

***Review and Herald*, April 7, 1885 - Advent Experience--No. 9**

**"The Shut Door Doctrine Among the Believers
in the Third Angel's Message" p. 1, par. 1, [NUM9].**

In No. 8 we gave extracts showing that what is called the "shut door" doctrine was held by the believers in 1850, '51. But we also clearly proved that it only excluded those who rejected the light. We quoted from Elder White's language the very strongest expressions which our opponents can find by which they try to make it appear that none but the believers in '44 could be saved. We have seen how utterly they have failed to prove their position. We will now present other evidences confirming our statements. On page 72 of *Present Truth*, published in Oswego, N.Y., April, 1850, we have the following item: p. 1, par. 2, [NUM9].

"A very interesting work is now going on among the children of the 'remnant' in this city. Their salvation has been the principal subject of our meetings for the last two Sabbaths, and God has wonderfully blessed us. The truth has had a good effect on us as well as on our children. In the evening following the last first day we had a meeting for their special benefit, and the Spirit of the Lord was poured out in our midst. The children all bowed before the Lord, and seemed to feel the importance of keeping the commandments, especially the fifth, and of seeking salvation through Jesus Christ. This was one of the most interesting meetings that I ever witnessed." p. 1, par. 3, [NUM9].

As this seems to be editorial matter (for there is no signature to it), it must have been from the pen of Elder White. This was published just one month before the article containing the lengthy extract from his pen which we quoted last week, and which contains those strong statements about the shut door, which opposers say prove that he believed there was no salvation for anybody but old Advent believers. Here we see him laboring, no doubt in connection with his wife, with the deepest interest for the dear children who were "seeking salvation." This had been their principal work for two weeks. It had been a great blessing to them and the children. p. 1, par. 4, [NUM9].

Yet our opponents conclude from what he published a month later, that they believed none of these children could be saved, because they were not believers in '44. They were laboring with all their might for the salvation of those who they thought could not be saved! This may be their conclusion, but

certainly it is not ours. We know, therefore, that they held no such views of the shut door as opposers attribute to them. p. 1, par. 5, [NUM9].

In the November number of *Present Truth*, pages 84, 85, we have an account of the conversion of young persons, and the baptism of one who must have been too young to have been a believer in 1844. This passage occurs in a letter of S. W. Rhodes', who was a prominent laborer at that time, and shows what kind of a shut door they believed in. p. 2, par. 1, [NUM9].

On the last page of the last number of *Present Truth*, in a letter from Elder Joseph Bates, we find the following: p. 2, par. 2, [NUM9].

"Our meeting at Waitsfield was blessed of God. Brother and Sister Butler came from Waterbury with brethren Chamberlain and Churchill; brethren Hart and Bailey came from Northfield; and those in the place, with Brother Lockwood's family, composed our meeting. Brother Butler finally yielded to the truth." p. 2, par. 3, [NUM9].

We personally remember this time as though it were but yesterday, although it was in 1850. Mother had been keeping the Sabbath about a year. Father was much opposed to it, though a strong believer in the great Advent movement of the past. The light on the sanctuary subject brought him to accept the seventh-day Sabbath.

We notice this meeting because the name of Brother Churchill is mentioned. His was one of the first cases of conversion from the world to the present truth, which occurred after 1844. As we have said, their work hitherto had been almost wholly for the "lost sheep of the house of Israel"--the old Advent believers. They saw that unbelievers showed no interest in the truths which were so precious to them, and therefore their attention was directed to those who loved the Advent faith, and they labored ardently for them. This, evidently, was in the order of God. p. 2, par. 4, [NUM9].

Heman Churchill, of Stowe, Vt., the one here mentioned, had not been engaged in the Advent movement of 1844. He had married, after this, a daughter of Sister Benson, a '44 Adventist. I remember him well as he came to Waterbury, Vt., and attended meeting in my father's house, where a few met from time to time. They were quite surprised at first that one who had been an unbeliever should manifest an interest in the Advent doctrine. p. 2, par. 5, [NUM9].

He was not repulsed but welcomed. He was earnest and zealous; and as they discerned in him sincerity, they accepted him as a true convert. I cannot remember the exact date when he commenced to seek God, though I recollect clearly his attending meetings in Waterbury, Vt. But we know from this letter to Elder Bates that it was previous to the meeting held in the fall of 1850; for he was then at the meeting referred to in Waitsfield, Vt., as a believer. Brother Bates calls him "Brother." His conversion was noised abroad quite extensively. p. 2, par. 6, [NUM9].

Now if our opponents were correct in their statements that the believers held to a shut door which entirely excluded all except old Adventists, how could Heman Churchill have been received as a true convert? This is positive evidence that their assertions are untrue. There is not an instance which can be found in the early history of this cause where anyone manifesting sincerity in seeking God was ever repulsed. They were most glad of any evidence that such desired the blessing of God. p. 3, par. 1, [NUM9].

In a letter recently received from Brother Ira Abbey, of North Brookfield, N.Y., whose name is signed to the statement at the close of this article, I take the liberty of making the following extract: p. 3, par. 2, [NUM9].

"After the time passed I was a strong shut door believer. But when the third angels' message was preached, I, with my wife, embraced it. Between 1846 and 1850 Brother and Sister White came to our house, and were very zealous for the children and those that had not rejected the truth. They labored for unconverted souls, and never do I remember of hearing Sister White say that there were no hopes of the unconverted; but there were hopes of the backsliders and those that had not rejected the truth." p. 3, par. 3, [NUM9].

This is an extract from a private letter and was not written for publication; but the testimony is so clear we venture to insert it. p. 3, par. 4, [NUM9].

We next present an extract from a statement written by Marion C. Truesdail, and signed by herself and five others: p. 3, par. 5, [NUM9].

"During Miss Harmon's (now Mrs. White) visit to Paris, Me., in the summer of 1845, I stated to her the particulars of a dear friend of mine whose father had prevented her attending our meetings; consequently she had not rejected light. She smilingly replied, 'God never has shown me that there is no salvation for such persons. It is only those who have had the light of truth presented to them and knowingly rejected it.' Miss

Harmon's reply coincided with my idea of a shut door, and in justice no other could be derived from it." p. 3, par. 6, [NUM9].

The fact here presented is certainly a decisive one as to the nature of the shut door in which they believed, even as early as 1845. p. 3, par. 7, [NUM9].

We now present a very explicit and comprehensive statement covering this whole shut door experience, of believers in the third angel's message previous to the year 1851. There are a goodly number of living witnesses who embraced the truth at that early date, who *know* whether these statements are true or not. Why should not their testimony be considered in this connection? We have obtained the signatures of quite a number, all of whom embraced the truth as early as 1850, and all were in the '44 movement: p. 4, par. 1, [NUM9].

"We the undersigned, having been well acquainted with the Advent movement in 1844 at the passing of the time, and having also embraced the truths of the third angel's message as early as 1850, hereby cheerfully subscribe our names to the following statement concerning the shut door doctrine held by believers in the third angel's message from the time of its rise to the last mentioned date, and onward. p. 4, par. 2, [NUM9].

"They believed, in harmony with Rev. 8:7, 8, and other scriptures, that at the close of the 2300 days of Dan. 8:14 Christ closed His work in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and changed His ministration to the most holy, and entered upon the work of the judgment, changing His relation in this respect to the plan of salvation. Here was a door opened and a door shut. p. 4, par. 3, [NUM9].

"They believed that those who had the clear light upon the first angel's message and turned against it, bitterly opposing it, were rejected of God. But they did *not* believe that those who had not had the light or those who had not come to years of accountability previous to 1844, if they should seek God with honest hearts, would be rejected. p. 4, par. 4, [NUM9].

"While they believed with William Miller and the great mass of Adventists *immediately* after the passing of the time, that their work for the world was done, and that the Lord would come *very* soon, yet after the light upon the sanctuary and the third message explained their disappointment, they did *not* believe that mercy was past save for those who had rejected the light." p. 4, par. 5, [NUM9].

**J. B. Sweet, South Saginaw, Mich.
Samuel Martin, West Ridge, N.H.
Ira Abbey, North Brookfield, N.Y.
Mrs. R. B. Abbey, North Brookfield, N.Y.
Mrs. Diana Abbey, North Brookfield, N.Y.
Mrs. L. B. Abbey, North Brookfield, N.Y.
Herman S. Gurney, Memphis, Mich.
Ann E. Gurney, Memphis, Mich.
Wm. Gifford, Memphis, Mich.
Mrs. Mary S. Chase, Battle Creek, Mich.
Mrs. S. M. Howland, Battle Creek, Mich.
Mrs. F. H. Lunt, Battle Creek, Mich.
Mrs. Melora A. Ashley, Battle Creek, Mich.
Mrs. Caroline A. Dodge, Battle Creek, Mich.
Mrs. Sarah B. Whipple, Battle Creek, Mich.
Mrs. Uriah Smith, Battle Creek, Mich.
Mrs. Paulina R. Heligass, Moline, Kan.
R. G. Lockwood, St. Helena, Calif.
Mrs. R. G. Lockwood, St. Helena, Calif.
Ruben Loveland, North Hyde Park, Vt.
Mrs. Belinda Loveland, North Hyde Park, Vt. p. 4, par. 6, [NUM9].**

Here is an argument which it will be hard to answer--more than a score of living witnesses testifying clearly and emphatically to what they *know* concerning the shut door doctrine. On the other hand, our opponents who raise such a hue and cry about the shut door had no practical knowledge of the matter. They were not in the movement themselves, and they have obtained at second hand what knowledge they have concerning it, while the witnesses we have quoted were actors in the message, and know whereof they affirm. We have demonstrated beyond all question that our opponents accuse the early believers falsely when they say they taught there was no salvation save for those who were Advent believers previous to 1844.--G. I. B. p. 5, par. 1, [NUM9].