William Sutton White, Swedenborgian Publicist

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PART ONE—EDITOR OF THE WICHITA BEACON, 1875-1887, AND PHILOSOPHER EXTRAORDINARY

I. THE FUNERAL

On April 1, 1887, the Wichita Beacon changed hands after almost exactly 11 years under the editorship of William Sutton White. On the following May 27, Captain White was dead—just past the 52d anniversary of his birth. The cause of his passing was described as "inflammation of the bowels," or "gastric fever," preceded, but unknown to most of his friends, by three years of "stomach trouble." Although White's relinquishment of editorship and his death occurred close together, they must be considered separately. The first was an act of personal choice, the latter was not. But in other respects, the two events must necessarily emphasize that they represented not "continuous" but "discrete degrees" of difference.

Political and social differences are often difficult enough to bridge, but cultural conventions being what they are, the rites associated with the death of a religious "heretic" place a community under peculiar strain. And Captain White was so highly regarded in the city and county that no one could have considered any alternative to some accommodation of the religious conventions to what was appropriate to the particular case. The funeral arrangements specified that in case of inclement weather at 4 P. M. Sunday afternoon, May 29, the services would be held in Crawford's Opera House, otherwise in the grove adjoining his, White's, residence on North Market street.

The funeral services were conducted by the Rev. Charles J. Adams, rector of St. John's, according to the ritual of the Protestant Episcopal church. The Episcopal quartet sang the "Cloriat." The Bible reading was the 15th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. The rector explained his position. The wording which is quoted is selected from the summary notes of the Beacon and Eagle reporters:

I come not this afternoon to speak as a minister, but as a friend. I see a lesson has been taught the community. I left the robe behind me at the

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church. I feel like coming out under the trees and talk[ing] as one man would talk to another. [Eagle.] We may have and most likely have differed on many things but under the wings of death we forget our differences. Death! What does it mean? I remember once my departed friend said to me, “there is no such thing as death,” and went on to explain to me how he considered it but transition from one life to another. [Beacon.] . . . the deceased said when near death, “Now on earth, but soon in eternity. Time is only a section of eternity.” [Eagle.]

I see around me many who knew Captain White longer than I did but I knew him intimately during the past year and I knew more of his internal man than you did. He may have passed with many of you as an unbeliever, but I tell you that on God’s green earth there lives no more of a believer than our departed friend. The Trinity was as mighty to him as any of you. Captain White once said to me: “I believe that when I was endowed with the power of thought and action and when I acted with all sincerity God is obliged to respect my individuality.” Intellectually he was one of the profoundest minds. He had a tremendous individuality and showed it on one occasion during the war when, in spite of the objections of his superior officer, he charged with his men and took a battery and so saved the army. He was brave to the core both physically and intellectually.

You may say that the dead man was not orthodox. In the name of the Almighty Father what is orthodoxy? Every individual member of a church has a right to his own opinions [sic] and God is bound to respect it if it be sincere. You nor I have the right to get up and say such and such is the only right belief. We may make mistakes and do make them, but there is always ready the mighty arm of God, outstretched in love, to bring us back into the right way and make us grander men and women. [Beacon.]

Remember what Captain White said of St. Paul. He said: “I consider St. Paul an honest man under all circumstances. Just as honest persecuting Christians as when a Christian himself.” He said there were two great things in the universe to be considered, truth and good. If a man loves you no matter how many mistakes, there shall be a righting in eternity. Our departed friend always said and did what he thought he ought to do. . . . [Eagle.] He may at times have shown a disposition to combat, but I ask you, what is the good of a man who never feels his manliness to urge him to enter the lists for truth? He may have been wrong in some of his arguments but I tell you he was at any rate always honest and no one was more ready to admit himself in the wrong if he was so convinced. [Beacon.]

Now, to glance at the spiritual. There is a mighty seen universe all around us, that is the material, but there is also a mighty unseen or spiritual universe. There are great heights and profundities and breadths of the unseen. I can picture this unseen world very vividly in my imagination and this proves the internal greater than the external man.1 Our departed friend was . . . a staunch believer in God the Father, His son Jesus Christ and God the Holy Ghost. Shortly before his death he said to me, “We have re-

1. The Daily Journal version of Adams’ remarks varied in detail, and was shorter than the others. One paragraph was so different, however, as to require notice, if for no other reason, because, according to the reporter, Adams presented the thought as White’s, but not necessarily as his own:

“There is a seen and an unseen universe. The outside man is nothing in comparison with the inside man; the eternal man is greater than the whole eternal universe. The natural universe is but the garment, the embodiment of the spiritual. When I say this, I have but given [the] idea of our departed friend.”—Daily Journal, May 30, 1887.
versed things in this world. We think first of material things, corner lots and buildings, then when we get sick we send for the priest. We should seek spiritual things at first."

It seems to me very appropriate that these services should be held out here under the trees, where we can hear the song of birds and the chirps of insects; because of all the men I have known—and I have known many—I have never known one so completely a child of nature as our departed friend. Captain White, though he was sometimes sarcastic on the subject, believed thoroughly in organizations for the building up of and improving of humanity.

Now, when we say earth to earth, dust to dust and ashes to ashes, we must remember we are only saying it over the cast off garment of our friend. His spirit still lives and has moved [not to that new home he has built on Riverside, but] to that home prepared for him in the beginning by God the Father. I say emphatically that in the mighty ranks of the redeemed our friend will not take a second place because he did not believe exactly as you and I do. He believed in the gospel of love. God is everywhere, and wherever God is He is representative of infinite love. . . . You ask how you are to be saved. I say to you as our friend was saved, by righteousness. Our friend is gone, and we are now going out to the cemetery to lay away his form, but he lives in spirit. During many years he had devoted the greater part of his time to the building up of our city. Work for its upbuilding and you will be raising a mighty monument to the memory of him who lived grandly and died nobly. [Beacon.]

The service closed with the singing by the quartet of "Nearer My God to Thee." The reporters agreed that this was the largest funeral to date in Wichita and by count, friends in 167 carriages proceeded to the completion of the last rites at the cemetery. 2

II. CHARLES J. ADAMS, RECTOR OF ST. JOHN’S

A circumstance that made this funeral and Rector Adams’ discourse more dramatic than it could have been otherwise was a fact well known to everyone in the audience. The speaker himself was in difficulties about his own unorthodoxy.

On April 15 he began a series of three Sunday evening lectures on the general Easter theme: “Are We Immortal?” Three answers were to be given on three successive Sundays: that of reason, of modern Spiritualism, and of Christianity. The series grew, however, a fourth answer being that of materialism, and then followed three on the theme of Heaven and Hell, or a total of seven lectures. The sixth, or second on Heaven and Hell, May 22, had stirred up sharp controversy. The unexpected crisis of White’s funeral came the afternoon of May 29. The time scheduled left little margin between

2. Wichita Daily Beacon, May 30, 1887; Daily Eagle, May 31, 1887. The reports of Adams’ remarks being written by separate hands, the wording differed. On most points probably the Beacon reporter’s version was the more adequate as he was more familiar with White’s philosophy upon which the rector was commenting. Details about the funeral arrangements and resolutions of sympathy are to be found in the Daily Beacon, May 28, 29, 1887; Daily Eagle, May 29, 31, 1887.
those rites, being at 4 P.M., and 7:45 P.M., when Adams must face a crowded church from his own pulpit, largely the same people he had talked to the preceding Sunday and that same afternoon. For all concerned it was an evening of acute emotional tension and expectancy.

Following still the format set up by White, the new owners of the Beacon gave reports on important sermons a front-page position on Monday evenings. And besides, these controversial subjects were now given conspicuous headlines. Thus the report on the lecture of May 15: "What Are Heaven and Hell?" was headlined: "Have We a Heretic?"

[The lecture] created something of a sensation in theological circles. . . . In the course of his remarks he stated distinctly, in almost so many words, that the love of God is so infinite that every soul, no matter how debased in this world, would have a chance for salvation in the future . . . that punishment was not eternal, and that the sentence to eternal torment was not irrevocable.

. . . He stated his belief to be that "Heaven" and "Hell" express no idea of location; they represent conditions, not localities . . . amplifications of Happiness and Misery in this [world]. . . .

Either the reporter himself, or his editorial chief, or both, were not sure that the rector had been correctly understood, and hesitated to print this summary without confirmation. The reporter sought out Adams and questioned him. As the lecture had not been reduced to writing, Adams could only restate the meaning he had intended to convey; in other words, he confirmed the substance of the report. To the question whether or not he believed that there was a chance for man hereafter, Adams replied: "I had rather say that I hope so. But wait, I conclude my sermon by saying that the way to win heaven and escape hell is by being righteous—by being a man. That is more important than any theories I, or you, or anybody, may have about the future."

The report of the lecture of May 22: "Heaven and Hell; the Orthodox and Heterodox Views," followed conspicuously a technique often emphasized in journalism; that of telling the story three times; first in sensational headlines; next, in a short summary of the main points thought to be especially newsworthy, stated in striking language; and finally, the narrative of events in proper sequence as straight reporting. Some readers go no further than the headlines; others go on through the summary; but only the persistent continue the story to the end, often finding that in proper context the material was not as sensational as the first two versions appeared to
represent it. In this case the headlines were: "Lucifer Knocked Out"; "Rev. Adams Demolishes the Hell Fire Theory"; "He Declares There Is No Hell But Conscience"; "A Sensational Sermon a la Bob Ingersoll"; "The Old Testament God Ridiculed and Reviled."

The fact that Adams was expected to present radical ideas had brought out an audience that filled the church to capacity, but the reporter insisted that they were not prepared for the fervor and violence of expression employed by the rector: "the Rev. Adams surprised his hearers and quite shocked some of the more orthodox and strictly ritualistic members of his flock. . . ." The report said that Adams "even denied the divine inspiration and sacred authenticity of the Scriptures themselves by declaring that the ancient Hebrews made a god of their own liking. That God was not up to the requirements of this civilized age and he cried 'if there was such a cruel god I for one would say away with him!" What Adams had done was to approach the question historically pointing out that the basis of the social organization of Israel was paternalistic and that the father was the head of the family, and that law, justice, and punishment were administered by the father. The concept of justice was objective, cold, and rigid. Thus the God of Israel was represented in the Old Testament as this type of God the Father. Next, Adams emphasized that the modern concept of family had come to emphasize the position of the mother as of an importance equal to the father, and the mother principle was love and sympathy which tempered justice.

Next the rector had emphasized three views of Christianity; orthodoxy (right faith), heterodoxy (other's faith), and rationalism. He endorsed the rational view. He accused the modern orthodox Christian view of distorting the Hebrew concept of a just God into a false representation, a cruel and vainglorious God. It was this concept of God which he denounced and said "away with him." Instead: "God is love." Calvin provided for the election of only few to be saved; Universalism went to the opposite extreme, providing for the election of all; Unitarianism insisted man was essentially good. Although he insisted that there was a great truth underlying each of these views, he could not accept any one of them. Universalism and Unitarianism had eliminated hell, which was necessary. Heaven and Hell were not locations or places, but conditions: "His hell was the hell of a guilty man's conscience, both here and hereafter." Also, he continued: "... A merciful God
could forgive at any time. . . ."—he would continue to forgive "throughout eternity," in other words, "Judgment" was not final. At one point in this context the rector was reported as saying: "The protestants lost a great truth when we lost the doctrine of an intermediate state taught us by our Roman Catholic brethren." It was when such sentiments were being stated that the censor at the reporter's elbow whispered: "our liberal friend will have the bishop after him. . . ."

According to Adams' rational view: "True orthodoxy conceived of man as coming into existence a free moral agent. A man could and must choose his own course and that choice even the Omnipotence cannot override." In the conclusion the reporter attributed to the rector the emphasis, however, that: "Unrighteousness means hell. Righteousness is happiness, not only for eternity, but temporarily. . . . God is love."

The Eagle reporter varied the concluding remarks: "When the day of judgment is past is there hope for the lost then? I hope so, and sometimes the hope amounts to belief. I do not say so. To you I would say repent now; delay not. Yet anyone can repent in the future. God must accept the one returning. God is love." But the rector interposed an emphasis that might be interpreted as being intended to rectify an apparent inconsistency; that belief alone is not enough; "They must be like him."

The reporters of these lectures did not make any attempt to label the rector's theology. Neither did they raise any question about the sources of any of the theological ideas expressed. Nevertheless, the identity of some of the ideas, even to the wording is inescapable. Whether derived from his friend, Editor White, during their year of friendship, or acquired prior to his coming to Wichita, Rector Adams had adopted into his own thinking a substantial body of the ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg.3

After the week's budget of argument and gossip about the lecture of May 22 and what might happen to the rector in consequence of it, the White funeral under the trees and outside any church, and Adams' discourse brought the whole theoretical discussion down

3. Adams' predecessor, the Rev. Mr. E. H. Edson, had conducted his farewell service March 7, 1886, explaining candidly the reasons for his leaving: interference with his freedom of expression. He had refused to submit or to resign. His funds were cut off; he proposed to collect by judicial process, but friends in Rochester, N. Y., persuaded him to desist and resign. Adams was then at St. Mark's church in Denver; was invited to Wichita April 4, and again May 20, and was appointed rector of St. John's as of June 20, 1886. The Beacon reports on church services explicitly indicate that White attended services at St. John's, August 22. The friendship between the two men ripened, apparently during the ensuing winter. Not until the series at Easter time services, however, did the reports indicate clearly the Swedenborgian flavor in Adams' discourses.—Daily Beacon, March 8, April 3, May 25, 24, June 19, 21, August 23, 1886.
to earth in terms of a concrete case. Many who had attended the late afternoon funeral and had completed the final tribute to White at the graveside, were now at St. John's—almost as though participating in the last act of a three-act drama. The rector had made his choice and had made it in freedom. On that premise, would the fate formula of Greek tragedy complete its relentless course? How would or could Adams release the tensions and resolve the conflict? By defiance which might have explosive consequences, or by a retreat that would leave his hearers with a sense of betrayal, or by a convincing reconciliation of opposing positions?

The report of this critical lecture of May 29 was given a front-page position in Monday evening's Beacon with the sensational headline "Whipped into Line"; "Rev. Adams Preaches a Strictly Orthodox Sermon"; "Varied With More Heaven and Hell Theories"; "He Still Says the Unitarians May Be Saved,"—the subject: "Pentacostal Tongues; Understood and Misunderstood." Prepared of course prior to the events of the afternoon, Adams called attention to the church calendar and the fact that it was Whitsunday. He described the preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentacost, the day of the birth of the church, and suggested that it was an appropriate occasion to consider the work that had been accomplished by the church. He traced the birth of the church direct to the apostles and while not claiming it as the only true church did insist that it should and would be some day, when the offshoots returned. Many, he insisted, were anxious to do so; an awakening was taking place in England and in the United States too. He took a high-church position:

He thought the time would come when all the world would return to Catholicism. The preacher said that the duty of preaching this second great reformation devolved upon the ministers of the Episcopal and ritualistic churches. He even declared that with this church rested the safety and salvation of the Republic, its rescue from atheism and infidelity, although he did not go so far as to propose union of church and state.

Here the reporter revealed his personal position by the remark: "This part of the sermon was very fine. . . ." But the reporter insisted at two points in his story that there was a dichotomy in the lecture and that Adams had yielded to pressure: " . . . the impression prevailed among Dr. Adams's somewhat mixed audience, mixed as to creeds and religions that is to say, that the pastor had been called to account and perhaps regretted some of the rather
broad . . . expressions to which he had given utterance on the previous Sunday."

Later the reporter returned to this conviction insisting, with the aid of typographical emphasis, that the strictly orthodox, high-church exposition
gave the impression that Rev. Adams, despite his pronounced liberalistic views on the existence of an orthodox heaven and hell, had been spoken with and easily

Whipped into Line

But before the close of the sermon, the preacher’s natural impulsiveness, noticeable in spite of his almost painful deliberation of expression, forced him into the old line of argument. He could not refrain from alluding to the subject so near his heart and the sensation caused by his previous utterances, though wholly foreign to the present subject. He prefaced his remarks by saying that it was easy for a man to be misunderstood. He did not care so far as he was concerned whether his auditor was a Calvinist, an Arminian or even a Unitarian. All might be saved and most of them would yet return to the holy church apostolic. The preacher did not believe in a selfish heaven which was made for a few alone. . . . The audience smiled when the preacher declared with ingenious candor that hell was a dangerous subject to undertake the discussion of.

He did discuss it: “The honest man, the righteous man has heaven within him and is in heaven.”

The speaker reiterated his former statement that all men might be saved regardless of creed. He believed that the Calvinists might be saved, that Armenians might be saved; yes, even the Unitarians—here the preacher hesitated for a moment—and then declared that they too might go to heaven.

If what he was saying was correct, along with what he had said during the afternoon, what was the role of the church? Was the church necessary? The closing paragraph of the Beacon's story was short but whether or not a fully adequate report of what was said is not subject to verification:

The church was the instrument left on earth by Christ for the salvation of men and the uplifting of humanity. Men must go to church. We must have the external as well as the internal peace of religion.4

Two weeks later, at the evening service at St. John's, Adams spoke about “Individuality, Here and Hereafter.” As reported, he persisted in stating views that would have been approved by his departed friend, Mr. White:

Mr. Adams is a thorough believer in individuality. He thinks the individuals have been the movers in the world. He distinguished between individuality and personality—saying that the personality is the mask through which individuality looks. Hereafter it is the individual who is to live, as it is the

4. Ibid., April 16, 15, May 2, 16, 23, 30, 1887; Daily Eagle, May 24, 1887.
individual who lives here. It is the I, the me that wants immortality, this is immortal.\textsuperscript{5}

III. APPRAISALS OF WHITE

Born January 2, 1835, at Johnstown, Pa., William Sutton White was just past 52 years of age when he died, May 27, 1887. His father, James P. White, a canal and railroad contractor, died in 1840 when William was a child of five, leaving Caroline White to raise her three boys, the other two being Norman P., and Oscar. William learned the printer's trade at Gallipolis, Ohio, and moved about as journeyman printer. In 1853-1854 he attended the Swedenborg College at Urbana, Ohio, and became a thoroughgoing convert to the New Church, or Church of the New Jerusalem. While engaged in typesetting in Cincinnati, in 1854, he became, for a short time, the private tutor to the children of Nicholas Longworth. Soon, however, he moved to Covington, Ky., where he remained until 1861. Declining a commission in the Confederate army, he returned to Ohio, where he enlisted in the Guthrie Greys, and later in the Fourth regiment of Ohio cavalry, which participated in operations under John A. Logan, in Tennessee and Georgia, and under Kilpatrick, at Atlanta. During the winter of 1863-1864, Lieutenant White was prisoner of war, and after release from prison was discharged from the army, on account of health, with rank of captain. After a business venture with his brother Norman, and George Warren, as army sutlers in Texas, he returned to Cincinnati, thence to the lead mines of Missouri, and in 1869 arrived in Kansas. With his brother Oscar, he worked at grading the roadbed of the Santa Fe railroad. Apparently he made Topeka his home, his mother joining him there in 1870. In 1871, he moved to Sedgwick county, pre-empting a claim on the Ninnescah, in Viola township, which he still owned at the time of his death. During his first two winters in Kansas apparently he taught school, but in Sedgwick county he supplemented his farm operations by working at the printer's trade in Wichita, as employment was available on the \textit{Beacon} and the \textit{Eagle}.

In 1872 the \textit{Beacon} had been established in Wichita by D. G. Millison, and Fred A. Sowers. It was said that White worked off his subscription setting type, and he worked occasionally during the winter of 1872-1873, but in 1874, the grasshopper year, he moved to Wichita and worked at the printer's trade during the winter of 1874-1875. During these early years the \textit{Beacon} had been var-

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Daily Beacon}, June 13, 1887.
iously owned and edited, but July 7, 1875, came into the hands of Frank Fisher and Frank B. Smith. In November, 1875, White accepted the editorship. Although a printer of proven competence, he had no editorial experience, and in that sense was launching upon a new profession at the age of 40. In March, 1876, White bought an interest in the paper, Fisher dropping out, and White assumed editorial control—this arrangement continuing until the Beacon was sold, April 1, 1887, less than two months prior to White's death.

Some facts about White's private as differentiated from his public life are necessary to this story. His mother had joined him at Topeka in 1870, and the little house that was built on his "plantation" on the Ninnescah was designed for the two of them. Whatever the private reasons that may have been involved, White did not marry. About 1877 Mrs. White's health failed and for the next ten years she was nearly helpless. In 1878 Susan (or Susana) Sebastian joined the White household as companion to Mrs. White. During the early months of 1887 a new home was being built on Riverside and upon its completion in midsummer, Captain White and Susan were to have been married. The crisis in White's illness intervened and his will was made to leave the North Market home to his mother, with financial provision for her comfort—she was 80 years of age. Also, Susan was to receive $2,000 per year for life. But doubts developed about the certainties of this arrangement, and within an hour of his death, Captain White and Miss Sebastian were married, aged respectively 52 and 47 years.6

The Beacon obituary of White was unsigned, but probably was written by his former partner, Frank Smith, or under his supervision. Corroborative evidence indicates that the eulogy contained in it was more than merely conventional:

As an editor Captain White proved himself one of the ablest writers in the

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6. Ibid., May 27, 30, 1887; Daily Eagle, May 29, 31, 1887; Wichita Daily Call, May 27, 30, 1887; Wichita Daily Journal, May 27, 30, 1887; New Republic, Wichita, May 28, June 4, 1887; Union Labor Press, Wichita, June 4, 1887; Sunday Courier, Wichita, May 29, June 5, 1887; Herald (German language), Wichita, June 1, 1887.

The Journal obituary, and papers which followed the Journal account, differed in some particulars from the Beacon and the Eagle, but the latter are accepted as correct.

United States census, 1880, Wichita, Sedgwick county, Kansas, Fourth ward: W. S. White, 54 (45); Caroline White, 73; Susanna Sebastian, 42, born in Illinois;

Kansas state census, 1885, Wichita, Sedgwick county, Kansas, Fourth Ward, p. 18: ages respectively, 50, 78, 43.

Susan Sebastian's sister Emily, wife of J. Whitfield Bell, died March 24, 1885, residents of Sedgwick county since 1871, from Edwardsville, Ill. Upon that occasion, White wrote the obituary and funeral notices from the Swedenborgian point of view: "Happily relieved from bodily pain she enters upon the real spiritual life." Also: "She had no fear of the death of the body. She knew that she would not die—that what seemed like death and annihilation this side was the birth and resurrection on the other side, and that, too, not as a soul without a body, but a soul in the real body—the spiritual. She knew she was passing from the shadow into the sunshine, from the phenomenal into the real, from the transitory into the permanent and substantial life. She is more alive in essential substance, and in essential form than ever before. She is not hurried, for the human is not a subject for interment. . . ."—Daily Beacon, March 25, 26, 1885.
state. He proved himself amply competent to cope with all questions of interest and his articles were at all times those of a man who had delved deeply... and had pondered much over his reading and drawn his own conclusions.

Though never a boomer in the accepted sense of the word, the Beacon... always took a leading part in advocating that which he considered to the best interests of Wichita. Captain White it was who first advocated an east and west railroad... , and the result of his agitation and hard work was the St. Louis and San Francisco railroad.

During the Ohio flood of 1883, White suggested sending a car or two of corn to the sufferers—the result was a special train load of corn.

His life was without reproach, his friends say of him that they never knew a more honest man, and while to many he may have seemed harsh and unjust in his criticisms of what he deemed hypocrisy or pride of authority, he was yet gentle and tender hearted as a woman, and in all his criticisms of errors he always classed himself among the erring ones.

The late Captain White devoted his life to his aged and infirm mother and she in turn was wrapped up in him. The shock of his death has completely prostrated the old lady and a few short days will probably find them joined in death as they were in life.

As the new editor of the Beacon had not known White more than a few weeks, the leading editorial was likewise by another hand, but had a similar emphasis:

Captain White is dead, and in his death the people of Wichita have sustained an irreparable loss. Broad-minded, liberal, far-seeing, yet so conservative as to be able to adjust a careful balance between right and wrong; gifted with a keen-sightedness which pointed out to him the dangers which lurked behind apparently plausible exteriors, he was a man eminently fitted for the work which he undertook with modest willingness, of aiding in the building up of this great city...

As an editor and as a citizen Captain White closely approached the ideal...

In private life Captain White was one of the most companionable of men, not opinionated, not egotistic, a good listener and a good talker when occasion required, he naturally had friends without number and of enemies as few as could be expected for a man of his sturdy character and outspoken views.

Again and again the reference recurred to White's contribution to the greatness of Wichita. He was "sturdy as an oak, modestly self-reliant... with an unselfish ambition to see the city of his home prosper... even to his own personal detriment..." And the editorial closed with what may be recognized as the writer's, not White's, unfulfilled prophecy: "and so thoroughly is this appreciated that evermore will the memory of Captain White be kept green in the minds and hearts of the people of Wichita and Sedgwick county."
White's major journalistic rival, Marshall Marcellus Murdock (1837-1908), was one of the pallbearers at his funeral and wrote a moving editorial "In Memoriam." As a Republican in politics, Murdock had disagreed with White on most public questions of a political character, but death is a private matter, and men of their caliber did not carry political differences into private relations:

So frequently are we called upon to make a record of things, which, it seems, ought never to have occurred, that at times we are ready to be persuaded that this world has to offer only disappointment, disaster and death. Our entire city was startled yesterday morning by the sad news of the death of Capt. W. S. White. . . .

Of Captain White's life in this county since the early settlement . . . no words are called for. No encomiums which we could offer would add to the value of that record. . . .

Murdock gave extended attention to Susan Sebastian, widow within an hour of marriage, she who "had been a daughter in the truest sense to the aged mother" for nine years. When the subject of marriage had been referred to in conversation with Murdock, he quoted White as saying "that the frosts of his head, mayhap, were too numerous for such a happy consummation. And now . . . before that home itself could be made ready . . . ." for mother and wife—

"And now, like God's great pity, the same blue sky still hangs over us this morning, but of our number, one is missing. . . ."

White was not a joiner, the reasons for which must be dealt with elsewhere, so other than press resolutions upon the passing of Captain White, no organizations, not even a church had been a participant in the final tributes.7 The Hypatia club and the Piano club prepared elaborate floral tributes, but the former went somewhat further. Nevertheless, the action of the Hypatia club, a woman's literary organization, is really no exception to this generalization. It had been organized in January, 1886, under the presidency of Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Lease. Early in 1887 she had relinquished office on account of ill-health. The club was named in honor of Hypatia, a woman mathematician and philosopher, leader of the Neoplatonic school of Alexandria, Egypt. She, a pagan, had been murdered by a fanatical Christian mob. Charles Kingsley had made Hypatia the heroine of a novel (1853) of that name. Two implications were obvious in the choice of the name for a woman's club in 1886: a plea for woman's rights, and a protest against in-

7. Captain White did not join the Wichita Garfield Post of the G. A. R. The proposal that the post conduct the funeral was dropped, yet informally many members attended. On Memorial day, G. A. R. services were conducted at White's grave.—Wichita Arrow, June 4, 1887.
tolerance. The *Beacon*, although not in sympathy with the woman's rights movement in all its features, had been unusually generous in giving publicity to the club's activities. The Hypatia club had good reason therefore to meet in special session, and to adopt resolutions honoring Captain White, Mrs. Lease being a member of the resolutions committee. Furthermore, Mrs. Lease, a frequent contributor of poetry to the *Eagle*, wrote:

**In Memoriam—Capt. W. S. White**

*We mourn no blighted hope, nor broken plan;
The burden of his life-work was well done.*

*He stood among his fellowmen a man,*

*The ripened grain beneath a mellow sun.*

*Oh! bells toll not a funeral chime*

*For one whose life was rounded well,*

*In Sun and shade of manhood's prime,*

*With deeds of worth that all men tell.*

*From solemn hush of silent tomb*

*He ne'er again shall walk among us here,*

*But in a land of deathless bloom*

*Our steps shall greet his quickened ear.*

*And here where he hath labored long;*

*Low mingling with the funeral tread,*

*Ring out glad bursts of triumph song*

*And tell the good deeds of the dead.*

*A faith sublime, a stainless life,*

*Shall guide us o'er life's stormy sea,*

*And 'mid the calm, and 'mid the strife,*

*Our hearts repeat, 'Tis well with thee.*

Irrespective of Mrs. Lease's merits as a poet, one aspect of her rationalization is of some significance. White was just past 52 years of age at the time of his passing, and she expressed the verdict that "The burden of his life's work was well done," and likened it to "The ripened grain beneath a mellow sun." For perspective it may be pointed out that the death of John A. Martin, two years later, at

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8. Whether or not known to any, part, or all of the participating parties, Hypatia meant much more than these more obvious interpretations. Swedenborg had incorporated into his science and Christian theology much of Neoplatonic philosophy. White knew his way around in philosophy and theology sufficiently to realize, probably, the implications of that fact in the history of thought. Mrs. Lease, a prime mover in the Hypatia club, probably did not. She was still, outwardly at least, a Roman Catholic in the strictest Irish tradition, and her children (1883) were being educated in the Catholic parochial school of Wichita.—Wichita *Daily Eagle*, June 18, 1885. How and when she broke with her religious inheritance has not yet been determined.


—*Sunday Grounder*, Wichita, June 5, 1887.
the age of 50, was similarly rationalized by his friends. Although, in that era, many lived out their span of three score and ten, yet the 50's were widely accepted as affording a reasonable life expectancy, especially for those whose accomplishments by that age were substantial. According to Murdock, however, White must have looked forward to a retirement from the grind of getting out a daily paper as an opportunity to devote himself to study and possibly to writing on his favorite fields of philosophy. But Murdock's reference to future plans were vague.

Although there was a certain sameness to the eulogies of White, Leo L. Redding, editor of the Daily Journal, May 27, varied the emphasis, after admitting to no more than a "passing acquaintance":

It has been said that to know a man "you must see him in his home," and it was in his home that Captain White was to be seen as he really was. On the streets or in his office he was a gruff and outspoken man. But at his home he was a dutiful son, striving in every way to make the declining years of his mother the happiest of her life. . . .

J. S. Jennings, editor of the New Republic, Wichita, May 28, wrote:

Yet Captain White was not only "our friend," but he was the friend of Wichita and humanity. May his spirit realize the destiny which his great mind pictured, in progress, in worlds unknown to us; for great minds never die, and his was great in his belief, and we can not condemn that belief when we know he was honest in it. He was a Swedenborgian, and a great admirer of his writings.

Although other commentators had made clear the fact that White was not orthodox, for some reason they were reticent about identifying his religious beliefs. The Union Labor Press, June 4, followed the pattern, "more than an ordinary writer," "a deep thinker," "considerably in advance of his time," "always fearless in expressing" his views which "may not have agreed with popular demands and customs; yet, withal, they contained the elements of some great truth which the future will develop. As a friend of the people against despotism and wrong, he was always ready to defend the weak against the strong. . . ."

The writer of "In Memoriam" in the Sunday Growler, May 29, probably the editor R. E. Ryan, who had been a Beacon reporter under White, agreed:

Capt. White was a strong man in every particular. A warm, devoted, earnest friend, not what might be called a popular man, yet one who, when he made a friend held him to the last. Honest, straightforward, outspoken in his likes and dislikes, sturdy as an old oak. He was a man who had the

10. Ibid., May 29, and the Daily Journal, May 27, 1887, likewise referred to White’s plans for study and writing.
regard and esteem of all who knew him, no matter how one might differ with him on any subject. To him was awarded by one and all, the palm of honesty and integrity in his beliefs and notions.

Referring to his reporterial days under White, the writer mentioned especially the generous treatment received: "In such close personal and social relations many little incidents occurred clearly showing the innate nobility of the deceased."

An unidentified writer of the "Old Settlers" column (Wichita was less than the legal age of 18, therefore still a female minor at law) in the Sunday Growler, June 5, admitted having collected some notes about White, at the time of his retirement from the Beacon, but had procrastinated in writing them for publication and now it was too late. But assuming the reader's knowledge of White's religious views, that in the spiritual world thoughts might be communicated from person to person without the medium of words, the "Old Settler" consoled himself:

It may be, as he believed, that after putting off the earthly tabernacle, he can know what was in my thoughts, and if so, he can feel that great measure of respect he enjoyed, perhaps unawares, from one whom he thought, while living, misjudged him. It was given to but few to know the interior man, to know his filial devotion, his strong friendships, the innate nobleness of his character. But of this, enough. Living, he was not to be flattered, though he loved appreciative praise for well-doing. Dead, merited to his praise nor flattery cannot add one jot of happiness. . . .

IV. The Sale of the Beacon

The eulogies of White may appear to some readers to be too much in the nature of a routine compliance with the conventions and too emotional to be taken seriously. The sale of the Beacon had occurred two months earlier and the commentary upon that event as historical evidence would be less subject to such adverse criticism. In "A Last Word" White reviewed the history of the Beacon, and the Smith and White tenure of nearly 12 years: "The history of this section cannot be written and the Beacon ignored." It had its ups and downs as did everybody else: "In 1875 it looked as if its light were to go out forever. When Fisher & Smith took hold of it, it was a dying ember instead of a blazing torch and a flamboyant beacon light. The paper then began a career which has not been excelled by any journal in Kansas." It had been continuously prosperous financially also, and never missed a Saturday night payroll.

White admitted his inexperience at the start as an editor, and that in nearly 12 years: "The Beacon may not have always been right.
It may never have been exactly right, but if we know ourselves, it never has been wilfully and maliciously wrong or dishonest. It has never been the tool or instrument of any man, clique or party”—not even of the owners or their personal interests. The paper was always for Wichita. At the moment the *Beacon* had four rival daily papers in the city, but only one counted—Murdock’s *Eagle*, nesting in its eyrie on East Douglas:

It is especially gratifying to us, at this time, that while we have had many hot set-tos with our able contemporary, the *Eagle*, we have never carried any bitterness or venom out of the office, and our personal relations with our friend—the enemy—on Douglas avenue, have always been of a most friendly and fraternal character.

It is impossible for us to be much of a partisan. By nature we are anti-partisan.

That insistence about the impossibility of being partisan was not a vain boast. And in business and in social relations party had no place.

Under stress of deep feeling, rather generally, Americans are noted for their reticence in verbal expression. The measure of the depth of feeling is often to be found in what is not said, or in exaggerated pretense intended to appear as merely facetious: In referring to the transfer of ownership of the *Beacon*, Murdock wrote:

In welcoming these strangers to our midst, and we do so most cordially, it is not so pleasant to part company with our old friend and standing critic, Capt. White, whom we have in all these years simply astonished and astounded a thousand times over and over until at times, in very despair, he has laid down his faber and resorted to the borders of profanity as close as he dare and not violate his religious convictions. And still he has loved us, loved us on and still cussed on. And, now our old self abnegator steps down, forever, and out, without so much as “by your leave” to a contemporary who has a thousand times held up his hands to his back [in private] only to sit down on him to the public. In these years proprietors of the *Beacon* have come and gone, and newspapers have come and gone, mighty nigh on to a score of them; come in with a flourish, gone out variously, some with a curse, others with a silence that smacked of the sneak, but none leaving the void, and the kind of void left by our sturdy old critic and friend who said good bye last night. . . .

That was about as near as Marsh Murdock could come to being sentimental in public. Indeed, newspapers had come and gone, even daily papers; the *Herald*, the *Republican*, and the *Times*, but what of it! In Wichita there had always been the *Eagle* and the *Beacon*. And for most of that time that meant Marsh Murdock, Republican, and Captain White, Democrat—that is, when the latter

11. *Weekly Eagle*, April 8, 1887; the *Daily Eagle* for April 2 is missing from the Kansas State Historical Society’s file.
succeeded in coercing himself into a more or less orthodox partisanship just a few weeks prior to election days. But after their own individualistic fashion, neither was orthodox in party politics or in anything else. They appeared to disagree on most everything, but underneath, they agreed upon fundamentals. Systems of popular government are usually assumed to function best when operating under conditions where two parties of about equal strength oppose each other. Similarly, in the newspaper business, a good journalistic adversary is a precious possession, and no one knew that better than Murdock. For his own good he needed "the old self abnegator." But this was merely Murdock's way of chronicling the sale of a worthy rival's paper to an unknown quantity. Captain White was still to be a citizen of Wichita, and his neighbor whom he could no doubt meet and argue with most every day.

Murdock's facetious reference to the old abnegator and his trials in attempting to reform or to educate the Beacon editor, recall an earlier episode when the Daily Eagle, April 1, 1885, a morning paper, featured a news item:

**Surprise—Congratulatory**

Probably our society people will never be treated to a more genuine surprise, and yet one which will call forth numerous pleasant comments and unnumbered congratulations, is the announcement of the marriage this morning, at his own home, at 6 o'clock, of Capt. W. S. White, the worthy and erudite editor of our evening contemporary. The charming young lady, Miss A. Prilist, who arrived from the east last night at midnight, is represented as a child of youth and beauty, a warm worshipper of buds and birds, spring-time flowers and April showers, who, as she claps our old incorrigible friend to her bosom, promises with her sunshiny nature to thaw him out in a way that will make him forget the long cold nights of the past winter when he curled up in his bed alone to freeze his toes off while in broken slumbers he dreamed of what this day was to bring him. The thought of the then and the now gets away with us, and we have no doubt it will get away with our friend. But, dear Captain, while we can only be with you in imagination, there is nothing envious about us, and with our entire people, including a thousand disappointed fair ones who but dared hope, we unite in not only well wishes, but the sentiment,

"If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy; for I fear
My soul hath her content so absolutely
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate."

The same evening Captain White replied:

The Eagle's announcement this morning was premature. The prospective bride arrived in time, coming not by rail nor palace car. She came in a vision of the night, in the heart of a hope long deferred, an answer to a silent prayer
that never troubled lip. We welcomed her as May, and not as December. In
the golden vision, we stood beside the river whose water is the elixir of life.
Youth was not returned, but recreated, spring had not come again, but had
followed the winter of our discontent. Age and decrepitude were only the
nightmare that fled with the coming of the beautiful dawn. With outstretched
arms we bade her welcome, and urged her to hasten her quick-gliding footsteps,
all too tardy for our eager desire. Ardent and impatient we sprang to meet—
her? No! the staid present! We awoke! It was a dream—that may find its
fruition in the Isles of the Blest.

Murdock closed out the fun the following morning:

Of course our many readers in this city enjoyed their laughs and made no
end of comments over the Eagle's April fool of yesterday morning. The com-
ments would no doubt fill a volume which would interest our innocent victim's
descendants to the third generation. His own ears must have tingled. Some
did not "catch on" till they got down town. Captain White not only very
gracefully replies in his last evening's issue, but utters sentiment which may
be but a faintly disguised disclosure of a bygone dream of his happy youth,
and which may not have been all a dream, but which in truth shall find its
ideal and full fruition in an exalted life whose pure atmosphere no earthly
passions can ever reach or mar. Begging the Captain's pardon for the innocent
fun had at his expense we quote his reply. . . .

An understanding of such an episode requires the recognition of
the widely accepted but unwritten code of the day which differenti-
ated things public from things private. To be sure, the bride
hoax dealt with things private, and in a public manner, but it was
not malicious, and after all was really impersonal. This April fool
pleasantry was perpetrated as the bitter city election canvass was
reaching its climax. Both Murdock and White were engaged in
campaign abuse which reached, if it did not exceed, the broad limits
usually considered permissible for the political journalism of that
generation. On one page of the paper was this friendly spoofing,
while in the political editorial column was outrageous vilification
which certainly both men knew was untrue. Yet the two types of
exchanges were carried on simultaneously, without becoming con-
fused. The editors as political "enemies" were figuratively different
men from the friends who enjoyed the private joke regardless of
which was the victim. Wichita had four dailies, and a flock of
weekly newspapers at this time, but no comparable relationship
existed between any two of them. The generalization is probably
safe that nothing similar existed anywhere else in the Kansas area.

But only two days after the bride evaporated in April fool sun-
shine, White took the public into his confidence about a truly serious
personal loss:

It is with much regret and a dull pencil that we announce the loss of that
historical pocket-knife again—the one with ivory handle and ventilated jaws.
It is not a very pretty knife, nor is it very valuable, but by long association it has crawled into our affections, and we'd rejoice to have it nestling once more in the tobacco crumbs at our right flank.

Except for the Daily Journal, the other papers in Wichita, whose files have survived, scarcely mentioned the sale of the Beacon. The Journal editor, Silas Robinson, was most offensive, April 1, boasting that he "must be an artist in the 'change' business," other paper changing hands when competing with his. "People want to read a paper published for men of the Nineteenth Century. Fossils don't do in these days of go ahead." Robinson referred to the attempts to bring a soap factory to Wichita: "If ever there was a gentleman who had all the qualifications to make a president of a soap factory, it is the ex-editor of the Beacon. . . ."

In the next issue Robinson addressed

THE EX-BEACON, or rather the ex-editors and proprietors of the Beacon, the Journal addresses you. It did not see your issue last evening, but it hears you had a nice article. Be that as it may the Journal recognized the fact that Capt. White, as editor of the Beacon, has held a prominent position in the city. The courtesy which ought to have existed between all papers of a town, whose duty ought to be to pull together for the interests of the town, have not been very prominent between the Beacon and the Resident-Journal. We suppose we have been equally at fault in the matter hence shall drop this subject and let the Beacon editor be in the past tense. Cap. White, since you have lain down the pencil, after years of its association, and resumed a private life, the Journal forgets all it may have had cause to say or think and it wishes you that success, as a civilian, crowned with health and happiness, due to every man who has worked for or been identified with the advancement of Wichita. Frank Smith, you are in this too.

The "change" business caught up with the Journal, however, Robinson leaving the paper May 16, 1887. The surviving partner, Leo Redding, felt relief, apparently at the departure of his associate, and observed the courtesies of profession. Upon the occasion of White's death, besides writing the "passing acquaintance" editorial already noticed, made amends by emphasizing that: "There is not one in Wichita who will today speak of the dead, except with profound respect."

The sale of the Beacon, followed so closely by the death of its veteran editor, calls attention to an important fact of Kansas journalism—its localism. No newspaper edited in Kansas (including the Kansas City metropolitan press) covered effectively the area news. Neither the sale of the Beacon nor the death of White caused more than a faint ripple on the surface. No paper has been found outside Wichita that undertook in any substantial manner to evaluate White, the man and editor. Even the local tributes fell short
on the evaluation of White as a thinker, on indicating the major sources and features of his thought, and on the controlling principle which had guided his 12-year journalistic career. At the time of the Beacon sale the Topeka Commonwealth, 1887, recognized Smith, but only because he had learned the printing business in the editor's office. Only the Commonwealth, May 29, 1887, paid White even a modest tribute:

Captain White was one of the most vigorous and voluminous writers on the press of Kansas. His theory of government was in advance of the times. They might answer when the millineum arrives, if it ever does. He wanted but little law, but desired that the people in the main should be a law unto themselves. He believed in the utmost personal liberty for every individual. While being in principle and practice a temperance man, his concern for personal liberty made him a strenuous opponent of the prohibition policy. He was as erratic in his religious as in his political views. Captain White was an honest, conscientious man. . . .

The Lawrence Journal had nothing to say about White's death, and upon the occasion of the sale of the Beacon was bluntly materialistic. The sale price was rumored to have been $50,000. The Journal estimated that the Eagle could not be bought for less than $75,000: "Is there another instance of so marvelous a growth in all the country?"—in 15 years.13 Admitting for the sake of interpretation the values assigned, how had it happened? Remarkable as had been the rise of Wichita, what gave the Eagle and the Beacon value; Wichita, or Murdock and White? How long would the Beacon's value survive without White?

V. WHITE'S EARLY YEARS IN WICHITA

At the age of 40, White had entered upon a profession of journalism. The traditional explanation of how that came about was a convenient rationalization after the event, but not exactly correct factually or an adequate explanation. The allegation was that he had contributed some articles over the pen name "Sartoris" that "caused a stir," and in consequence Fisher and Smith induced him to assume the editorship of the Beacon in November, 1875.14 But for some time prior to that, however, White had been setting type for the Beacon and was well acquainted with the proprietors.

White had first made an impression upon Sedgwick county in his writing on agricultural questions over the pen name "Agricola," the identification for the historian being made in the Weekly Bea-

12. This editorial was copied into the Fort Scott Daily Monitor, May 31, 1887, but credited erroneously to the Capital, and was correctly credited and printed in the Beacon, May 30, 1887.
13. Lawrence Daily Journal, April 5, 1887.
con, September 8, 1875. Contemporaries already knew the identity of "Agricola." The first "Agricola" letter was printed October 14, 1874, and argued vigorously against the Texas cattle trade; not only was it a dead loss to Kansas, but it prevented the development of a home livestock industry. Next "Agricola" condemned the relief measures proposed by the state and county; humiliating, impoverishing, costly, and did not reach the many who were in need. He advocated state loans through the counties so that intermediaries could not absorb the funds on the way—cheap money was the only method:

To come down to the hard pan of true legislative function, the state has no right to go into the benevolent business at all, no right to build anything but a penitentiary: I mean in the charitable or educational line. But since the State is in this kind of business let it be done in some manner that will preserve the manly independence of its citizens, and not in the way that has a great tendency to make chronic beggars of us.

The following week "Agricola" proposed an enlarged plan, county-state-federal; loans not to exceed $200, secured by real estate or chattel mortgages, for one to two years, at four percent interest. One class could not be reached by this plan; those who could offer no security. For these city or county public works programs were suggested. The following week additional provisions were proposed that would cover—in the Osage lands settlers—time extensions etc., on lands.

Upon the approach of another Texas cattle season the regulation of the trade was again raised. "Agricola" agreed to the new dead line proposed in western Sedgwick county, defiantly defending himself for this particular year on the ground of expediency in the face of the agricultural disaster of the preceding year.

Possibly the most significant "Agricola" explosion was that of May 26, 1875, on the same day that, in another letter, he protested the useless office of city attorney. In "France vs. the United States" "Agricola" focused on the general theme of waste: The Frenchman's prosperity depended upon what he saved rather than what he made, but the citizen of the United States wasted almost everything he touched—natural resources in a broad sense being emphasized first—springs drying up, and with them the streams, climate changing for the worse, soil being impoverished, criminal waste of forests—

15. A reply was printed October 21, and "Agricola" rebutted November 4, 1874.
17. Ibid., February 10, 17, 1875.
18. Still another "Agricola" letter which dealt with the unwise "economy" of the county in not providing adequate court accommodations and its relation to an adequate administration of justice, was printed in the Eagle, August 19, 1874. This was the only "Agricola" letter found in the Eagle.
and then turning to finance he pointed to the failure to reduce public debt, the seeming impossibility of constructing railroads or opening mines without first mortgage bonds, protective tariff to breed monopolies and paralyze business, rings, frauds, and special legislation to favor special groups and localities. With all this the people, he insisted, were discontented.

Beginning January 27, 1875, the *Beacon* printed an article of more than one column: "Time and its importance: A Philosophical Essay," which was labeled "Written for the Beacon" and was signed "Omega." No identification has been discovered, but in the perspective of other articles that are identified, this one was probably White's first venture, at Wichita, into philosophy.

It has been the study of great philosophers and of wise men in every age to give an adequate definition of Time; but so far, all have failed to accomplish this object. Time is a gift of God, that particular period of duration given to man to prepare himself, for that high and noble end of his creation—the enjoyment of an endless eternity, when time shall be no more. Time had its beginning with the creation of the world, and will likewise have its end with the destruction of same. It is the most cunning and yet the most insatiable of depredators, apparently taking nothing, but in reality taking all; for it is not satisfied with stealing from us all that we possess, or all that the world can afford, but continues in its course until finally it steals us from the world.

The next philosophical contribution was headed "Sartor Resartus," and is the first of a series of nine extending over a period from February 10, 1875, to May 1, 1878. In addition, an unidentified editorial article of December 29, 1875, was entitled "Idol Worship" which appeared about one month after White had become editor of the *Beacon*. Almost certainly this was his also. The name of the articles, "Sartor Resartus," was borrowed from Thomas Carlyle's book of that name—literally the "tailor patched"; metaphorically, the philosophy of clothes.

Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* was one of the great books of the middle of the 19th century. Although first printed in England serially, 1833-1834, and in an American book edition in 1836, it gained popularity slowly. In the mid-19th century, a victim, along with much 19th century literature, it is all but forgotten in the United States, under the relativist-presentist educational theory that what was relevant to the 19th century is irrelevant to the 20th century.\(^{19}\)

In Carlyle's philosophy of clothes:

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\(^{19}\) *Sartor Resartus* has not been reprinted in any paperback series, which are leftist in their slant, and is available in only one low-priced edition, the English Everyman's Library, No. 278, printed originally in 1908, last reprinted in 1956, and available in the United States through the American representative of the English publisher.
an Emblem; a Clothing or visible Garment for that divine ME of his, cast
lither, like a light-particle, down from Heaven. . . .

. . . Whatsoever sensibly exists, whatsoever represents Spirit to Spirit,
is properly a Clothing, a suit of Raiment, put on for a season, and to be laid
off. Thus in this one pregnant subject of CLOTHES, rightly understood, is
included all that men have thought, dreamed, done, and been: the whole
Eternal Universe and what it holds is but Clothing; and the essence of all
Science lies in the PHILOSOPHY OF CLOTHES.20

The issues involved are peculiarly private, although they possess
a public aspect in the aggregate, and are persistent. Most every
individual becomes concerned sometime about the mystery of life
and death, and their meaning—probably no one escapes. Each
must sometime experience a period of doubt about the validity of
prevailing conceptions. Regardless of the personal outcome the
ordeal is more serious for some than for others. Preceding Carlyle,
the age of excesses committed in the name of science and ration-
alismand, and often miscalled the 18th-century enlightenment, had
emphasized the "Everlasting No" of materialism. For many living
under that influence, the personal ordeal of philosophical and re-
ligious orientation was peculiarly painful and often personally
dastrous. For Carlyle, the experience led through a period of
despair to an eventual illumination in which both the original ortho-
doxity and the negation were left behind, and a new spiritual certainty
emerged. Against the "Everlasting No," he wrote in the name of
his hero, "my whole ME stood up, in native-God-created majesty,
and with emphasis recorded a Protest. . . . I directly there-
oned to be a Man." The "Everlasting NO" gave way to the
"Everlasting Yea."21

Although Carlyle cultivated the impression that he had not read
Swedenborg prior to the writing of SARTOR RESARTUS, the present
writer is convinced that he had; but, if not, the resemblance between
Swedenborg's and Carlyle's thought is one of the truly remarkable
coincidences of literary history.22 This Swedenborg interpretation
of SARTOR RESARTUS was reinforced by a later comment White made
about a popular lecturer on science and theology, who had visited
Wichita in 1881 for the third time: "Wendling is a Sartor Resartus,
a mender of old clothes. We doubt if he has a Sunday-go-to-
meeting suit in his intellectual wardrobe." But that was not all.
White proceeded to compare him with Carlyle, and thereby trans-
ferred the focus of judgment to Carlyle and his book SARTOR RE-

20. SARTOR RESARTUS (Everyman's Edition), pp. 54, 55.
21. Ibid., p. 127.
22. This question has been examined in some detail in another essay, as yet, not pub-
lished.
sartus: "He [Wendling] has the Carlyle idiosyncrasy of presenting an old truth, or a truth well known among reading and observing people, as a fresh discovery of his own." First, this reflects back on White’s Beacon column as having been intended primarily as commentary on subjects of current interest that would apply the ideas of Swedenborg. Clearly, he was making no pretense of originality. On the contrary, however, as related to the question of Carlyle’s indebtedness to Swedenborg for the philosophy of clothes, White was quite explicitly implying his own conviction that Carlyle had done nothing more in his Sartor Resartus than to rehash Swedenborg’s philosophy but had presented it as though it were his own invention.

But should White’s and the present writer’s view be in error, and should Carlyle not have consciously borrowed from Swedenborg without credit, then the remarkable philosophical and literary coincidence of resemblance still demonstrated that, in his literary masterpiece, Carlyle was but a mender of old clothes whose owner-identity had become lost to most people, and was patching them together nearly a century after the original garments had been tailored by the Great Swede. In either case, therefore, Carlyle’s Sartor Resartus was in the Swedenborgian tradition. In recognizing this fact, Editor White, in the pioneer town of Wichita, was more discerning than any of the leading critics operating for more than a century in the recognized literary and academic centers.

After this diversion for the purpose of clarifying antecedents, the story is returned to Wichita, and to the Beacon of February 10, 1875, containing the first installment of White’s Sartor Resartus column—two short items:

A hypocrite is a first, second and third class liar. He lies to his God, to his neighbor and to himself.

We love our neighbor, not for what he has done, but for what he is going to do for us.

The second installment of a week later contained six paragraphs, three of moderate length; on doubt, waste of resources, and the crucifixion:

“Doubt” is the pregnant mother of discovery in science, reform in politics, and truth in religion; without it there is scarcely a basis for the regeneration of the world. The “doubters” are the hope and inspiration of the future.

Taking into consideration our immense resources, developed and undeveloped, extent of territory, fertility of soil, varieties of climate, etc., we are the poorest of the civilized nations. Born the heir to all the centuries, yet we are like children in a toy shop, we scatter with the lavish hand of waste and build not.
The awful agony of the cross was spiritual, not physical. It is barely possible that Christ was conscious of the slightest bodily pang. Thousands of persons have suffered physical pain beyond all comparison greater. It is a well-known psychological fact that the soul, when in an ecstasy of joy or sorrow, fear or pain, is utterly unconscious of the sympathy of the body. The physical view of this great event is the lowest possible conception of it.

The third in the “Sartorian Series” contained nine independent paragraphs: six of them being pertinent to this story: dreams, truth telling, reform, action versus thought, the true church, and doubt versus revivals:

Dreams, frequently, in flashes, reveal to a man his true character. Analyze them, they are intuitions of truth, sometimes.

If we were sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, we would find it difficult to keep up an ordinary conversation.

Reform in high places must be the consequent [sic] of reform in low places. We cannot expect integrity in Congress unless it has its well-spring in the cabin. The mountain side is apt to be the unhealthiest of places if there is a mephitic pool at its base.

The men of action are like the storm, the tornado, the raging fire, the earthquake, the pestilence; the men of thought are like the silent forces of nature, whose universality and power no man is fully conscious of. The actor is essentially a man of faith; the thinker is essentially a doubter.

You must not look for the true church of God in visible organizations, nor creeds, nor sects. It is not catholic, it is not protestant. It is the marriage of good and truth in the soul, which is the temple of the living God. Unless the church is in the man by no physical or spiritual possibility can man be in the church. It is this invisible church that is the bride of God; and it is as universal as humanity.

The formula of the day is, “I don’t believe.” The most hopeful sign of the present is the general scepticism diffused through all ranks and conditions of life; and nowhere does it exist to a greater extent than in the churches. The frequency of the so-called revivals of religion furnishes an incontrovertible proof that the leaven of doubt is causing a fermentation in the whole mass, and they are but vain protests against the inevitable. There must be fermentation before we can have the pure wine of truth.

The fourth of the “Sartor Resartus Series” was in six paragraphs, in the first of which White indulged in puns, which was rare for him in a generation hopelessly addicted to the habit: “Never say ‘can’t’. Avoid cant. Carefully read Kant.” Three of the paragraphs were long and are essential to this mirror of White’s mind as of 1875; life in outer space, mental slavery, and the Devil:

According to the accepted theory of modern astronomy, the earth is perhaps the only planet of our system that is inhabited, those within the earth’s orbit having too high a temperature, while those outside have too low a temperature to admit of animal life. Might it not be that distance has no appreciable effect upon the temperature of the planet, that being regulated entirely by the extent of the radiating surface[?] What is there of absorbing or refracting
power in space that would cause a ray of heat to lose anything of its potency? If there is nothing, Jupiter and Saturn may be of as high a temperature as Mercury, and Mercury may be of as low a temperature as earth.

The slavery of body is fast disappearing from the face of the earth, but that of the mind broods with sable wings over the intellect of the age. With what abjectness, what unquestioning servitude, do we bow before our creeds, our dogmas, and our spiritual tyrants. Freedom is the very life of the soul, and thought its most beautiful form. Liberty and rationality are the man; destroy them and you annihilate him. No truth of God can be received and become a part of the spiritual man if it is not received by the free will through the calm, deliberate judgment of the intellectual faculties. To call a man a free thinker, is not to reproach him, but to crown him with the laurel and the amaranthe. For without the utmost freedom of thought there cannot be the fullest moral or intellectual growth.

Who the devil is the "Devil?" is a pertinent inquiry, and one that is increasing in frequency of repetition. It is of the utmost importance that it should be definitely settled. . . . If we gift him with personality, . . . [the orthodox view], we must concede him almost divine powers, relieve the human family from nearly all moral responsibility, and must look upon man as a mere foot-ball between God and the devil. We must deny personal existence, or else admit that the devil is equal to God, or that God is the author of evil. There is such an entity as good, and its form is truth. There is no such thing as a spiritual entity called evil. Evil is simply a perversion of good—that and nothing more. There is no good that cannot be perverted, even the highest. . . . Good is objectively and subjectively alive, and its form, in the concrete, is God. Evil is not objectively or subjectively alive, and has no form, because it is not an entity and has no substantial existence. The transmutation of good into evil by perversion or misuse, takes place in the will through the understandings, or as otherwise expressed, through man's freedom and rationality, consequently there can be no use for an objective, personal devil. From the above postulates, it may be seen that every man is his own devil. . . .

In the Beacon, July 7, 1875, came the announcement that Fisher and Smith had taken possession of the paper, and in this issue was printed White's fifth in the "Sartorian Series." After quoting from Draper's Conflict Between Science and Religion to the effect that in relation to the magnitude of the universe, man is only a tiny particle: "Of what consequence is man, his pleasures or his pains?" White replied that the difference lay in the value or worth of one object over another, quality not quantity, and that this is an absolute truth—

though but one man in a million is ever heard of, or leaves a visible trace, yet the meanest of his kind leaves an indelible impress on the world. And those whose names are indelibly impressed on the memory of the ages, were but the exponents of the spirit of their age and molded by it. We, to-day, are the sum of the efforts of the past.

This is the last of the "Sartor Resartus Series" until February 28,
1877, a full year after White had become part owner and controlling editor of the *Beacon*. There would not appear to be anything in these philosophical paragraphs to recommend him as editor of the paper as of November, 1875. The basis of that choice must be found elsewhere, tradition to the contrary notwithstanding. The "Agricola" letters were much more to the point of what concerned Sedgwick county. The things discussed there were the Texas cattle business as against the local agricultural interests, drouth relief, city and county government, and most important of all, the comprehensive political program of May 26. In fact, some might look upon this particular letter as a politician's "trial balloon."

White's candidacy for the Republican nomination to the state legislature appeared in the *Beacon* and the *Eagle* for September 1 and 2 respectively. The following week both papers contained "An Open Letter to the People," dated Ninnescah township, September 6, 1875—one of the most remarkable documents in Kansas political history:

I am told frequently, that if I desire the nomination as representative, I must work for it; yes, work like the devil. What more could I say to any man than to tell him that I am a candidate, and probably say, in addition, that I have been living in this county for the last four years, the most on my farm, on the Ninnescah. I can as effectively say the same through the papers.

White pointed out that worthy citizens condemned the customary methods of canvass, promising, trading, etc., which went far toward giving politics its bad name. And then, he put his finger on the theme that, as it turned out, he was to repeat again, again, and again; the fundamental character of the individual citizen in his own locality—the state or the nation was no better than the localities of which it was composed:

If the people desire honest reform they must commence the work at home.

... The primary meeting is the very bed-rock of our political system.

... It should be a question alone of integrity and capacity. ...

If a candidate is not willing to leave the people to their cool, sober, untrammelled judgment, but feels that he must labor with them as the exhorter does with the sinner at the mourner's bench, he surely must think that they are not capable of making a proper choice, and need his instruction.

In conclusion, I beg leave to say that I cannot visit a township or devote a day to the working up of influence or securing delegates pledged to my support. I have strongly condemned such procedure when not expecting an office, and now ... I see no reason to change my views. I shall leave the matter to the good and honest judgment of the people. ...

In the *Beacon*, September 8, a letter to the editor from a "Ninnescah Republican" was printed, expressing pleasure at the an-
nouncement of White's candidacy, commenting that he was generally known about the county because of his many ably written articles under the pen name "Agricola":

Indeed we doubt if there is a man in Sedgwick county who possesses the same acquirements, is so practical withal, and who would come as near filling the position with honor to himself and credit to the community as would Mr. White. He is a good Republican, is modest and unassuming, and will not stoop to huckstering, log-rolling or button-holing for an office.

So far as White's candidacy is concerned it is not necessary to complete the record of the campaign—the outcome is self-evident. Other considerations were involved, however, which require a brief explanation in terms of campaign facts. In the county Republican primary convention, October 5, Kelley won the nomination on the second ballot from a field of four. Dissatisfaction, even prior to the primary convention, led to a call, dated August 28, for an independent or opposition ticket, which materialized with Judge B. H. Fisher as candidate for the legislature. In the vote of November, John Kelley received 1,056 Republican votes, Fisher 520 independent votes, and Jay Kempinsky 69 Democratic votes, although the Democrats had no party organization in the county.23

Party-wise, this campaign of 1875 was critical for Sedgwick county. It was doubly an off year in Kansas with its annual elections, but 1876 was portentous in possibilities—national, state, and county. Many thought that the political party disorganization and realignment consequent upon the American Civil War had about run its course—new issues, new men, and new orientations, freed from the captivity to the old war-and-slavery issues, seemed to some about to crystallize.

When Fisher and Smith employed W. S. White as editor of the *Beacon* in November, 1875—after the election excitement was over—they were not hiring an unknown man. Conversely, White was not unaware of the views of Fisher and Smith when he accepted the position. His inexperience in the newspaper business extended only to the editorial function. Certainly, no one, not even "Ninnescah Republican," could have been really surprised when the *Beacon*, December 8, 1875, with White as editor, announced that henceforth it was a Democratic paper. On January 19, 1876, the *Beacon* carried the banner: "Leading Democratic Journal of the Southwest." To be sure there was some occasion to wonder how the writer of the "Open Letter" of September 6, declining to canvass

23. *Beacon*, September 1, October 6, 13, November 10, 1875; *Eagle*, November 4, 11, 1875. Different reports of numbers disagree slightly.
for the office for which he was a candidate, would perform as a partisan political editor. In that capacity he was expected to promote the Democratic party according to the prevailing code of political party warfare.24 Certainly, White himself was aware of the fact that he was incapable of being partisan in that literal sense. When he said as much 11 years later, upon the occasion of the sale of the Beacon, no reader of that paper would have disagreed. He must have tried the patience of the Sedgwick county Democratic committee, but on the other hand, in the task of building a Democratic party out of virtually nothing, there was something to be said in favor of the White type of journalism.

The reception by contemporaries given the Beacon’s political confession of faith was cordial. The Winfield Courier said: “There is not a square-toed Democratic paper in Southwest Kansas. One is needed. . . . Success to the Beacon. . . .” The Democratic Kansas City (Mo.) Times welcomed the Beacon repeating apparently from the missing number of the Beacon that: “The delay in the avowal, they declare, was entirely owing to” the lack of a Democratic county organization. Murdock’s Eagle was partly facetious—the Beacon “becomes a Democratic headlight, not only for Wichita but Southwestern Kansas, we judge. . . . If the Beacon but maintains its present literary excellence and local enterprise it will not only hold the same relation to the Democratic party in Southwestern Kansas that the Eagle has held to the Republican party.” The Eagle emphasized the prospects and the logic of Democratic ambitions in justification of the announcement: “One half of Congress—the popular half—over one half of the State Governors is of that stamp, and the impending great National fight will be maintained on the one side by that party.” 25

The letter of “An Anxious Democrat” urged Democratic organization pointing to the next presidential campaign, the need of reform, the Republican devices for smothering it, and the Democratic obligation and opportunity. Incidentally, the author revealed an important aspect of his positive program—money and banking—repeal of the national banking law and the substitute therefor of a national paper currency issued by the United States treasury, and interchangeable for registered United States bonds bearing 3.65%

24. The critical number of the Beacon in which the announcement was made, v. 4, No. 1, December 8, 1875, is missing from the file, so the full story of the announcement is not available. Contemporaries, in their commentary on the “new departure,” supply the dating and some of the content.—Eagle, December 9, 1875; Beacon, December 22, 1875.
25. Ibid., December 22, 1875; Wichita Weekly Eagle, December 9, 1875.
interest: “it is worth something to be conscious of working in a good cause, though the chances of defeat obstruct the progress.”

In the same issue the Beacon seconded the plea to organize the Democratic party in Sedgwick county. Without a party, what had Democrats been doing—some had “fallen into the ranks of the Republican party”; and others had not participated in politics at all and did not vote. “Democrats or men of whatever political faith or creed that discern the portentous storm gathering in the political sky, should at once consent to a day, and fall in line,” to organize the Democratic party. The call was issued for February 22, 1876, and was supported by a long editorial in the name of reform and good government, challenging centralization tendencies in contrast with “the simple republic of a Jeffersonian administration. . .” But two weeks later the Beacon comment is a reminder about the meaning of terms. Replying to the Cincinnati (Ohio) Gazette’s diagnosis that the Democratic party in the West was in a rather bad way, the Beacon observed that: “It is rather in the way of a Radical party, but we don’t look upon that as being particularly bad.” Illumination on the meaning of the term “radical” may well await White’s own exposition of editorial policy. Early in February, 1876, his trial period as editor, if it was indeed to have been intended as such, was over, and he bought Fisher’s interest in the paper, becoming editor in control of the Beacon’s policies, Smith serving as business manager.

During his first year as editor and his first political campaign White followed a course that was conventional for the most part. Corruption in politics was attributed, not to a debased moral tone of the people, but to “the almost universal neglect on the part of the so-called best citizens to perform faithfully their civil duties.” Private business was put first, he insisted, to the neglect of public duties of good citizens, and more extensively in cities than in smaller towns. To end corruption and other objectives, the Beacon urged Kansas Democrats to fuse with the Greenback party, but with the substitution of C. W. Blair, or E. G. Ross, Democrats, to head the ticket instead of J. K. Hudson, the Greenback candidate. In the final appeal before going to the polls, White spoke for the principles

27. Ibid., January 12, 1876. The issue of January 5, 1876, is missing from the file. It might have contained the call, but at any rate it was printed in the issue of January 12.
28. The Beacon file is incomplete for this period, v. 4, numbers 11-17 inclusive, February 16 to March 30, 1876, are also missing.
29. Wichita Weekly Beacon, April 26, 1876.
30. Ibid., August 16, 1876.
of "constitutional liberty," purity of administration, and civil service reform—Samuel J. Tilden for president, and John Martin for governor.\textsuperscript{31} When the disputed Hayes-Tilden election was finally decided late in February, 1877, White answered his own question: "What Will the Democracy Do?" by declaring:

Just what it did when by a coalition that outraged public decency, Gen. Jackson was defeated in the electoral college [1824] that disregarded the admonition of the popular vote—. . . . The Democratic party is the only party that has existed in this country not held together "by the cohesive power of public plunder."\textsuperscript{32}

The record of 1876 as partisan Democratic editor was anything but distinguished,—as dull as dishwater—and might have been duplicated by most any other "reform" paper. The factors that were to make White a distinguished Kansas journalist, or more comprehensively, publicist, were of quite a different order of magnitude. Already the reader has been introduced to White's major source of inspiration, Emanuel Swedenborg. To a lesser degree he was indebted to Herbert Spencer, a materialist. White's originality lay in effecting a substantial syntheses of the philosophical-theological system of the Great Swede, with an admixture from the secular philosophy of Spencer.

In 1882 Kansas elected its first Democratic state governor, George W. Glick. When a call was issued for a convention of Democratic editors to meet in Topeka at the time of the inauguration, some Republican editors took occasion to ridicule the Democratic press. This procedure angered Col. D. R. Anthony, editor of the Leavenworth Times, whose Republicanism no one could doubt. Anthony reminded his Republican colleagues that there were about 40 Democratic newspapers in the state, that some of them were edited with conspicuous ability, and the Wichita Beacon "has few equals anywhere for clear-cut vigorous expression."\textsuperscript{33}

At the convention of the Democratic editors, January 8, 1883, White's stubborn individualism received conspicuous notice. Flushed with victory, of course, these editors proposed to create a permanent organization. White refused to be organized and opposed organization of any kind: "He would not 'belong' to anything. The word 'belong' was one for a dog or a slave. He withdrew."\textsuperscript{34} White's Democratic party colleagues could not understand or control such stubborn individualism. But whether right

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., November 1, 1876.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., February 28, 1877.
\textsuperscript{33} Leavenworth Daily Times, December 21, 1882.
\textsuperscript{34} Topeka Daily Capital, January 9, 1883.
or wrong, his 11 years editorship of the *Beacon* was grounded in a well articulated and remarkably consistent philosophy; an intellectual commodity that was conspicuously absent from the party councils and the party press of either political organization. An editor who lived his philosophy and religion without fear or favor, and applied his singular system of thought with rigorous consistency, was a rare phenomenon, was indeed an uncomfortable colleague and a dangerous opponent. Evidently, Anthony read White’s “clear-cut vigorous expression” with a certain apprehension.

*(This Article Will Be Continued in a Later Issue of the Quarterly.)*