

# Mr. Faulkhead and the Secret Sign

by Arthur L. White

The story of N. D. Faulkhead of Australia is the story of a man whose life was changed by a personal message he received from God. It is a story he has told and retold, and his name is used with his written permission. The account as we give it here is brought together from the records of Mr. Faulkhead, W. C. White, G. B. Starr, and Mrs. E. G. White, drawing both from her correspondence and diary entries at the time of the incident. MFSS 1.1

Early in the work of Seventh-day Adventists in Australia, Mr. Faulkhead heard and accepted the truths of the third angel's message. He was tall, keen, apt, and an energetic businessman, genial and liberal in his disposition. He was respected by his associates and was deeply loved by his wife and two children. At the time of our study he was a prominent member of the Masonic order. As Mr. Faulkhead became a Seventh-day Adventist he failed to withdraw from the several secret organizations in which he held membership, but became more and more engrossed in their activities. Listing his lodge connections, he states, "I was Master of the Master Masonic Lodge; second, I was first Principal of the Holy Royal of Canada; third, I was Preceptor of the Knight Templars, besides many other minor lodges (five in all), Good Templars, Rechabites, Odd Fellows, etc." MFSS 1.2

Recognizing Mr. Faulkhead's unusual ability, he was early employed as treasurer of our printing house in Melbourne, Australia, the Echo Publishing Company. He served well at first, but as time went by and he became more and more involved in his lodge work, his interests in the work of God began to wane. MFSS 1.3

It was just at this time that Mrs. Ellen G. White, in response to an invitation by the General Conference, visited Australia, reaching there in December, 1891. While on shipboard, en route to Australia, and again a few days after her arrival, during the session of the Australian conference, there was opened to her in comprehensive visions much relating to the work in this newly entered field. These views included the personal experiences of a number of the workers. MFSS 1.4

Prominent among the cases revealed to Mrs. White was that of Mr. Faulkhead and his perilous position. As she was able, she painstakingly wrote out what had been shown to her in regard to his experience in the office and with the lodge. It made a document of fifty pages. When she thought to mail this to him, she was restrained from doing so, for she says, "When I enclosed the communication all ready to mail, it seemed that a voice spoke to me, saying, 'Not yet, not yet. They will not receive it.'" MFSS 1.5

Although several times she felt that she must communicate the message to Mr. Faulkhead and his wife, each time she was restrained, and she told her copyist, Miss Emily Campbell, not to send the communication until Mrs. White herself instructed her to do so. MFSS 1.6

Divinely restrained, for a full twelve months Mrs. White said nothing to anyone except Miss Campbell regarding her view of the matter, but maintained a deep interest in Mr. Faulkhead's spiritual welfare. His associates in the publishing house were very much concerned as they observed through the advancement of time his growing interest in the work of the lodge and his waning spirituality and decreasing concern for the interests of the cause of God. They pleaded with him, urging him to consider the danger of his course of action, pointing out that not only was he wasting his time, but he could not possibly serve two masters. "But," as Mr. Faulkhead states, "my heart was full of those things. In fact, I thought more of them than I did of anything else." MFSS 1.7

He defiantly met the appeals with the bold statement that he would not give up his connection with the Free Masons for all that Starr or White or any other minister might say. He knew what he was about, and he was not going to be taught by them. It was clear to those who had charge

of our work that unless a marked change came in his attitude, he must soon be asked to find other employment. MFSS 2.1

Writing of this experience, Mrs. White says, "None could reach him in regard to Free Masonry. He was fastening himself more and more firmly in the meshes of the enemy. The only thing we could see to be done was to leave him to himself." His condition was shown to her to be "like that of a man about to lose his balance and fall over a precipice." MFSS 2.2

Thus matters went on through the period of weeks and months that Sister White held the messages for him and thought on several occasions to send, but each time was restrained. MFSS 2.3

In December, 1892, Brother Stockton, one of our first Seventh-day Adventist believers in Australia, was talking with Mr. Faulkhead, and failing to reach his heart, spontaneously asked him what he would do if Sister White had a testimony for him in regard to his connection with the lodge. To this he boldly retorted: "Very well; it would have to be a mighty strong statement that would make me believe that the Lord had given her a message for me." MFSS 2.4

Of course, neither man was aware that the whole matter had been opened to her in vision a year before. MFSS 2.5

Regarding his general attitude at that time toward Mrs. White and the Testimonies, Mr. Faulkhead records: MFSS 2.6

"I had great regard for Sister White, but as for the Testimonies, I did not take very much stock in them. I used to enjoy visiting with her and listening to her talk, but when it came to her giving Testimonies, as it was stated she did and had done all along, I was a little skeptical." MFSS 2.7

Shortly after this, on Saturday night, December 10, Mr. Faulkhead dreamed that the Lord had revealed his case to Sister White, and that she had a message for him. This, with his defiant reply to Brother Stockton in regard to his attitude toward a message through Sister White, should there be one, led him to serious thought. It is evident that the Spirit of the Lord was working upon his heart. MFSS 2.8

At the time of this dream Mrs. White was at Ballarat, en route from Adelaide, but on Monday, December 12, she had returned to Melbourne, after a three-month absence, and the next day attended the closing exercises of the first term of the Australian Bible School. This meeting, filling the morning, was well attended by our workers, nearby Adventist families, and the student group. In the afternoon a meeting of the board was called to consider plans for the coming term of the school as well as the larger plans for a school plant to be established in the country. MFSS 2.9

Mr. Faulkhead, as a member of the board, attended the afternoon council meeting. A little after four o'clock the board meeting closed and the chairman, W. C. White, stepped over to Brother Faulkhead and told him that Mrs. White wished to see him before he left. "Certainly," Brother Faulkhead replied, and when he was free he made his way to her room. As he did so his dream of Saturday night, that Sister White had a message for him, came forcibly to his mind. MFSS 3.1

Sister White, who had been resting on the lounge, greeted Brother Faulkhead cordially, and as she did so he was impressed to ask, "Do you have anything for me, Sister White?" MFSS 3.2

She replied that the burden of his case was upon her mind, and that she had a message from the Lord for him and his wife, which she wished them to hear. She called for a meeting in the near future, when she would present the message. To this Brother Faulkhead eagerly inquired, "Cannot you give it to me now?" MFSS 3.3

Although Sister White was just recovering from a long siege of illness and was weary from her journey the day before and from her work that morning, she gave her consent. She went to the stand, opened the drawer and took out a packet of typewritten sheets. She then settled herself in her comfortable chair. She told Brother Faulkhead that several times she had prepared to

send those sheets with their important message to him, but each time she had been forbidden by the Spirit of the Lord to do so, for she was instructed that the time had not fully come that he would accept it. MFSS 3.4

Sister White then read and talked. A part of the fifty pages that were read that evening was general, relating to the work in the Echo Publishing House from its beginning, and the experience of the workers employed there. The major part dealt more particularly with Mr. Faulkhead's experience and his connection not only with the work in the office but also with his affiliation with the Masonic Lodge. MFSS 3.5

She pointed out that his connection with Free Masonry had absorbed his time and blunted his spiritual perception. She read to him of his efforts to maintain high principles, often couching her message in Masonic language. As she described some of the meetings of the secret order, she told him just where she had seen him sitting in the lodge hall, of his conversations with the men, and what he was endeavoring to do with his associates. She clearly described his increasing interest in the work of these organizations and his waning interest in the cause of God. She told of seeing in vision his dropping the small coins from his purse in the Sabbath offering plate and the larger coins into the coffers of the lodge. She heard him addressed as "worshipful master." She read of scenes of drinking that took place, especially after Mr. Faulkhead had left. MFSS 3.6

"I thought this was getting pretty close home," he later wrote, "when she started to talk to me in reference to what I was doing in the lodges." MFSS 3.7

Especially was he impressed when she used secret terms employed in the lodge meetings. Then Mrs. White spoke most earnestly of how his connection with Free Masonry imperiled his religious experience as a Christian, yoking believers unequally with unbelievers, and she warned that unless he severed every tie that bound him to these associations he would lose his soul. She repeated to him words spoken by her guide in reference to these associations, and giving a certain movement that was made by her guide, she said, "I cannot relate all that was given to me." MFSS 3.8

Mr. Faulkhead started in surprise and turned pale. He interrupted Sister White by asking, "Do you know what you have done?" MFSS 4.1

To this she replied that she was not aware of having done anything unusual. But Mr. Faulkhead excitedly told her that she had just made the secret sign known only to the Masons. MFSS 4.2

The two talked on. Again she made a certain movement, which, she later stated, "My attending angel made to me." MFSS 4.3

Again a deadly paleness settled on his countenance. For a second time she had made a secret sign, but this time it was one known only to the highest order of Masons, and one he had just learned a few days before. In fact, only six people in all of Australia knew that particular sign. This secret sign given by Mrs. White no woman could know, for it is held in the strictest secrecy and the encampment is guarded both inside and outside against strangers. MFSS 4.4

"That really put the fear of God into my heart," commented Mr. Faulkhead later, "to see how God worked through you to arrest me from these things." MFSS 4.5

Speaking further of his reaction, he said, "This convinced me that her testimony was from God. I can assure you this caused me to feel very queer. But, as Sister White said, the Spirit of the Lord had come upon me and taken hold of me. She went on talking and reading as if nothing had happened, but I noticed how her face brightened up when I interrupted her again and spoke to her about the sign. She seemed surprised that she had given me such a sign. Immediately the statement that I had made to Brother Stockton, that it would have to be mighty strong before I could believe that she had a message for me from the Lord, flashed through my mind." MFSS 4.6

W. C. White, knowing of his mother's physical weakness, and not too well aware of what had been revealed to his mother in regard to the case, was concerned as hour after hour passed and the interview continued. Finally, he had Miss May Walling, Mrs. White's niece and a nurse, endeavor to terminate the meeting, but Sister White told her that she must not interrupt them, "for a soul was at stake." Then a little later W. C. White himself came in to protest against the prolonged conversation, but Sister White says, "I bade him not to disturb us." The Lord was sustaining her and giving her strength for the task. MFSS 4.7

As for Brother Faulkhead, "it was a life or death question," commented Mrs. White as she recounted the story in a letter to him a few years later. "In the room were good and evil angels striving for the mastery of your mind. This intense struggle continued from one to two hours. Then I saw that an angel of God laid a hand upon your shoulder and your face was lightened up with the glory of God. Your lips could scarcely utter the words, but you said, 'I sever from this night my connection with the Free Masons, although it seems a terrible struggle.' With your eyes raised toward heaven, you said, 'O Lord, I give myself unreservedly to Thee. I turn from the temptation to reach the highest position in the order of Free Masonry. I surrender all to Thee, to become a true Christian.'" MFSS 4.8

More than three hours had now passed. Tears were in Mr. Faulkhead's eyes as he answered Sister White: "I accept every word. All of it belongs to me. I accept the light the Lord has sent me through you. I will act upon it. I am a member of five lodges; three other lodges are under my control; I transact all of their business. Now I shall attend no more of their meetings, and shall close my business relations with them as fast as possible." MFSS 4.9

Then, as he thought of how Sister White had held the message for many months, he told her: "I am so glad you did not send me that testimony, for then it would not have helped me. Your reading the reproof yourself has touched my heart. The Spirit of the Lord has spoken to me through you, and I accept every word you have addressed especially to me, and the general matter also is applicable to me. It all means me. That which you have written in regard to my connection with the Free Masons, I accept....I have just taken the highest order in Free Masonry, but I shall sever my connection with them all....It will take me nine months to wind up my business relations with the three under my control." MFSS 5.1

As Mr. Faulkhead told the story later to his friends and children, he pointed out that Sister White made no attack on the Masonic Lodge. That was not her work. Had she done so, he would not have received the message. The testimony to him pointed out rather that the Christian cannot serve two masters. MFSS 5.2

The hour was late when Mr. Faulkhead left. He took the streetcar to the station and while traveling up Collins Street he passed the lodge hall. It suddenly dawned upon him that he should have been there attending an important lodge meeting that very evening. As he neared the station he saw the train for Preston pulling out, so he was obliged to walk the four miles to his home. He chose an unfrequented road that he might have opportunity for meditation. He enjoyed the walk very much, for a new experience had come to him. MFSS 5.3

He so much wanted to meet Elder Daniells, Elder Starr, and Elder White and tell them that he was a new man and how free and happy he felt in his decision to sever his connection with all secret societies. It seemed to him that a ton of weight had rolled from his shoulders. And to think that the God who rules the universe and guides the planets had seen his danger and sent a message just for him! MFSS 5.4

The next morning found Mr. Faulkhead at the publishing house. Word quickly spread to the group of workers of his experience the night before. Over and over again he recounted with this one and that one how God had sent the message to arrest him from a course of action that would have led him to destruction. MFSS 5.5

As his first work he called in his assistant and dictated his resignation to the various lodges. Then A. G. Daniells, the conference president, came in and Mr. Faulkhead told him of his

experience. While the two were talking, the secretary handed him his letters of resignation to be signed. He signed and enclosed them, and then handed them to Elder Daniells to mail. In telling of it, Mr. Faulkhead says, "How his eyes did sparkle with pleasure to think that the Lord had gained His point at last, and that his prayers had been answered." MFSS 5.6

But no sooner had he given the letters to Elder Daniells than a feeling of mistrust came over him, and he felt that he should have posted the letters himself. Then immediately he thanked the Lord for what he had done, for he felt that he could not have trusted himself to mail the letters. MFSS 5.7

On Thursday, Mr. Faulkhead, accompanied by his wife, had another interview with Mrs. White. Twenty-eight pages of new matter were read to the two of them, and it was all accepted. MFSS 5.8

"I wish you to know," he told Mrs. White, "how I look upon this matter. I regard myself as greatly honored of the Lord. He has seen fit to mention me, and I am not discouraged but encouraged. I shall follow out the light given me of the Lord." MFSS 5.9

The battle was not entirely won, however, with the sending in of the resignations, for his Masonic friends put forth determined efforts to hold him to their society. But he had taken a firm position and stood by it. At times his associates trembled for him, but he was victorious at last. Speaking of this struggle as it continued, Mr. Faulkhead reassuringly declared: MFSS 6.1

"Brethren, I will not give up the conflict. I did not expect that it would be so severe. I thought I could sever my connection easily, but I find it a greater struggle to break the bonds than I had anticipated, but the Lord has honored me greatly in speaking to me through Sister White. He has presented my case to her, and called me by name, and I will heed the instruction from the Lord. Oh, the Lord has engraved my name on the palms of His hands."