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**THE ROLE OF DIVINE AGENCIES IN
ADVENTIST EDUCATION:
AN ELLEN G. WHITE PERSPECTIVE**

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*Heaven is a school; its field of study, the universe; its teacher, the Infinite One.
A branch of this school was established in Eden; and, the plan of redemption
accomplished, education will again be taken up in the Eden school.
Ed p.301*

Introduction

The Lord Himself directed the education of Israel. His care was not restricted to their religious interest, but whatever affected their mental or physical well-being was also the subject of divine providence, and came within the sphere of divine directive.

Seventh-day Adventist education rests upon a foundation of divine will and by divine decree addresses itself to a task unexcelled for importance and difficulty; for the task of Adventist education is to help restore the image of God in man. It must be recognized that a work of so great importance requires that all persons relating to it (church members, administrators, pastors, school personnel, parents, and children) understand well the supernatural-divine guidance concerning Seventh-day Adventist education as presented to the church by God, through Ellen G. White. The supernatural-divine agencies, (guidance through God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and angels), endowed us richly with everything essential to our perfection and endeavor in Seventh-day Adventist education. Through this study, the author recognized that these advantages are frequently not acknowledged. We tend to overlook our privileges and opportunities, and fail to co-operate with the heavenly intelligences, and thus fail to become noble, intelligent workers for God.

Seventh-day Adventists are inclined to resort to human strategies and intellectual formality, but these fail to impart courage and hope, to inspire thought, to quicken energy, and to impart such life that the home, school, and church need to become a living, growing power for good.

The purpose of this essay was to identify the observations in the writing of Ellen G. White on the role of divine agencies, that is, angels in Adventist Education. With this orientation, hopefully, each of us will be better able to integrate faith and learning in one's work place and would be better positioned to make changes concerning the education of one's children and youth and how one may support efficiently the SDA education and education related activities.

In writing this essay, the author wished to present a compilation of quotations on the role and function of God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and angels in S. D. A. education, keeping them as simple and compact as possible. But in an essay of twenty pages, it is almost impossible to bring them together in one list. Thus, the author has limited them to the description of the role and function of angels in S. D. A. education.

In assembling this material, there has been no attempt to select passages to support preconceived views held by the author. Rather a sincere and honest effort has been made

to let the writer propound her views, leaving them somewhat loose in form. This is accomplished by drawing from several of her publications.

The work of the author has been restricted to the selection of the materials, and summaries of them, the placing these in what seemed to be a logical sequence, and supplying of the headings. If there are passages that seem ambiguous, or if there appear to be alternative understandings, the author encourages the reader to refer to the original sources for complete context.

That this essay may help the reader to a better understanding of and appreciation for the role and purpose of the divine agency, angels, in Seventh-day Adventist education and in response so position himself that angels may work uninhibitedly through him to accomplish heaven's purpose through Seventh-day Adventist education is the most sincere wish of the author.

Where the English language is used, four volumes on S. D. A. education are available. They are Education, Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students, Counsels on Education, and Fundamentals of Christian Education.

In Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao, and Japan, only the book Education is available in their local languages. Because of this, the Seventh-day Adventists in Hong Kong, Macao, and Japan have not been exposed to sufficient educational guidance through becoming acquainted with divine will concerning education as revealed by God through Ellen G. White. Consequently, support from many of the constituent members is limited. In order to extend the understanding of divine directions to Christian education and in order to bring about participative opportunities and generate better support on the part of people for Christian education, the five hundred selected statements compiled on the role and function of divine agencies in Adventist education in four groups, God the Father, Christ the Son, the Holy Spirit, and angels will be available in their local languages.

The Source And Authority of S. D. A. Educational Information: Internal Criticism

Mrs. Ellen G. White is a widely read author in the fields of education, religion, and health. The soundness of her counsel in the area of education, religion, nutrition, as well as in other fields, has already been proven. The denomination gives Mrs. White credit for the form of its educational system as well as other church activities. Officials and leaders shape educational policies according to her teachings. Educators look to her writings for principles of teaching, discipline and management. The laity is taught to accept her statements about schools and education. In short, the denomination considers her the supreme earthly authority on the subject of Christian education in these areas where she made pronouncements.

W. A. Spicer (1937), former president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, writing as General Field Secretary in 1937, speaks with authority about the place of Mrs. Ellen G. White's counsel as follows;

You could no more account for this work if you set aside that gift that you could explain the exodus movement if you separated Moses and all his work and instruction from it. The Spirit of Prophecy is interwoven with everything in this advent movement.

How did we get into this system of Christian education that is distinctive in all the world, and that has brought such fruitage in training workers for gospel service? You know how we were led into this thing. You know the years in which that gift of the Spirit of Prophecy continually warned us and exhorted us and drew us and marked the way for us to follow. All through these books by the Spirit of Prophecy the true educational idea is emphasized. p. 79

Further evidence of the importance of Mrs. White's teachings on education is found in the custom of denominational educators who in their educational functions rely exclusively on White as their recognized leader and authority. For example, attention is called to a brochure, The Balanced Education (1976) which was issued to help churches design the most efficient, effective and economical schools and colleges possible, on the basis of the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. In this brochure Ellen G. White is quoted extensively. The other authority used to substantiate the author's views is the Scriptures.

The Source And Authority of S. D. A. Educational Information: External Criticism

Non-Seventh-day Adventist leaders in education and others have also acclaimed the value of the counsel given through Ellen G. White. Quotations from such leaders which follow have been taken from Nelson and Manalaysay (1971), The Gist of Christian Education.

Recently the book Education Ellen G. White has been brought to my attention. Written at the turn of the century (1903), this volume was more than fifty years ahead of its time. And I was surprised to learn that it was written by a woman with but three years of schooling.

The breadth and depth of its philosophy amazed me. Its concept of balanced education, harmonious development, and of thinking and acting on principle are advanced educational concepts. . . .

Mrs. White was concerned with the whole learner – the harmonious development of mental, physical, and spiritual powers. . .

I am not surprised that members of the Seventh-day Adventist church hold the writings of Mrs. White in great respect and make them central in developing the educational programs in their schools. p. 4

The book Education was, in the year 1912, published by the Minister of Education of Serbia. His name was Paja R. Radosavlyevish. He held degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Master and Doctor of Pedagogy, and was a graduate of Columbia University. He published the book Education in the Serbrian language while he was serving as Minister of Education of his

country. His name appears on the title page. He signed a foreword to the book, stating the need and he was pleased to fulfill this need. From that point on, the book is Education from first to last. p. 4

A copy of the book Education was sent to the Danish Minister of Education who, having read it, considered it so remarkable that he ordered several more copies for the members of his department. Our teachers are missionary-minded and one American diplomat asked to enter his two boys into our College at Vejleford because it is a school recommended by the Danish Minister of Education. p. 4

A courageous colporteur called on the Minister of Education of Japan's Kanagawa Prefecture and sold him a copy of the book Education in Japanese. Weeks later the same colporteur returned to the spacious Yokohama office of the same official. When he opened the door, the secretary exclaimed, "You're just the man the Minister was looking for!" He was quickly ushered into the inner office to be cordially welcomed by that official.

"Say, friend," began the Minister, "I've been hoping for days that you'd drop in again. I've been amazed at the book Education that you sold me. I've read every word of it. Can you tell me if there's any school in Japan where they are actually carrying out the plan delineated by Mrs. White?"

"Sure," answered the surprised colporteur. "There's one right across Tokyo Bay from Yokohama."

"Do you suppose you could arrange for the President of that institution to come over and give a lecture to my public school principals?"

And a few days later Dr. Yamagata, the President of Japan Missionary College was delivering a lecture to the Kanagawa principals on the Adventist Program of education! When finished, many in the audience gathered around him, asking questions. Among the questions was this strange one from the Minister of Education himself:

"Could you please come once more and repeat this lecture?" Noting Dr. Yamagata's puzzlement, the Minister quickly added, "Today's audience is composed of hundreds of our public school principals. And they want their Executive officers – their vice-principals – to hear the same lecture. They are the men who direct the day-to-day operation."

So a few day later, Dr. Yamagata was back at that spacious Auditorium, repeating the same lecture on Adventist education to a double audience, for the principals themselves came back to listen again to the startling program delineated in the book Education! p. 4

Definition

Supernatural-Divine Involvement The expression refers to the role of the Deity in initiating S. D. A. education and the continuing involvement of the Deity and the angels in shaping and making possible S. D. A. education. This expression also refers to the role of the Deity in assuring that heaven's purpose for S. D. A. education in the day-by-day activities is realized.

The Role of Divine Agencies in Adventist Education

Angels are waiting to co-operate in every department of the work.

This has been presented to me again and again. Ed p.57

Ellen G. White, in her writings, often calls angels, *His angels* (4SG p.67), *heavenly angels* (AA p.231), *angels of heaven* (4T p.432), *holy angels* (6T p.161), *angels of God* (CT p.160), *heavenly messengers*, and *His messengers* (Ed p.21).

As she delineates the role and function of angels, the followings seem to be within the scope of her concerns in which the reader will find how to invite angels.

1. Angels in Educational work
2. Angels and Education from Adam's time to Today
3. Angels and Home Education
4. Angels in schools and School Rooms
5. Angels and Student
6. Angels and Teachers
7. Angels by Our Side
8. Angels as Companions
9. Definitive Tasks of Angels

I. Angels in Educational Work

The angels are to supervise and, often times, work through human agencies (CT p.57, Ed p.271). They work to set before the world an example that will honor God and bear the mark of divine excellence in operating Adventist educational institutions and their departments at this time, as wickedness in the world becomes more pronounced, and teaching of evil are more fully developed and widely accepted (CT p.57). As we seek this education, angels of God are our companions; when the enemy comes in and lifts up a standard for us against him (CT p.388). Ellen G. White's advice extends to Adventist primary schools through older students in the university (Ed p.271), of that character that angels of God can walk through the school room and love to linger (CT p.93-94, 170). When she mentions, "to gain high education," this means, often times, "to become a partaker of the divine nature," copying the life and character of Christ so that we shall stand on vantage ground as we fight the battle of life. As we seek this education, angels of God are our companions. (CT p.388)

She states that this is thought by many to be impossible, but says, "*be determined that you will make the school a success!*" Every school should begin with this, and work most earnestly to preserve the spirit of Christ in temper, in communications, in instruction (CT p.170), and the development of **intellectual and moral power** that will cause even

angels to rejoice, and God will joy over the school personnel with singing (CT p.103). Ellen G. White emphasizes the importance of this by saying, as a means of education “what university course can equal this?” (Ed. P.271)

May I suggest that this is the purpose of the seminar of integration of faith and learning and Christ in the classroom?

Christ is the leader, His workplace is the world, and those served are human beings. Who takes the initiative for the Adventist Education? Ellen G. White suggests that all of our people—**teachers, ministers, teachers and managers** (6T p.161) and **lay members (parents)** who engage in educational ministry are God’s helping hand. They are co-workers with the angels; rather, they are the human agencies through whom the angels accomplish their mission (Ed p.271). Angels speak through their voices, and work by their hands. And the human workers, co-operating with education. Those served are the students. She calls them “God’s property.” (CT pp. 93-94) and, further, one earnest, conscientious, faithful young man in school is an inestimable treasure. (4T p.432)

II. Angeles and Education from Adam’s Time to Today

Ellen G. White describes the works of angels from Adam’s time to today. There appear many figures with whom angels are associated in her writings. Here, I would like to briefly highlight their work. Adam and Eve prized the society of the Son of God and the heavenly angels (SR pp.29-30) and the Son of God and the angels personally directed their education (Ed. P.21). Adam and Eve used their portion of time in dressing the garden, listening to the instructions. They were taught about the rebellion and fall of Satan. They were taught about the plan of salvation. They enjoyed their happy meditation. (3SG p.39) Angels took part in the instruction of Moses, Aaron (3SG p.196), and the people of Israel (4aSG p.67). Angels opened to John the Baptist the prophecies and promises of Christ, but no miraculous deliverance was granted to John (DA p.2124). Angels enlightened the minds of the Bereans, Luther, and William Miller in their search for the truth. (AA p.231, SR p.340, EW p.229) Ministers and church members are attended by heavenly angels and are taught how to use their talents and to increase their faith. (GW p.184, 200, DA p.70)

III. Angels and Home Education

For those who accepted Christ’s teaching

Ellen G. White repeats the importance of home education over and over again. Those who accepted Christ’s teaching are under the guardian care of angels (FE p.177). For those who are willing to be taught, who meditate, and who try to become acquainted with divine things, angels are round about (GC p.600) to strengthen, to enlighten, so that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul and bring to their remembrance the very truths which are needed. (see James 1:5-8)

For fathers and mothers

For fathers and mothers who hold babies in their arms (TE p.290) and who desire to be watchful and prayerful home missionaries, who desire to keep the atmosphere of the home free from the influence of unkind and hasty speech, (4T pp.139-140, CT p.160) the

angels of God look with intense interest upon them (AH p.315) and can come in and bless and give success to the efforts put forth.

For parents who remember their childhood years and are young in their feelings and bring their minds down to understand the wants of their children (1T p.388), the angels will be strong helpers. For parents who try to be priest and teacher, co-operating with them by doing their part (MH p.394), both in the church and in own home, the angels will be strong helpers (CG pp.548-549).

IV. Angels in Schools and School Rooms

A frequent appearance of such expressions as “angels of God pass through school rooms and school ground” is encouraging. Angels pass through rooms and they are led to linger in the rooms of students who are kept neat and clean (6T p.171).

Angels on the school ground of Avondale College

“There were more than visible spectators on the ground. Satan and his angels were there, making impressions on human minds. Angels of God, who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, were also present, not to approve, but disapprove.” (CT p.350)

V. Angels and Teachers/Students/Parents

In Ellen G. White writings, the importance of deep concern for interpersonal relationships among parents, teachers, and students is frequently seen. When every teacher shall forgets self and feel a deep interest in the success and prosperity of his pupils, then we shall have a school in which angels will love to linger (CT pp.93-94). Those angels of God will co-operate with the faithful instructors, the parents and teachers (5T p.324) who give wise instruction in a calm and decided manner (Ed pp.148-149, FE p.420)

In her description, one earnest, conscientious, faithful young man in school is an inestimable treasure (4T p.432). Many students apply their God given talents to unsanctified, unholy purposes (MYP p.165), but they will be sober-minded, if they realize that God’s eye is upon them and that angels of God are watching the development of character. (FE p.245)

In Ellen G. White’s writings, the expression, “intellectual and moral power” and “priests and teachers” appears occasionally. If students will heed the instruction given in the word of God, they can go forth with a development of *intellectual and moral power that will cause even angels to rejoice.* (CT p.103)

Teachers and Managers

Ellen G. White delineates beautifully the unity of teachers and managers. When every teacher and manager study what it is essential for them to do in order to work in His lines, and carry with them a sense of pardon, comfort, and hope (6T p.161), and seek with all heart to bring true principles into the work of education (FE p.519), angels of God will be present, come to their side to help them, converse with them and strengthen them.

VI. Angels by Our Side

When we search the word of God (MYP p.257), angels are by our side and draw near (DA p.70), to strengthen our mind, to elevate and refine our character, and help us become more like our Saviour by reflecting bright beams of light upon its sacred pages (CSW p.22).

Angels guard us from confusion, perplexity, and the deception around us (SD p.110, 4BC p.1145). As we turn our attention to the beautiful and grand in nature (DA p.70), our affections go out after God. While the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming contact with the Infinite through His works, angels of God will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from satanic deception. (4BC p.1145)

VII. Angels and Teachers

Teachers who are with God in prayer before they engage in their daily work (CT p.196), who bring true principles in to the work of education (FE p.519) and who work circumspectly (FE p.430), the angels of God would go with them into the schoolroom (CT p.196)

For teachers, helping the erring students

“Let Christ’s methods be followed in dealing with those who make mistakes. Unwise actions, the manifestation of undue severity on the part of the teacher, may thrust a student upon Satan’s battleground..... A Christlike nature is not selfish, unsympathetic, cold. It enters into the feelings of those who are tempted and helps the one who has fallen to make the trial a stepping-stone to higher things. The Christian teacher will pray for and with an erring student, but he will not get angry with him. He will not speak sharply to the wrongdoer, thus discouraging a soul who is struggling with the powers of darkness. He will let his heart ascend to God for help, and angels will come to his side to help him in lifting up the standard against the enemy; thus instead of cutting off the erring one from help, he will be enabled to gain a soul for Christ.” CT p.266

VIII. Definitive Task of Angels

“The parents and teachers who by wise instruction, in a calm, decided manner, accustom children to think of and care for others, will help them to overcome their selfishness and will close the door against many temptations. *Angels are not commissioned to do this work themselves; but they will give strength and efficiency to those who, in the fear of God, seek to train the young to a life of usefulness.*” (Ed pp. 148-149)

How To Invite Angels

*As Ellen G. White delineates the role and function of angels,
The followings seem to be within the scope of her concerns
in which reader will find how to invite angels.*

WE CAN INVITE ANGELS:

OPERATION OF SCHOOLS

1. As we seek to set before the world an example that will honor God and bear the mark of divine excellence in operating Adventist educational institutions.
2. As we are determined that we will make the school a success, earnestly preserving the spirit of Christ in temper, in communications, in instruction.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

3. As we are in our search for the truth, angels enlighten our minds. Ministers and church members are attended by heavenly angels and are taught how to use their talents and to increase their faith.
4. As we are willing to be taught, meditate, and try to become acquainted with divine things.

HOME EDUCATION

5. As fathers and mothers desire to be watchful and prayerful home missionaries who desire to keep the atmosphere of the home free from the influence of unkind and hasty speech.

HOME EDUCATION /PARENTS' ATTITUDES

6. As parents who remember their childhood years and are young in their feelings and bring their minds down to understand the wants of their children.

CLASSROOMS

7. As the classrooms are kept neat and clean.

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES

8. As every teacher shall forgets self and feel a deep interest in the success and prosperity of his pupils.
9. As the faithful instructors, the parents and teachers give wise instruction in a calm and decided manner to their children and the youth.

STUDENT

10. As the students heed the instruction given in the word of God.

AESTHETICS

11. As we turn our attention to the beautiful and grand in nature, and as our affections go out after God and while the spirit is awed.

TEACHERS' AND MANAGERS' ATTITUDES

12. As every teacher and manager study what it is essential for them to do in order to work in His lines, and carry with them a sense of pardon, comfort, and hop, and seek with all heart to bring true principles into the work of education

PRAYER BEFORE WORK

13. As teachers who are with God in prayer before they engage in their daily work and who bring true principles in to the work of education and who work circumspectly.

PRAYER FOR ERRING STUDENTS

14. As the Christian teacher prays for and with an erring student, but he does not get angry with him. As the teacher does not speak sharply to the wrongdoer, thus discouraging a soul who is struggling with the powers of darkness.

TRAINING THE YOUNG

15. As the teachers and parents by wise instruction, in a calm, decided manner accustom children to think of and care for others and seek train the young to a life of usefulness.

Conclusions

There is great personal value in reading extensive concentrations of statements by Ellen G. White, on the role of the divine agencies in S. D. A. education. How encouraging that as we **“be determined that we will make the school a success!,”** we are taught that we are not alone. Angels are willing to come to our side to converse with us and extend their helping hands in operation of our schools and in our classrooms to preserve the spirit of Christ in temper, in communication, in instruction and in the development of **intellectual and moral power** that will cause even angels to rejoice, and “God will joy over the school personnel with singing.” (CT p.103)

This is the purpose of the integration of faith and learning and Christ in the classroom. May I suggest to the readers to solicit the presence of angels to co-operate with the heavenly intelligences and thus become noble, intelligent workers for God. By doing so, we will be able to impart courage and hope, to inspire thought, to quicken energy, and to impart such life that the home, school, and church need to become a living, growing power for good.

While many schools suffer because of the lack of financial power and adequate human power, there is no reason for us not co-operating with God’s angels to draw the divine resources to make our school a success.

We have no room to resort to human strategies and intellectual formality only which tend to fail to impart courage and hope, to inspire thought, to quicken energy, and to impart such life that the home, school, and church need to become a living, growing power for good.

As a project of the Northern Asia Pacific Division Education Department and the Korean Union Conference Education Department, an amplified book on “The Divine Dynamics in Adventist Education” has been translated into Korean and has been circulated to the teachers at the Pan Korean Teacher’s Convention held in the summer, 2001. The same book will be published in Chinese and Japanese and will be circulated at the Chinese Union Mission and Japan Union Conference Teachers’ convention in the year 2002 and 2003, respectively.

The publication will be used, also, for parents who send their children and youth to Adventist Schools and, especially, for the parents who send their children and youth to public schools. The three union education departments and the Northern Asia Pacific Division Education Department have special plans to use this publication in their local curriculum.

For

***“Angels are waiting to co-operate in every department of the work.
This has been presented to me again and again.”***

Ed p.57

May I close this essay by an inspired words of Ellen G. White? “Not until the providences of God are seen in the light of eternity shall we understand what we owed to the care and interposition of His angels. Celestial beings have taken an active part in the affairs of men. Though the rulers of this world know it not, yet often in their councils, angels have been spokesmen. Human eyes have looked upon them. Human ears have listened to their appeals. In the council hall and the court of justice, heavenly messengers have pleaded the causes of the persecuted and oppressed. They have defeated purposes and arrested evils that would have brought wrong and suffering to God’s children. To the students in the heavenly school, all this will be unfolded”. Ed pp. 304-305

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