SDAs have failed to admit, that Ellen was proved to be a false prophet well before she became a false prophet in the Adventist Sabbatarian movement.
6. *Casebolt's discussion of the Shut Door Doctrine in Adventism is accurate in its assessment that EGW repeatedly gave false prophecies, and with James deleted these errors after the fact, but he (Casebolt)*

largely attributes these false "visions" and cover-ups to confabulation. How does an Adventist who writes history about the movement admit that EGW plagiarized from Joseph Turner on the Shut Door, and many others, changed her views on the Shut Door supposedly based on "visions," deleted her false claims, with James, about the Shut Door after her prophecies failed, and later denied ever teaching any such thing by 1874 and 1883. All of this clearly qualifies Ellen White to be a false prophet, unless one finds a way to argue that Ellen was somehow not responsible for her errors and false claims. And here is where Casebolt and I disagree most about the historical evidence (which I will address in my disagreements below). But once you take the position that Ellen was simply the victim of brain damage and confabulation and therefore not responsible for her contradictions, errors, false claims, and denials, you have a whole new set of problems to deal with regarding EGW. Casebolt states, "Ellen Harmon's unawareness of her dependence on Turner is probably explained by a neurological unawareness" (*FMD,* p. 119), he quotes Brown's definition of confabulation to make his case. "Confabulation is the creation of false memories in the absence of intentions of deception. Individuals who confabulate have no recognition that the information being relayed to others is fabricated. Confabulating individuals are not intentionally being deceptive and sincerely believe the information they are communicating to be genuine and accurate" (*FMD,* p. 120). In my section on disagreements, I will explain why I believe this interpretation of Ellen's writings and behavior does not fit with the historical source documentation.

7. *The Sabbath and other issues*. Casebolt admits that Ellen's conflicting "visions" of the Most Holy Place were not only contradictory with regard to the Sabbath, but clearly dependent on what she had been taught by man, at the time, and not shown her by God. With reference to her later Sabbath additions, and the deletions with regard to her first "vision," he states, "She only saw these things in later visions after she had been 'taught by man'" (*FMD,* p. 158; see also pp. 156-158 for full context). In other words, Casebolt is confirming what I wrote in my psychobiography, and Rea wrote before me, that Ellen was a plagiarist, not a prophet. She got her materials from human sources, and falsely attributed them to God. This not only applied to the first great Adventist doctrines of the Shut Door and the Sabbath, and the time period that Casebolt studied (1835-1851) but to every other doctrine and subject that Ellen addressed in later time periods as well. Of course, some subjects are more embarrassing than others, and maybe it was for this reason that Casebolt wondered out of his stated period of study to spend a whole chapter (*FMD,* pp. 268-284) focusing on Ellen's writings about masturbation or solitary vice. Numbers of course, already covered much of this in his study, but Casebolt seems to want to emphasize just how dependent EGW was on false views concerning this subject, and how extensively she attributed to God false views that she obviously copied from authors who were ridiculously mistaken. What he doesn't point out, in this section, is what I did point out in my psychobiography, which was that Ellen not only believed the most bizarre and erroneous things about masturbation, according to her writings (claimed to be shown her in "vision"), but weaponized this information to attack church leaders with whom she disagreed, by intimidating them into thinking that God was showing her "visions" of them engaging in this solitary vice, in order to keep them in line, and under her control. In a "vision" supposedly given her on October 2, 1868, Ellen's confidence in humanity was "terribly shaken" because God showed her the "sordid" lives of "God's professed people." She became "sick and disgusted with the rotten-heartedness" of the Battle Creek Church. For she claimed she was "shown" respected brethren leaving the "most solemn and impressive discourses on the judgment" and going to their rooms to indulge "in their favorite, bewitching sin, polluting their own bodies." And it wasn't just the adults who were guilty of this moral depravity the children of the church were also so wicked that God "hated" them, and she had begun to refuse requests for prayer, "for fear that she might be asking the Lord's blessing upon a self-abuser." (Daily, *EGW a Psychobiography,* pp. 98, 142-143; see also EGW, *4T,* p. 96, 648-653; *Manuscript 1* (1854) not released by the White Estate until they were hacked in 2012). As I've written before, if you want to control people, just convince them that God is providing you with pornographic "visions" of your sinful behavior, and you will have all the control you want. Ellen was about power, control and deception, never about being a true prophet of God.
8. *Reviews of Casebolt's books*. I will be focusing my attention on two reviews of Casebolt's books, which appeared in *Spectrum* and *Adventist Today,* respectively. The first was by Alden Thompson, entitled, "Can We Trust a Prophet Who Gets it Wrong?" (*Spectrum* March 30, 2023*)* There was a time when I respected Alden Thompson as a sincere and competent Adventist academic, but unfortunately that time

is long past. His review of Casebolt's books has only served to tragically further my current disrespect for him. Thompson begins his review with the following criticism of Casebolt, *Words like "far-fetched," "fanciful," "erroneous," and "outlandish" are not likely to inspire confidence in Ellen White's prophetic ministry.*[11] *How can she serve effectively in the church and world if her work triggers that kind of reaction?* When you review a book, it is helpful if you actually read the book. Thompson goes on to write that "Casebolt uses such biting language when describing Ellen White's ministry." And concludes that, "Casebolt is a man on a mission, a mission to show that Ellen White is an unreliable guide to Adventist doctrine and history." The problem here is that Thompson is attributing words such as "far-fetched" and "fanciful" as descriptors of Miller's indefensible methods, to Casebolt, when Casebolt was actually quoting Francis Nichol's use of these words to describe Miller's methods. And Nichol was the ultimate SDA apologist of all time. So, if even a dishonest apologist like Nichol (and I have shown he was dishonest in my books, see *The white Estate Fraud* pp. 17-19, 208)) acknowledged that Miller's methods were unreliable and indefensible, how is it that Thompson can spend most of his review trying to justify these methods as legitimate! He spends a tedious amount of time trying to compare Miller's debunked methods to Rabbinical Midrash, an equally bizarre and non-contextual method of interpretation. Why can't Thompson just admit that Miller's methods were wrong and that Ellen's "visionary" endorsements of them were wrong, and a false attribution to God? Because this is not the SDA way, Ellen and her followers had to claim they were right about 1844, the Shut Door, and all of the false dates for the second coming she claimed God gave her after this, even though Miller and his fellow leaders admitted they were wrong. It boils down to, the Remnant can't be wrong, and Thompson has become a pitiful example of this mentality. And the SDA/EGW delusion that they are the Remnant is nothing more than denominational/cultic idolatry. Thompson wants us to believe that Ellen grew in her theological understanding, and that this somehow makes up for her tragic misrepresentations of God, but the truth is that this argument does not fit with Ellen's absolute claims for herself, or the fact that she regressed in many of her views as she grew older. What caused me to first lose my respect for Thompson was his call for censorship on the part of Adventist Today with regard to my psychobiography. *March 2, 2021 |Dear Editor, I was stunned to see that Adventist Today had posted a video interview with Steve Daily in connection with Daily's new book, Ellen White: A Psychobiography. Adventist Today's board chair led out and gave the distinct impression that Daily's allegations were justified.* Thompson never refuted my documented allegations. But attempted to give two examples of how I was wrong which I thoroughly refuted in my response to his letter. He then went on to falsely describe my psychobiography as "exit literature" and used the same tactics with me that he used with Casebolt. He wrote, *A friend of mine used the Kindle edition of Daily's book to compile this list of vivid words and phrases:*

- *fraud 49 times*
- *lie, lied, lying 42 times*
- *plagiarism 126 times*
- *sociopath 43 times*
- *manipulate 29 times*
- *deception 54 times*
- *pathology 49 times*

I fear that this kind of "journalism" may sully the good reputation of Adventist Today that Loren has created for it in the past six years. I have written regularly for many years for Adventist Today and I fear that I, too, now stand under a cloud. I would also argue that the Adventist Today board must urgently address the question of appropriate responsibilities for editor, chief executive officer, and board chair. Sincerely, Alden Thompson Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies, Walla Walla University

Thompson did succeed in shaking up the AT Board & its Chair and in getting my interview not only censored off the website, but made completely unavailable through AT. Thankfully I have my own copy which is available on my website (authorstevedaily.com). But Thompson seems to be a word counter rather than one who explores the proper context and documentation behind words that are

used, this is anything but impressive for one who claims to be an academic. He is more worried that his reputation may be sullied by a magazine allowing for the full and open discussion of documented views that may disagree with him, than he is with the pursuit of the truth. No matter how many thousands of times Ellen White is proven wrong & her plagiarisms are proven to be falsely attributed to God, apologists like Thompson, and publications like *Spectrum,* that printed this pitiful review, will try to defend the most successful serial plagiarist of all time. In short, Thompson is unfair and ignorant in the way he treats Casebolt and the way he treated me. But this is to be expected of an Adventist Pharisee!

The second review of Casebolt's books, was done by Ron Graybill, and was published by *Adventist Today,* on November 25, 2022. To his credit, and in contrast to Thompson, Graybill was able to differentiate between what Casebolt himself wrote, and what he quoted from F. D. Nichol. And he rightly observes that Casebolt does not mince words in his criticisms of Miller's methods. "Casebolt is a bit more colorful when he gets into his detailed, granular, analysis of Miller's arguments in *Father Miller's Daughter*, describing them as capricious, contradictory, convoluted, discredited, erroneous, fallacious, false, imagined, inaccurate, inappropriate, incomprehensible, insupportable, preposterous, speculative, whacky, and whimsical. This reviewer was himself dumbfounded by the absurdity of some of Miller's eisegesis." But both Graybill & Casebolt were much more restrained in describing Ellen's role in endorsing Miller's methods and insisting that God sanctioned them based on claimed "visions"! In the words of Graybill, "Casebolt's second book, *Father Miller's Daughter*, with over 400 pages and more than 600 footnotes, will be more challenging for most readers. But he has covered the subject so thoroughly that his bibliography alone would be worth the price of the book for serious students of Adventist origins. He shows that Miller, far from confining himself to his Bible and concordance, drew extensively on discredited Reformation era historicist commentators for his interpretations, just revising their dates and events. Then Ellen White drew on Miller for her interpretations and interpretive method. Casebolt graciously avoids colorful pejoratives in describing Ellen White's interpretations, saying only she was wrong or incorrect. However helpful Ellen White's role has been in her community, fewer Adventists will continue to consider her an unfailingly reliable interpreter of scripture if Casebolt's findings stand." I'm not sure how Ron concludes that Casebolt's second book is over 400 pages, when the actual page count is 318, but I am more concerned, that as a historian, he has to frame his words in such a cautious manner. Casebolt's contribution is definitive, and Graybill should acknowledge it as such, if he was simply willing to check out the historical sources as I did. And why should Casebolt and Graybill extend grace to EGW when she attributes Miller's gross errors, which he later admitted, to God, extending them to generations in the future. Clearly there is a reticence on the part of anyone connected to Adventism, in any way, to criticize the sacred cow, EGW, when it is becoming increasingly obvious that this serial plagiarist was in reality an immoral, con artist. Even the endorsement of Casebolt's larger work, given by Lawrence Geraty, is quite non-committal in its tone. "However one views Casebolt's findings, there is much to learn from them." Geraty wants to keep his options open, as a lifelong politician, rather than simply admitting that Casebolt clearly shows that Miller's methods were a joke, and Ellen's "visionary" endorsements of them were totally wrong, and in my view fraudulent, the false prophet must be protected at all costs. From my reading of Casebolt, I think he is an honest man (although I disagree with his confabulation interpretation) and I thank him for his contribution. Unfortunately, based on my experience, noted in my book *The White Estate Fraud,* with men like Thompson (p. 221 note 8) , Graybill (pp. 95-96, 220), Geraty (pp. 227-228) and Gil Valentine (pp. 220-221), I cannot say the same for them. To me they personify the essence of

Adventist Pharisees, so one cannot expect them to give Casebolt the recognition or credit he deserves for the work that he has done.

1. *Casebolt's response to Thompson's review (Spectrum July 19, 2023)*. As one who read a great deal of Thompson's writings, as a fellow SDA in the Northwest, Casebolt tries to extend as much grace to the former professor as he possibly can. And this is understandable, but even with this acknowledgement, it is obvious that Casebolt can barely hold back his disdain for Thompson's inaccuracies and extremely lame arguments, presented in his review of Casebolt's books. Casebolt presents an overwhelming amount of historical facts in his books, especially his latter work, that are well researched and very convincing. Thompson all but ignores this material in his review in favor of his own apologetic arguments that are totally lacking in substance. Again, it is really surprising that Thompson's feeble effort was the best review *Spectrum* could produce to evaluate Casebolt's contributions. Casebolt generally employs meticulous reason and logic to the facts, in interpreting the source documentation he presents (the exception being his confabulation argument), while Thompson demonstrates a tragic lack of both reason and logic with regard to the fanciful and incompetent arguments he presents. As Casebolt points out, Thompson is not even accurate in his attempt to discredit Casebolt as one who is on a "mission to show that Ellen White is an unreliable guide to Adventist doctrine and history." If anything, Casebolt goes out of his way to try to exonerate EGW from the accusations I make against her (based on very sound historical evidence and source documentation), and tries to interpret the evidence he presents against her in the most gracious and non-accusatory manner he possibly can. To quote Casebolt himself, "In closing, let me correct Thompson's impression that I see my 'mission' as proving that 'Ellen White is an unreliable guide.' My objective was to examine the history of historicism, Miller's non-contextual use of it, and the shut door, proto-Adventist appropriation of it." So, Casebolt is not on a mission to discredit EGW, but Thompson falsely assumes that this is the mission of both of us. "*As I worked through his two books, I found myself wishing that he had provided a clearer context for them, locating them in the larger picture of Adventism and Ellen White studies. In his first book, for example, he briefly mentions Steve Daily's flamboyant* Ellen G. White: A Psychobiography.[10] *Daily's point was that Ellen White "may have been one of the most successful con artists in history."*[11] *Yet Casebolt does not mention Daily's book until his conclusion, and there his gentle words are a far cry from "con artist."* Thompson's point seems to be that Casebolt deliberately tries to avoid referring to my psychology much because he wants to destroy EGW himself. This is the paranoid way Thompson seems to think. He can't simply deal with the overwhelming historical evidence and source documentation presented, much less refute it, but has to attribute destructive motives to those who present it. He goes on to write, "My own position on Ellen White favors a growth model, a third option that moves away from Daily's "con artist" and Casebolt's "honest but misinformed guide," if I can thus paraphrase Casebolt's position." Yet, Thompson's model completely ignores EGW's absolute claims for her writings, and fails to recognize that she changed back and forth on so many issues that she was anything but a stable or integrative thinker. I'm guessing that Casebolt treads so softly where EGW is concerned because he values his membership in the SDA Church, which I do not hold against him, I am happy for current SDAs to present the kind of evidence that he does in his books, but I also want to finish up by addressing the points where I take issue with Casebolt.
2. *Disagreements with Casebolt*. There are several points that I disagree with in Casebolt's books, and I want to deal with them in the order of their importance or significance. A) My most significant disagreement with Casebolt concerns his belief that Ellen's false prophecies and/or lies were the result of confabulation. As Brene Brown puts it, "Confabulation is a lie told honestly." Casebolt wants us to believe that Ellen's lies and false prophecies were the result of her head injury at the age of nine. He quotes Roger Coon, former associate director of the White Estate, to convince us that Ellen's "central nervous system [was] shattered" by this accident (*COA,* p. 15), that she was "still mentally disabled" when she first encountered Miller's 15 mathematical proofs of Christ's 2nd Coming (*COA,* p. xv), and that this "frontal lobe brain injury" was ultimately responsible for her "confabulation" (*FMD,* pp. ix, 120ff) which in turn freed her from all moral responsibility for her lies, false prophecies and other immoral actions that would occur throughout her lifetime (documented in my psychobiography). Casebolt is a former nurse practitioner, and I don't know whether he specialized in

brain injuries or not, but my suspicion is that he did not. Because I am both a historian and a licensed psychologist who has taken numerous courses in neuro-psychology, and my training in both areas, fully convinces me that Casebolt's position will not stand up to scrutiny. First of all, let us consider the historical evidence. When Ellen was struck in the head with a rock from a friend who was angry with her, the evidence is very strong that the rock struck her towards the top of her nose, and broke her nose, rather than hitting her square in the forehead (*Psychobiography* pp. 38-39, 40ff). Ellen did not pass out immediately, but continued to walk with her sister and friend until the swelling went into her brain and she then went into an extended coma. I go into some detail on this in my psychobiography that I will not go into here, but suffice it to say that the brain was not directly injured by the initial contact with the rock, and there is no proof of brain damage after the swelling subsided. Furthermore, there is overwhelming evidence that Ellen was very much aware of her ability to manipulate and control others, very intentionally or purposefully throughout the rest of her life, this is source documented throughout my psychobiography and has not been refuted by Casebolt, any other SDA, or anyone else for that matter. It would be nice for SDAs if Ellen could be absolved from all her immoral deeds by the blanket absolution of "confabulation," but this cannot be justified by the historical or medical evidence. B) Casebolt insists that Ellen was "converted" by William Miller at the age of twelve, and this is not only wrong, but is related to a number of other important factors that need to be explored. At the very beginning of his more significant book, Casebolt claims that "Ellen Harmon-White" was "Father Miller's spiritual daughter and most important convert" (*FMD,* p.1). Elsewhere he quotes George Knight, the fact that Ellen attended some Millerite meetings in March of 1840 when she was 12, and Ellen's own statement in 1909 recollecting that her conversion was "probably in March of 1840" to conclude that Miller converted her and was truly her "spiritual Father" (*COA,* p. 2). This is where Casebolt's lack of training as a historian becomes evident. In the *Maine Encyclopedia,* under the heading, White, Ellen Gould Harmon, we read the following: "In the year 1840, White attended a Methodist camp meeting at Buxton, and there, at the age of 12, she gave her heart to God. On June 26, 1842, at her request she was baptized by immersion in Casco Bay, Portland. That same day she was received as a member of the Methodist Church." As I point out in my psychobiography, Ellen was first a Shouting Methodist, converted at their fanatical camp meetings, before becoming a Millerite. EGW's initial exposure to religion was Methodism, and this really took hold for her in the context of the fanatical Shouting Methodists (who were known for their charismania - my term- in their camp-meeting settings), where Ellen was initially converted at the age of 12. This becomes very important because Ellen gains prominence with the Shouting Methodists as a young teenager and with Israel Dammon, who was also very involved with extreme charismania, after she is disfellowshipped from Methodism. Both her involvement in Methodism and Millerism is in the most extreme context of charismatic excesses, which SDAs never seem to want to admit, and which Casebolt seems to blatantly ignore given how significant this was in Ellen's early spiritual development. Miller himself rejected modern prophets, so while Ellen was taken by his mistaken "Biblical proofs" it would be far more accurate to say that Israel Dammon, the fanatical Millerite preacher, was thoroughly on Ellen's spiritual wavelength, much more than Miller. The reason Ellen develops into the crazy "visionary" she claims to be, has everything to do with the deluded Shouting Methodists and the fanatical Israel Dammon, who ultimately rejected EGW as a false prophet himself, rather than Miller who was a former Deist and anything but a charismatic. If Casebolt wants to truly understand the roots of EGW he needs to spend just as much time studying the Shouting Methodists, and Israel Dammon's group, as he has researching Millerism! C) There seems to be a running contradiction throughout both of Casebolt's books which allow him to claim on the one hand that Ellen suffered from a major brain injury that was responsible for her inability to comprehend and her absolving confabulation, while on the other hand, that she was Miller's greatest and most influential product who was responsible for building a large world-wide denomination of millions of people. Casebolt certainly does not seem inclined to attribute this extreme contradiction to the providence or intervention of God, as so many SDA apologists are prone to do. So my question would be, how does he resolve this extreme contradiction. My take on it would be, that Ellen was fully functional mentally and knew exactly what she was doing when her and James deceived the early believers into giving them money through feigned "visions." When they deceived their little flock into embracing the Shut Door , though Miller himself was rejecting it. When Ellen repeatedly set

new dates for the Second Coming even though they failed, one after the other. The same is true when Ellen duped Bates through a faked astronomy "vision" to get his financial and theological support. The same was true when Ellen embraced Bates' & -Year-Theory, when she told her followers that God showed her they were to sell their homes and possessions and give the money to "the cause" which James and Ellen controlled and would personally enrich them, and in the deletions and censoring of Ellen's previous visions, in 1851 by James and herself, which had proven to be totally false and embarrassing. All of this occurred in Casebolt's stated period of study. To try to blame all of this on confabulation and a brain injury is not only illogical, and opposed to the evidence, but is giving Ellen far too little credit for the master manipulator that she turned out to be! My last disagreement with Casebolt is relatively minor, but I believe is worth mentioning: D) That we don't know whether Ellen was an identical or fraternal twin. "We are not sure whether she was an identical or fraternal twin" (*COA,* p. 7, note 6). Every historical source I have ever seen on the subject identifies EGW as a fraternal twin, not an identical twin, and simply looking at photos of the two sisters should be proof enough, so this assertion from Casebolt is quite confusing to me. If he was going to challenge this position, to raise doubt about her status as a fraternal twin, one would expect him to provide some evidence to support this claim, but none is given. So, I am not sure why he even brings the subject up, or expresses ignorance in this regard.

But I don't want to let my disagreements with the author take away from the masterful contribution he has made, which generally fits perfectly with what the critics of EGW have been generating for decades. I can only say that I wish him protection and God's grace as he tries to survive in Adventism, as one who tells the truth!