

Appendix 4

Ellen G. White's Uses of Heb 6:19-20

Introduction

Below I document three motifs from Heb 6:19-20 as they are used in the writings of Ellen G. White. These are "anchor" (eight times), "veil" ("vail" is an older spelling of this word) (eight times), and "Forerunner" (or "fore-runner") (used five times but only together with "veil"). In groups of two we have "anchor" and "veil" (or "vail") together (four times) and "veil" and "Fore-runner" (or "fore-runner") (five times). Two quotations bring together all three terms "anchor," "veil," and "Forerunner." I also include two quotations using "the holiest"--together with "veil" (once) and alone (once).

It is not equally clear in all cases that Ellen White has the present passage in mind as she writes, especially where "veil" appears alone.¹ The link to our passage in such cases is provided by words such as "enter" or "beyond" (not used in Heb 6:19 but "beyond the veil" is clearly reminiscent of it). These are not key terms in themselves but serve as a catalyst for our understanding of others. The above combinations of terms must occur within some unit of text to be countable. The unit I have chosen to count is the paragraph. This is an arbitrary cutoff point but there must be one in order to proceed.

References to "Melchisedec" (the KJV spelling) are omitted here, as are the many references to Christ being our "high priest." Both of these terms figure prominently in Heb 6:20 but occur so frequently elsewhere that finding them does not tell us anything about the source of the thought. All terms are cited as they appear in the King James Version because that is the one Ellen White used most frequently.² To the best of my knowledge what follows is a comprehensive list.

Listing of Passages

Abbreviations for documents cited below are as follows: BC = *SDA Bible Commentary*; COL = *Christ's Object Lessons*; EW = *Early Writings*; GC = *Great Controversy*; RH = *Review and Herald*; T = *Testimonies for the Church*. Sources are cited alphabetically rather than chronologically.

Anchor

1. In the keenest sorrow they had "strong consolation," a hope which was as "an **anchor** of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Hebrews 6:18, 19. They had been witness to the wisdom and power of God, and they were "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height,

nor depth, nor any other creature," would be able to separate them from "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "In all these things," they said, "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Romans 8:38, 39, 37. (GC 350)

2. Its strong principles will prove an **anchor**. Those who are teachers of the word should be patterns of piety, ensamples to the flock. (1RH 522; May 12, 1885)
3. If your mind is stayed upon God, you will not go from a state of ecstasy to the valley of despondency when trial and temptation come upon you. You will not talk doubt and gloom to others. You will not say, "I do not know about this or that. I do not feel happy. I am not sure that we have the truth." You will not do this, for you will have an **anchor** to the soul both sure and steadfast. (2RH 487; May 19, 1891)
4. Thus they enter the wilderness of unbelief, and make shipwreck of the faith. The truth as it is in Jesus, in its simplicity, would have proved an **anchor** to them; but they have broken away from the stronghold, and drifted about, beaten by the winds and waves of unbelief. (3RH 426; December 29, 1896)
5. Truth as it is in Jesus sets men right, and keeps them so. The truth is an **anchor** to the soul, both sure and steadfast. (4RH 75; August 1, 1899)
6. The life must be hid with Christ in God. The **anchor** of every soul is to be cast into the Rock cleft for us, that Rock which bears up a ruined world. Let us keep these things in our minds. (4RH 216; September 4, 1900)
7. You will not say, "I do not know about this or that. I do not feel happy. I am not sure that we have the truth." You will not do this, for you will have an **anchor** to the soul both sure and steadfast. When we talk discouragement and gloom, Satan listens with fiendish joy; for it pleases him to know that he has brought you into his bondage. (6RH 317; February 27, 1913)
8. The only safety now is to search for the truth as revealed in the word of God, as for hid treasure. The subjects of the Sabbath, the nature of man, and the testimony of Jesus are the great and important truths to be understood; these will prove as an **anchor** to hold God's people in these perilous times. But the mass of mankind despise the truths of God's word and prefer fables. (1T 300)

Veil (vail)

1. By the rending of the **veil** of the temple, God said, I can no longer reveal My presence in the most holy place. A new and living Way, before which there hangs no **veil**, is offered to all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest.
Type had met antitype in the death of God's Son. The Lamb of God had been offered as a sacrifice. It was as if a voice had said to the worshippers, "There is now an end to all sacrifices and offerings." (5BC 1109)
2. Our faith must pierce beyond the **veil**, seeing things that are invisible. No one else can look for you. You must behold for yourself. In the place of murmuring for

blessings that are withheld, let us remember and appreciate the blessings already bestowed. (7BC 930)

3. The Holy Spirit will take the things of God and show them unto you, conveying them as a living power into the obedient heart. Christ will lead you to the threshold of the Infinite. You may behold the glory beyond the **veil**, and reveal to men the sufficiency of Him who ever liveth to make intercession for us. (COL 149)
4. True faith lays hold of and claims the promised blessing before it is realized and felt. We must send up our petitions in faith within the second **veil** and let our faith take hold of the promised blessing and claim it as ours. (EW 72)
5. The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the first apartment of the sanctuary, "within the **veil**" which formed the door and separated the holy place from the outer court, represents the work of ministration upon which Christ, entered at His ascension. It was the work of the priest in the daily ministration to present before God the blood of the sin offering, also the incense which ascended with the prayers of Israel. So did Christ plead His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners, and present before Him also, with the precious fragrance of His own righteousness, the prayers of penitent believers. Such was the work of ministration in the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven. (GC 420)
6. When we in humility tell the Lord our wants, the Spirit itself makes intercession for us; as our sense of need causes us to lay bare our souls before the all-searching eye of Omnipotence, our earnest, fervent prayers enter within the **veil**, our faith claims the promises of God, and help comes to us in answer to prayer. (1RH 360; July 24, 1883)
7. Our faith must reach within the **veil**, where Jesus has entered for us. We must lay hold with firmer grasp on the unfailing promises of God. (2RH 256; October 23, 1888)
8. They will be yearning for purity, for light, for love, for all the graces of heavenly birth. Their earnest prayers will enter into that within the **veil**. This class will have a sanctified boldness to come into the presence of the Infinite One. They will feel that heaven's light and glories are for them, and they will become refined, elevated, ennobled by this intimate acquaintance with God. Such is the privilege of true Christians. (5T 112-13)

Anchor, veil

1. The Christian's hope is an **anchor** to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entereth into that which is within the **veil**, whither Christ the forerunner is for us entered. We have an individual work to do to prepare for the great events that are before us. (MYP 89)
2. If we are firmly fixed upon the present truth, and have our hope, like an **anchor** of the soul, cast within the second **veil**, the various winds of false doctrine and error cannot move us. (1RH 11)
3. Our hope of salvation is an **anchor** to the soul, both sure and steadfast, when it entereth into that which is within the **veil**. Anchored in Christ, the soul, like a ship driven, is immovable. (3RH 365; June 9, 1896)

4. That which brings sickness of body and mind to nearly all is dissatisfied feelings and discontented repinings. They have not God, they have not the hope which reaches to that within the **veil**, which is as an **anchor** to the soul both sure and steadfast. All who possess this hope will purify themselves even as He is pure. (1T 566)

Veil, Forerunner (fore-runner)

1. Yes, He beholds His people in this world, which is a persecuting world, and all seared and marred with the curse, and [He] knows that they need all the divine resources of His sympathy and His love. Our **Forerunner** hath for us entered within the **veil**, and yet by the golden chain of love and truth, He is linked with His people in closest sympathy. (7BC 948)
2. The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. We must by faith enter within the **veil**, "whither the **Forerunner** is for us entered." Hebrews 6:20. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption. (GC 489)
3. Yes, he behold his people in this world, which is a persecuting world, and all seared and marred with the curse, and knows that they need all the divine resources of his sympathy and his love. Our **fore-runner** hath for us entered within the **vail**, and yet by the golden chain of love and truth, he is linked with his people in closest sympathy. (3RH 74; August 15, 1893)
4. It is important that we fill aright our position in the world, in society, and in the church; but in order to do this, we must have a firm hold upon righteousness. Our faith must reach within the **veil**, whither our **Forerunner** has for us entered. If we would take hold of the eternal promises of God, we must have a faith that will not be denied, a steadfast, immovable faith that will take hold of the unseen. (4RH 140; January 9, 1900)
5. It is important that we fill aright our position in the world, in society, and in the church; but we can not do this unless we have a firm hold on Heaven. Our faith must reach within the **veil**, whither our **Forerunner** has for us entered. It is possible for us to take hold by faith of the eternal promises of God; but to do this we must have a faith that will not be denied,--a steadfast, immovable faith that will take hold of the unseen. (5RH; April 15, 1909)

Anchor, veil, Forerunner

1. Thither the faith of Christ's disciples followed Him as He ascended from their sight. Here their hopes centered, "which hope we have," said Paul, "as an **anchor** of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the **veil**; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever." "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 6:19, 20; 9:12.

For eighteen centuries this work of ministrations continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. . . . (GC 420-21)⁴

2. Said Jesus: "The Father Himself loveth you." If our faith is fixed upon God, through Christ, it will prove "as an **anchor** of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the **veil**; whither the **Forerunner** is for us entered." It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. (5T 742)

The holiest, veil

1. Through Christ the hidden glory of the holy of holies was to stand revealed. He had suffered death for every man, and by this offering the sons of men were to become the sons of God. With open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, believers in Christ were to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. The mercy seat, upon which the glory of God rested in **the holiest** of all, is opened to all who accept Christ as the propitiation for sin, and through its medium, they are brought into fellowship with God. The **veil** is rent, the partition walls broken down, the handwriting of ordinances canceled. By virtue of His blood the enmity is abolished. Through faith in Christ Jew and Gentile may partake of the living bread. (5BC 1109)

The holiest

1. It is your privilege to experience the completeness of salvation in Christ. Jesus is your only hope. You are to enter into **the holiest** by the blood of Jesus. You are to follow on to know the Lord, whose goings forth are prepared as the morning. (2RH 569; May 17, 1892)

Discussion

From the above it is clear that Ellen White applies Heb 6:19-20 in more than one way. But what does this fact imply? On the one hand, we could say that because she applies the passage to both the first apartment and the second--in those passages where she applies it specifically enough that the question of which apartment she intends becomes an issue (most of the references are more general than that)--it does not matter how we apply it. Or we could say that it does matter but that her critics' position is not the only one available. Arguments similar to these have been used to demonstrate that our position on the sanctuary is at least possible--i.e., it is not impossible--which is hardly a ringing endorsement.

On the other hand, we could ask what positive insights reside in the fact that Ellen White's inspired understanding of this crucial passage allows her to apply it in more than one way. In fact she applies it in three ways--to the first apartment, the second apartment, and more generally, i.e., without reference to apartments.

It is the general references that I find especially interesting. In these she merely draws a spiritual lesson using the language of Heb 6:19-20 without focusing on the when and where of any sanctuary allusions in the passage. This comes very close to my understanding of what the author had in mind originally. But if it is necessary to impose the question, Which part of the sanctuary does Christ minister in first? on the passage--which it was not designed to tell us--then Ellen White has given the correct answer in GC 420-21 and her emphasis is on God's presence pervading the entire sanctuary rather than being limited to any one part of it.

Here we come to the crux of the matter. What makes Ellen White's views on the book of Hebrews controversial is her comments on Heb 6:19-20. And of all the twenty-nine times she uses that passage, the two paragraphs in *Great Controversy*, pp. 420-21 are the only ones anybody would challenge. But here the problem is insuperable because she applies Heb 6:19-20 explicitly and with emphasis to the first apartment. There is no questioning her intent. It is perfectly clear. She applies the author's second apartment imagery to the first apartment. So what do we do with this fact?

In the paper above I have emphasized the metaphorical nature of Heb 6:19-20. If the veil in this passage is the physical distance between heaven and earth, then it is entirely appropriate for Ellen White to apply the passage to Christ's daily ministry in the first apartment. Both apartments of the heavenly sanctuary are in heaven. Both equally lie on the other side of the physical gulf that separates heaven and earth. So if Christ transcends that barrier in order to minister in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, how is any part of that assertion contradictory? In this context what Ellen White wrote in *Great Controversy* pp. 420-21 is correct just as it reads and Ballenger should not have been offended by it.

Two Clarifications

It will be necessary to insert two clarifications before closing the present discussion. First, I do not claim that Ellen White had identically the same understanding of Heb 6:19-20 that I do. And second, on reading her other twenty-seven statements on the same passage, it is clear that she herself did not understand it as one might assume after reading only the above statement in *Great Controversy*.

First clarification

I do not claim that Ellen White's understanding of the passage is identical to mine. She wrote what she did because the Holy Spirit led her to write it. She might not have followed out all the implications as she did so. Or she might have. I do not know. But as we look back and try to bind the pieces together in a systematic exegetical framework that will withstand our critics' attacks, we must explain in some measure why she wrote what she did. This was not the question that occupied her. It is our question after the fact.

It would be possible to imagine some other model in which Ellen White's exegesis of Heb 6:19-20 would be inappropriate or just plain wrong. But my point is that there is a model in which what she says is not wrong but fits perfectly. And it is a model that does more than just explain what she wrote, although it does do at least that. It also accounts for the spiritual meaning of the articles of furniture in the first apartment and in doing so establishes a sanctuary-based theology of witness that is entirely consistent with every article of historic Seventh-day Adventist belief.

Second clarification

I have also argued that what Ellen White writes in the *Great Controversy* passage is consistent with what we read in Heb 6:19-20. But if it were in every way representative of the

author's primary intent, why do we find one or more different interpretations in all her other twenty-seven uses of the passage? If we accept the two paragraphs where her position is embattled, must we then reject the twenty-seven others where it is not? What she writes in *Great Controversy* about the passage in question is appropriate but represents only one aspect of her thinking. We have this on her own authority, as expressed in the quotations listed above.

Conclusion

The student of Ellen White who comes upon one of the above quotations at random can assume with about 93% confidence before reading a word that the interpretation put forward will not have anything to do with the first apartment of the antitypical sanctuary in heaven. Thus, whatever she was saying in GC 420-21, one thing she was not saying is that a first apartment application is the only one available. And yet the way she handled the element of time when adding it became unavoidable is correct. The present model explains these facts and provides a framework for asserting all of them with equal emphasis.

¹This number excludes *Early Writings*, p. 252 ("The **veil** was lifted, and I looked into the holy of holies and saw that the furniture was the same as in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. . . ."). The above statement is referenced in the *Comprehensive Index* but there is no reason why one would have to have Heb 6:19 in mind in order to write it.

²See Hardy, "Ellen White's Use of Bible Versions Other Than King James," *Historicism Supplement/Jul 90*, pp. 1-2.

³In the source it is quoted from this paragraph immediately precedes no. 1 under "Anchor, veil, Forerunner," p. 45 below.

⁴In the source it is quoted from this paragraph immediately follows no. 5 under "Veil (vail)," p. 43 above.

⁵This is reminiscent of *mirmās* in Dan 8:13, where the sanctuary as a whole became a trampling ground. There it was walked on indiscriminately. Here we avoid it altogether or meet on it only to argue.