Chapter 1

Accepting the Prophetic Gift: Nineteenth-Century Religious Context and the Years Leading Up to 1850

Ellen Harmon received her first vision in December 1844, a few weeks after the Great Disappointment on October 22, 1844. Although many Millerites (particularly Millerite leaders) were skeptical toward such visionary claims, the majority of Sabbath-keeping Adventists who came out of the Millerite movement after the Disappointment accepted her initial visions as genuine and began to defend what they believed to be a true display of the biblical gift of prophecy. The reason for this ready acceptance of Ellen Harmon's visions among Sabbath-keeping Adventists, however, may not be so surprising after all, if it is examined against the contextual background when the movement appeared.[1]

General historic background of charismatic influences during the 1800s

American Christianity in the mid-1800s was open to both charismatic and visionary manifestations. Such experiences were not seen as something strange or extraordinary but were viewed as a sign of God's power and acceptance. Four major factors provided the way for that openness: (1) the Second Great Awakening; (2) the camp-meeting gatherings; (3) the Methodist quest for holiness; and (4) the appearance of radical religious groups established by a charismatic or visionary leader (or prophet). Sabbatarian Adventism arose in this context of nineteenth-century America, and its understanding of the doctrine of spiritual gifts was influenced to one degree or another by the general religious climate of the times. Ellen White's gift of prophecy, therefore, was not something unique

or extraordinary by itself. Her gift was in line with the milieu of her time.

One of the major factors contributing to the establishment of experiential and charismatic religion in the 1800s was the Second Great Awakening. It lasted roughly from the 1790s to the early 1840s and became "the most influential revival in the history of the United States." More than anything else, it created a religious climate that accepted weeping, shouting, groans, visions, prophetic revelations, and other charismatic forms of religious expressions as an important part of true and genuine Christianity.[2] As Nathan Hatch wrote, "Scores of preachers' journals, from Methodists and Baptists, from north and south, from white and black, indicated a ready acceptance to consider dreams and visions as inspired by God, normal manifestations of divine guidance and instruction."[3]

Revivalist preachers of the Second Great Awakening began to employ new techniques and established further the charismatic forms of religion in American Christianity. Charles G. Finney, a Presbyterian minister, became one of the main leaders of the new revival methods during the 1820s and 1830s, and his approaches became widely popular among other religious leaders and groups. Finney's prominence began first in upstate New York but eventually spread to the big cities of the east, such as Hartford, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and others. Finney believed that the aim of preaching was not only to instruct and comfort people but also to bring them to spiritual and moral change.[4] What he meant was that if a preacher gave the right biblical message using the right methods, a revival would happen.[5] Thus Finney "made revivalism into a science."[6] Although Finney focused on preaching and prayer, the responses of the listeners were often accompanied by intense religious experience and emotionalism.

Additionally, Finney contributed to the emotional and charismatic religious atmosphere of the time by introducing "protracted meetings"—town-wide revivalist meetings that lasted for several days. He used tents or large churches and auditoriums for his mass evangelism. His meetings were interdenominational and were usually sponsored by all the major churches in the town. The meetings were held during mornings, afternoons, and evenings and were full of prayers, praises, and preaching. They often ended up with many conversions and different kinds of spiritual manifestations.[7]

Furthermore, Finney employed what he called "new measures" as part of his revivalist techniques. He believed that new times and circumstances required a new system of measures to be employed in order for true revival to happen. Those new measures included the practice of praying for the conversion of people by name and allowing women to pray and give religious testimonies in gender-mixed groups in public. Although many saw this practice as scandalous, Finney believed that both men and women had the right to express their faith publicly. He considered such testimonies as important means for

other conversion experiences, since public testimonies were usually dramatic and emotional in character.[8]

Finney also introduced the "anxious seat"—a specially designated bench that was placed in front of the church where people who desired salvation and sought forgiveness of their sins would come to experience a special encounter with God. At the anxious seat, people manifested their determination to be followers of Christ. These events, too, were most often accompanied by deep emotionalism and ecstatic display that affected emotionally not just the anxious ones but the rest of the people in the auditoriums.

Although Finney apparently never intended to arouse the emotions of his hearers, his new methods undoubtedly contributed to the greater acceptance and popularity of charismatic religious expressions and demonstrative religion. Even Adventist preachers, including William Miller, used some of Finney's methods in their meetings. Ellen Harmon (later White) came to an "anxious seat" seeking a special prayer during William Miller's meeting in the spring of 1840 at the Casco Street Christian Church in Portland, Maine.[9]

A second factor contributing to the acceptance of charismatic and visionary manifestations in the first half of the nineteenth century was the establishment of camp meetings. These were annual gatherings at which people camped out for several days to listen to powerful preaching, to pray, to sing, and to experience or witness conversion. The earliest camp meetings were interdenominational and were conducted by Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and others. Eventually, however, they became mainly a Methodist institution and played an important part in the growth of that denomination.[10]

One of the main hallmarks of the camp meeting was a highly charismatic worship that was full of emotional excitement. Many participants, in fact, measured the success of a camp meeting by the display of God's power through the people present.[11] Conversion experiences at camp meetings were usually accompanied by dramatic physical manifestations, including prophetic visions and trances, falling, shouting, jerking, running, barking, and others. Although there were some who did not favor such experiential displays, most preachers accepted them to be legitimate manifestations of the power of God. Peter Cartwright, a camp-meeting preacher, describes one of his meetings in the following way:

> My voice was strong and clear, and my preaching was more of an exhortation and encouragement than anything else. My text was, "The gates of hell shall not prevail." In about thirty minutes the power of God fell on the congregation in such a manner as is seldom seen; the people fell in every direction, right and left, front and rear. It was supposed that not less than three hundred fell like dead men in mighty battle. . . . Our meeting

> lasted all night, and Monday and Monday night; and when we closed on Tuesday, there were two hundred who had professed religion, and about that number joined the Church.[12]

In addition, the camp meetings gave opportunity to the converted believers to give public testimonies of their conversion experiences. The main purpose of this practice was to encourage other people to experience God's power for themselves. Women and children were also given the opportunity to publicly exhort, testify, and preach before the people on such occasions.[13] One account tells the story of a twelve-year-old boy who during the time of worship raised his voice and with tears in his eyes cried aloud to the wicked, "warning them of their danger, denouncing their certain doom if they persisted in their sins."[14] On another occasion, Rebecca Chaney Miller, a sixteen-year-old girl, felt the call to preach but struggled with "deep anxiety" and fear to follow her calling. While attending her first camp meeting, however, she overcame her "diffidence in public speaking" and began a fourteen-year preaching career that led to "thousands" of new converts.[15]

Perhaps the best-known example of activities taking place at a camp meeting is that of Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801. In fact, Cane Ridge became the most famous camp meeting and a model for other early-nineteenth-century gatherings. It was full of charismatic excitement, dramatic conversion experiences, and powerful testimonies. As Paul Conkin observes, "Cane Ridge gained its greatest fame for the extent of these exercises."[16] One minister (probably James Campbell) reflected on some of the scenes that he witnessed. "Sinners," the minister penned, were

> dropping down on every hand, shrieking, groaning, crying for mercy, convoluted; professors [of religion] praying, agonizing, fainting, falling down in distress, for sinners, or in raptures of joy! Some singing, some shouting, clapping their hands, hugging and even kissing, laughing; others talking to the distressed, to one another, or to opposers of the work, and all this at once—no spectacle can excite a stronger sensation. And with what is doing [*sic*], the darkness of the night, the solemnity of the place, and of the occasion, and conscious guilt, all conspire to make terror thrill through every power of the soul, and rouse it to awful attention.[17]

Peter Cartwright in his autobiography gives a similar description of the emotionalism displayed at Cane Ridge:

> The mighty power of God was displayed in a very extraordinary manner; many were moved to tears, and bitter and loud crying for mercy. . . . Hundreds fell prostrated under the mighty power of God, as men slain in

> battle. Stands were erected in the woods from which preachers of different Churches proclaimed repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and it was supposed, by eye and ear witnesses, that between one and two thousand souls were happily and powerfully converted to God during the meeting. It was not unusual for one, three, and four to seven preachers to be addressing the listening thousands at the same time from the different stands erected for the purpose. The heavenly fire spread in almost every direction. It was said, by truthful witnesses, that at times more than one thousand persons broke out into loud shouting all at once, and that the shouts could be heard for miles around.[18]

As time went on, however, many of the more radical physical manifestations died out. By the 1830s most denominations, except for the Methodists, had abandoned the camp-meeting gatherings.[19]

A third contributing element to the atmosphere of experiential and charismatic religion in America in the early 1800s was Methodism and its emphasis on holiness. This was particularly true of American Methodism. As Lester Ruth notes, the difference between American Methodism in relationship to British Methodism "was in the pervasiveness and intensity of the ecstasy" among believers.[20]

Although most of the Methodist ministers were poorly educated, they were known for powerful preaching that led to visible and audible responses from the listeners. Such responses were viewed as evidences of the presence of the Holy Spirit.[21] It became a common practice, therefore, to interrupt the preaching with shouts of "Hallelujah," "Amen," or "Glory, glory, glory." Eventually, the Methodists in America became known as the "Shouting Methodists."[22]

Benjamin Abbott, for example, who claimed to be given many of his sermon texts in dreams, reported that most of his meetings were full of ecstasy and enthusiasm. Describing one such meeting, Abbott reported that "the next meeting-day in time of preaching, we had a powerful time, and a number fell to the floor; one man attempted to run off, but God laid him down at the door. A woman made the same attempt, but the Spirit of the eternal God arrested her, and she fell back into the house just as she was going out of the door. After preaching, we had a blessed time in class: while claiming the promises, several were soon down, both on the right and left; some found peace, and others professed sanctification."[23]

The impact of such preaching upon the listeners was a visible, tangible emotional response and was often reflected in some kind of bodily affectations.[24]

Similarly to the camp-meeting tradition, Methodism also gave opportunity to lay men, women, and children to participate in worship services to an extent unseen up to that time. Since the circuit ministers could visit local Methodist societies only periodically, local congregations were operated primarily by lay

leadership. Lay ministry involved "preaching in the vernacular, accepting popular idioms into worship," and giving worshipers a sense of belonging and an opportunity to lead.[25]

Women were also actively included in the life of the church and contributed greatly to the success of Methodism. Although not officially ordained, women were welcomed into the pulpits. Like most male Methodist preachers, women lay-preachers were uneducated and often claimed that their messages were given to them through visions and dreams.[26] Understandingly, they were provided with opportunities to stand before their congregations and publicly testify concerning their religious experience, which in many cases was accompanied by intense emotionalism. At times, women were asked to repeat a dramatic testimony in different gatherings.

Probably the best known example of the role of a Methodist woman is that of Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874). Palmer had the devastating experience of losing three of her children, and she "longed for a deeper experience of her faith." After July 26, 1837, when she received a special sense of the power of the Holy Spirit, Palmer began to share her experience with others. Together with her sister, Sarah Lankford, she organized the "Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness" gatherings, where people assembled to pray, to share publicly personal experiences, and to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Palmer believed that public testimony was an essential element if one was to retain God's grace in his or her life. The meetings were usually accompanied by strong emotionalism.

Palmer also published several books and believed that God's gift was given equally to men and women. Based on Galatians 3:28 ("there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus") and Joel 2:28 ("your sons and your daughters shall prophesy"), Palmer argued that women should have the right to speak and share their Christian experiences in the church and other religious meetings. Although Palmer was concerned primarily with the promotion of holiness, she greatly contributed to the "public role of women in the religious life of America."[27]

Furthermore, Methodism associated true conversion with some kind of outward manifestation of the Holy Spirit. In fact, a direct experience of God's power was a necessary means for membership in the denomination.[28] Even Wesley, who was at times skeptical of dreams, visions, and other spiritual phenomena, demanded believers to provide a written account of their conversion experience.[29] New converts often burst forth with such emotional and physical demonstrations as weeping, jumping, shouting, loud praying, clapping of hands, trances, visions, or other bodily motions. Some of the more dramatic conversions were recorded and later given as public testimonies. This was true for ministers as well as for lay adults and even children.

Interestingly, for Methodists, expressions of ecstasy and supernatural

encounters were not to be confined to corporate worships only but were to be seen in smaller Methodist class meetings or everyday life experiences. As John Wigger notes, "This quest for the supernatural in everyday life was the most distinctive characteristic of early American Methodism."[30]

A good example is the conversion of John Emory at his house in August 1806. One evening, he and several members of his family were gathered together and spent some time in singing, praying, and "conversing about experiential religion." After the family prayer, John went to the garden and "there gave vent to the feelings of his burdened spirit." The next morning he attended a "love-feast." The meeting was filled with "exercises" and "the mighty power of God was displayed." John fell upon his knees and speaking in a "solemn manner," promised to God to "seek the salvation of his soul." Immediately the present believers formed a circle around him and many offered prayers for his salvation. Suddenly, John rose from his knees and declared that "he felt peace and comfort" in his heart.[31] With Ellen White growing up as a Methodist, charismatic and emotional manifestations would not have been foreign to her Christian development.

The fourth element contributing to the charismatic and visionary background of American Christianity was the emergence of new religious groups led by a charismatic leader. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed the appearance of prophets (or visionaries) of all genders and conditions. Based on a scholarly survey of published sources only (pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, literary journals, and evangelical memoirs), Susan Juster has identified about 315 men and women who were recognized as prophets in England and North America in the period between 1750 and 1820.[32] Juster notes, however, that the real number is probably much higher; many were illiterate or did not keep a journal. While some of them made only brief appearances, others left enduring legacies and many followers, "sometimes numbering in the thousands."[33]

Jemima Wilkinson and Ann Lee, for example, were "the forerunners of new revelation in upstate New York." In the late 1770s, Wilkinson received a vision, which revealed to her that her body was possessed by a new spirit and that she had been reborn as the "Public Universal Friend." Wilkinson believed that God had called her to invite people to repentance, and she began to view herself as the female John the Baptist. In spite of her limited education, she became a highly successful evangelist. Some of her main beliefs included the promotion of a modified form of community living, celibacy, equality of sexes, and the importance of visionary revelations.[34]

A much more familiar example is that of Ann Lee and the Shakers. After her conversion in England and her joining a small group of "Shaking Quakers," Ann Lee claimed to receive a series of visions. It was revealed to her that the root of all evil was sexual activity within and without the marriage. For Lee, this was

the "original sin" of Adam and Eve. After Ann Lee migrated with a small group of followers to upstate New York in 1774, the Shakers grew rather quickly. The Shakers became known for promoting celibacy and the validity of new revelations. Their worship was full of excitement and included singing, groaning, jumping, dancing, laughing, shouting, and leaping for joy. In these things they saw the manifestation of the Holy Spirit inspiring "love for the sacred things" and giving "confidence in those gifts."[35]

A further example of visionary manifestations in nineteenth-century America was the appearance of Joseph Smith and Mormonism. Mormonism became known mostly for its promotion of plural marriages and its belief in continuing revelation. When Smith and his family moved to the state of New York in 1816, he was exposed to the religious excitement of what came to be known as "the burned-over district." Seeing some of the religious controversies of that time, Smith became disturbed and troubled by the question of which was the right denomination. He decided to pray and seek God for guidance. According to his account, one day as he prayed in the woods, he received a vision. The Father and the Son appeared and revealed to him not to join any of the existing denominations because all of them were wrong and "their creeds were an abomination."[36] He was to establish a new movement. After further revelations, he was given a special task. Guided by the angel Moroni, Smith claimed to have discovered two golden plates that revealed the story of a lost tribe of Israel that had inhabited the American continent centuries ago. Because the stones were written in an ancient lost Egyptian language, Smith claimed that he was given the tools for translation. In 1830, he published the *Book of Mormon* [37] in Palmyra, New York. Smith and his followers considered the *Book of Mormon* to be equal in authority to the Bible, since it was a direct revelation from God. Joseph Smith became a contemporary prophet for his followers. The Mormon belief in modern prophetic manifestation was so strong that they considered anyone who denied the new revelations as being from God or argued against the modern prophetic gift to be denying Christ and His gospel.[38]

Smith claimed to have received an additional revelation in which John the Baptist appeared to him and ordained him together with Oliver Cowdery to the "Priesthood of Aaron." The two men became the first and the second elder of the new Church of the Latter Day Saints.[39] Other revelations established Smith's authority even further. In cases of doctrinal controversy over issues such as baptism, ordination, the Trinity, marriage, and church government, to mention a few, Smith used his prophetic authority to decide every controversial question.[40] Although Smith was murdered at a prison in Carthage, Illinois, by an angry mob in 1844, Mormonism continued its growth under the leadership of Brigham Young, who became the next prophet of the movement. Thus the prophetic gift was institutionalized in the presidency of the new denomination.[41]

One other particular movement related to charismatic and visionary manifestations in America in the first half of the nineteenth century was the Christian Connection group. The goal of this movement was to reform existing churches from unbiblical traditions and to return to the purity of New Testament Christianity. The Christian Connectionists, therefore, had no formal creed but the Bible and referred to themselves simply as Christians. William Kinkade (b. 1783), one of the main founders and the theologian of the movement, also argued that at the center of the New Testament order was the doctrine of spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy. Based on verses such as 1 Corinthians 12:8–12 and Ephesians 4:11–16, he believed in the perpetuity of spiritual gifts until the end of time.[42] "This is the *ancient order of things,*" he wrote, and "every one opposed to this, is opposed to primitive Christianity. To say God caused these gifts to cease, is the same as to say, God has abolished the order of the New Testament church. . . . To divest the church of all these spiritual gifts, would be to take from the body of Christ the senses of hearing, smelling, seeing, &c."[43]

With its appeal to pure Christian practices, the Christian Connection attracted many followers. By 1840, there were about forty congregations of the Christian Connection in Vermont alone.[44] Elias Smith and Abner Jones, two major leaders of the Christian Connection movement in the New England area, for instance, were firm believers in visions and direct manifestations of God's Spirit in the lives of true believers. Smith's own conversion, he claimed, was accompanied by a vision.[45] Thus the Christian Connectionists were open to supernatural revelations and visionary experiences and saw them as biblically founded, even though they held the Bible to be their only authority.

While Ellen G. White came from a Methodist background, James White and Joseph Bates, the other two founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, came from the Christian Connection. Their views on the primacy of the Bible as the only source of theological authority and the perpetuity of spiritual gifts were influenced by the Christian's theology.

Noticeably, the Sabbatarian inclinations toward the modern display of the gift of prophecy were influenced by the milieu of that time. But before we examine their initial reaction toward Ellen White's prophetic gift, we will look at the Millerite attitude toward supernatural revelations and visionary experiences.

Millerite attitudes toward charismatic and visionary manifestations

The Millerite movement appeared in the first part of the nineteenth century and became a part of the Second Great Awakening. The Millerite attitude toward charismatic and visionary manifestations, however, was somewhat complex. While there were occurrences of charismatic and visionary manifestations among Millerites, the mainstream Millerite leadership rejected such activities as unbiblical and produced official resolutions condemning visions and prophetic

revelations. This radical denial was prompted mostly by fanatical elements that arose from the movement particularly after the Great Disappointment.

The existence of charismatic expressions among Millerites can be understood in the light of three major reasons. The first was the nature of the movement. Millerism was an interdenominational movement, and as such its religious practices varied among its followers. The Millerite believers came from different churches and brought with them their past religious experiences and worship styles. Everett Dick's study of 174 Millerite lecturers found that 44.3 percent were Methodists, 27 percent Baptists, 9 percent Congregationalists, 8 percent Christians, and 7 percent Presbyterians.[46]

Second, Millerite leaders did not exercise strong external control over the movement. Miller himself never wanted to establish a new denomination but only to alert believers of the soon coming of Christ. Millerism encouraged people to think for themselves on doctrinal issues and did not force doctrinal unanimity. Consequently, it was difficult to prevent practices of charismatic, visionary, or other forms of emotional manifestations among its adherents. And third, since a large portion of Millerite believers came from the Methodist tradition, Millerism was indirectly influenced in terms of its worship style and charismatic exercises. Hence, we find examples of emotional expressions during Millerite gatherings.

Joseph Bates, an early Millerite, reported of a meeting taking place in Taunton, Massachusetts, in September 1842 that was attended by "crowds" of believers and several Millerite ministers. Josiah Litch took a leading role in the weeklong gathering. At one Morning Prayer assembly there was an invitation for people to come forward to be prayed for. Among those who came forward "there were about *thirty ministers* that prostrated themselves, some of them *on their faces* beseeching God for mercy, and a preparation to meet their coming Lord!" "The Holy Spirit," was displayed with so "much power," wrote Bates, "that it seemed like sin to doubt."

On the following Sunday it was estimated that there were about ten thousand people in the camp. "The clear, weighty and solemn preaching of the second coming of Christ," Bates noted, "and the fervent prayers and animated singing of the new Second-advent hymns, accompanied by the Spirit of the living God, sent such thrills through the camp, that many were shouting aloud for joy."[47]

Some forms of charismatic exercises and fanaticism were also present at the famous Exeter, New Hampshire, camp meeting in August 1844. It was described that there was a tent from Watertown, Massachusetts, "filled with fanatical persons" that attracted much attention because of the way they conducted their worship. Their meetings frequently continued "nearly all night" and were filled with "great excitement," "noise of shouting," "clapping of hands," and other such exercises. Elder Plummer, who was in charge of the meeting, stated

that "he had no objections to shouts of praise to God, over victories won in his name. But when persons had shouted 'Glory to God' nine hundred and ninety-nine times, with no evidence of one victory gained, and had blistered their hands in striking them together with violence, he thought it was time for them to stop."[48] The *Advent Herald* also reported that the Exeter camp meeting was "somewhat disturbed and greatly annoyed by a company who came on the ground with a tent, having no sympathy with the object for which the meeting was called, and in whose exercises and extravagances the meeting had no sympathy."[49]

There were also individual Millerites who claimed to be prophets and were involved in visionary activities before the Great Disappointment. William Ellis Foy (1818–1893) was a Free Will Baptist minister and a Millerite preacher who claimed to have received several visions during the early 1840s. Foy's first vision occurred on January 18, 1842, and lasted for about two and half hours. "I met with the people of God in Southark St., Boston," he wrote, "where the Christians were engaged in solemn prayer, and my soul was made happy in the love of God. I was immediately seized as in the agonies of death, and my breath left me; and it appeared to me that I was a spirit separate from this body."[50] In this vision he saw the saved people in paradise and the wicked ones burning in flames of fire. Foy was so distressed that he felt it was his duty to declare the things that he had seen to his "fellow creatures, and warn them to flee from the wrath to come."

He had his second vision two weeks later on February 4, 1842. While in a meeting with a large group of Christians who were "engaged in exortation [*sic*] and prayer," Foy recalled, "I began to reflect on my disobedience; and while thus engaged, suddenly I heard a voice, as it were, in the spirit, speaking unto me. I immediately fell to the floor, and knew nothing about this body, until twelve hours and a half had passed away, as I was afterwards informed." In his second vision, Foy was shown "innumerable multitudes coming from the four quarters of the earth" to be judged before the throne of God.[51] According to some of his contemporaries, Foy may have had additional visions, but we do not have a record from him about them.[52] Ellen White remembered seeing and talking to Foy. At one time as she related the scenes of one of her visions, Foy said that "it was just what he had seen" in his visions.[53]

In Philadelphia, Dr. R. C. Gorgas also claimed to have visions. In one of his revelations, Gorgas claimed seeing Christ coming at three o'clock in the morning of October 22, 1844. He also published a broadside explaining his prediction through a graphic chart.[54] He even managed to convince George Storrs, a major Millerite leader, of the validity of his vision, and Storrs helped him to publish his prophecy in a *Midnight Cry* Extra. The editor, N. Southard, trusting the judgment of Storrs, did not read the document and printed several

hundred copies and sent them out. The next day, however, Southard stopped the distribution of the paper and burned the rest of the remaining copies. He wrote a note of regret to the readers of the *Midnight Cry* for his "great mistake" of not paying attention to the content of the material and publishing it.[55]

Probably the most dramatic example of charismatic display and fanaticism before the Great Disappointment, however, was that of John Starkweather. A graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, he accepted Millerism in the autumn of 1842. Soon Himes hired him to be his assistant pastor at the Chardon Street Chapel, so that Himes could have more time for traveling and spreading the Advent cause. Being a powerful orator, Starkweather won the confidence of many believers. However, his peculiar views on perfection and personal sanctification brought about a conflict with Himes and other Millerite leaders. Starkweather taught that "conversion, however full and thorough, did not fit one for God's favor without a second work; and that this second work was usually indicated by some bodily sensation." Such manifestations were seen to be "evidences of the great power of God in the sanctification of those who were already devoted Christians."[56]

While some believers accepted such charismatic manifestations with "wonder" and "awe," others were suspicious but feared to say anything that would "offend" the Holy Spirit. The problem grew and divided the believers to such an extent that Himes had to publicly challenge Starkweather and his fanatical views in the spring of 1843. Starkweather was removed from his position as associate pastor. He left the Chardon Street Chapel with a group of followers and began meeting at different locations. Eventually, by 1844, Starkweather lost most of his Millerite devotees, accepted the doctrine of spiritual wifery, and separated from his family.[57]

In light of such manifestations, visions, and fanatical extremes, it is not surprising to find most of the Millerite leaders being against such occurrences. In a letter to Sylvester Bliss, Miller expressed his unbelief in such things and noted that he saw "no reason for the working of miracles in this age." Such claims, he thought, were the work of Satan and not of God.[58] Looking back at some meetings where he was present before the Great Disappointment, Miller wrote in December of 1844: "Sometimes our meetings were distinguished by noise and confusion, and—forgive me, brethren, if I express myself too strongly—it appeared to me more like Babel, than a solemn assembly of penitents bowing in humble reverence before a holy God. I have often obtained more evidence of inward piety from a *kindling eye,* a *wet cheek,* and a *choked utterance,* than from all the noise in Christendom."[59] Joshua Himes, Sylvester Bliss, and others made similar personal pronouncements.

In addition, the Millerite movement issued official declarations disapproving of such charismatic and visionary exercises. In June 1843, for example, at

a general conference meeting, the Millerites declared that they had "no confidence whatever in *any visions, dreams, or private revelations*."[60] A year later, in May 1844, at another general conference, the Millerite leadership issued a similar warning and cautioned the believers "upon the danger of placing any confidence in impressions, and dreams and private revelations, so called, as independent sources of information."[61]

The same duality continued after the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844. While there continued to be Millerite followers who exercised charismatic displays, the Millerite leadership condemned such occurrences as the work of Satan.

From an account of the trial of Israel Dammon, a Millerite preacher, in February 1845, we understand that Maine was one of the areas where charismatic and visionary practices prevailed. There appeared to be at least five prophets in the area of Portland, Maine, and four of them, including Ellen Harmon,[62] were women.[63] The trial of Dammon depicted fanaticism among the Millerite Adventists in Maine that was producing a negative public attitude toward the movement after the Great Disappointment.[64] Just before the significant Millerite conference in Albany in April 1845, Himes, for example, warned Miller that "things in Maine are bad—very bad."[65] He, however, looked toward the "Albany conference to help stabilize the advent cause."[66] Himes and Miller became so concerned with the situation in Portland that they even visited the Advent believers there in June 1845. The *Portland Advertiser,* a local newspaper, "noted the sharp opposition of Miller and Himes to 'fanaticism' which had spread among Maine Millerites."[67] Understandably, living in Portland at that time, Ellen White was viewed as one of those fanatical prophets.

Samuel S. Snow, another major Millerite leader, also began to claim the prophetic gift in 1845. He saw himself as Elijah the prophet who had to appear just before the second coming of Christ. Snow and his followers promoted his views in a periodical called *The True Day Star*. In its first issue they published a statement claiming that "Elijah," the messenger of Jesus, "is here" in the person of Snow and that the "Spirit of God, guides him in the high and special work which is committed to him, of expounding the sacred Scriptures, for the infallible guidance of the household of faith."[68] Those who did not accept Snow as the new prophet were, according to him, assigned to hell in his *Book of Judgment Delivered to Israel by Elijah the Messenger of the Everlasting Covenant*.[69] Since Miller, Himes, Litch, Storrs, and some other Millerite leaders rejected Snow's prophetic claims, Snow saw them as "fallen," "judged," and "cast out from the holy mountain of God, to receive the due reward of their deeds, and melt away under the burning curse of the Lord."[70] He apparently continued his prophetic claims until the end of his life.[71]

The Millerite leadership, as before the Great Disappointment, rejected such