

Moore, Mary (Hunter) (1889–1975)

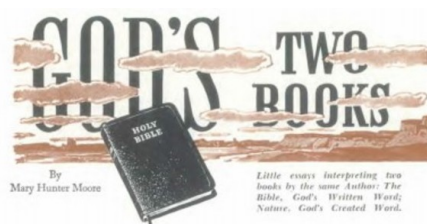
GERALD WHEELER

Gerald Wheeler, M.A. in religion (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan) and M.A.L.S. (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan), served the church for more than 47 years as an editor, first at Southern Publishing Association in Nashville, Tennessee, then at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, after its merger with Southern. He retired as head book editor. Wheeler has written numerous articles and books, including biographies on James White (2003) and Stephen Nelson Haskell (2016). He contributed to the first revised edition of the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1976) and *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (2013) and continues to edit for denominational publishing entities.

Mary Hunter Moore served the denomination for more than half a century in the areas of education and publishing. She authored several books and scores of magazine articles and columns.¹

Born April 21, 1889, Mary grew up in a seventh-day Sabbath observing Presbyterian family in Chicago. During her childhood she struggled with severe vision problems, once commenting that she thought the depiction of the crescent moon in drawings was only an artistic convention and not real. Becoming a Seventh-day Adventist, she attended Union College and received her B.A. degree in 1914. After graduation, she tutored the children of a wealthy family that was one of the first major donors to the College of Medical evangelists and taught church school in California. While there she attended Ellen G. White's Oakland, California, funeral service in 1915. A memory of the service that stayed in her mind the rest of her life was the sheaf of wheat laid across Mrs. White's casket, a symbol of resurrection.

Moore taught for three years in California, then served another three years as girl's dean and teacher at Maplewood Academy in Minnesota. Leaving the world of education, she accepted in 1920 a position as proofreader and librarian, despite her vision problem, at Southern Publishing Association in Nashville, Tennessee.² Because she had not married, she was one of the few women in the denominational work force to



Another Slander Protested

THE CHILDREN were absorbed in listening to the guest speaker at Junior camp. He was suggesting that our camp ought to have a special name. He hopefully asked if any boy or girl had a name to propose. He was obviously unprepared for the unanimous shout:

"Camp Skunk!!!!"

Oh! Oh! And he had thought they were enjoying this camp. But—"Camp Skunk!" again shrieked the juniors delightedly as they saw him startled. He turned appealingly to the staff members beside him, to find them as joyously pleased with the suggested name as the youngsters themselves. A few whispered words from the camp superintendent restored his equilibrium, but he said no more about a camp name. Evidently he could not bring himself to accept the odorous one proposed, and the juniors were in no mood to think of any other.

So Camp Skunk it has remained in the memories of some of us who were there. We enjoyed those skunks. And the children had meant their suggestion in happy earnest.

Mr. *Mephitis Mephitis*, the American skunk, and his family had welcomed with courtesy the horde of strange two-legged animals that had suddenly invaded their peaceful home in Montgomery Bell Park. They had done their best to entertain their queer guests. They had faithfully inspected everything about the living quarters of these new animals to see whether all was in order and there was nothing left lying about to decay. It was peculiar that these gigantic bipeds reversed the natural order and slept during the pleasant nights, making it difficult for hosts and guests to mingle.

But the skunks faithfully gathered every evening as sunset approached to put on a family show for their strange audience. Of course the audience understood that the nightly gathering of a dozen or two skunks in the parking area back of the dining hall was more for the skunks' hope that someone would leave open a screen door and they could get into the food storage rooms back of the kitchen. But they put on a show that entertained the juniors anyway.

All except one night. The playing crowd of skunks in the gathering dusk had always been good-natured, until this night some troublemaker among the quadrupeds evidently called someone else in the crowd a "human," and the fight was on. In a few moments the whole bunch of black-and-whites was one swirling, growing tumble of teeth-and-toenail fighters—but not with tails. It must be a family trait that no skunk uses his spray gun on a fellow skunk. But no bites and kicks were barred.

One runty fellow was getting the

worst, and looked for escape. Maybe one of the giants would help him. Up the back steps he dashed to clamber into the lap of a thrilled junior and lie quiet, sheltered from his relatives' sharp teeth, till it was safe to jump down.

Then one night the word was passed among the humans for the staff to return for a skunk carnival after the juniors were asleep. With every kind of camera in camp and floodlights and flashbulbs ready, we opened the screen doors at each end of the hall between the kitchen and the storerooms. In ran the hopeful skunks, to find every source of food closed off, except the slices of buttered bread that lay about; and they proceeded to feast, oblivious of us.

Among them was "Queen," who was more white than black, and who took her slice back under the water heater to eat in royal solitude, but who couldn't understand why her bread steadily moved away from her. She couldn't see the string attached to one corner of the slice that drew it out, but she followed—toward the camera.

As each skunk finished eating, he ran out of the open door; but "King" remained the longest. His white was all gathered into a round "crown" on his head, and he was the least shy. Indeed, he seemed as much curious of us as we of him. Leaving his bread in the middle of the circle of giants, he came to each of us in turn, placed his little black "hands" on our shoes, and looked up intently into our faces. His shining black eyes tried to pierce the invisible wall between us. Then he returned to his meal. Finished, he walked to the door, turned one meditative glance around the mysterious circle of mammoths, and departed with dignity.

"Skunks! Don't ever again insult such high-class animals by applying their name to low-class humans. ★★★"

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A sample of Moore's column "God's Two Books"

From *These Times*, November 1956.

keep her job during the American Great Depression of the 1930s when institutions laid off numerous employees and generally retained only male heads of households.³

Moore remained at Southern Publishing until her retirement in 1958. Among her many responsibilities at Southern was serving on a committee that did a special revision of Uriah Smith's *Daniel and Revelation* to sell in the Southern Union. Church leadership also called upon her to do research on various doctrinal and other issues troubling the denomination at the time, such as the Wednesday crucifixion theory promoted by Herbert W. Armstrong. In addition, Moore authored a "God's Two Books" column in *These Times* magazine and became a popular speaker on nature and the spiritual lessons it taught. She also wrote the responses for the Bible question and answer column in *These Times* (previously titled the *Watchman*, then *Our Times*).⁴

In addition, she wrote numerous magazine articles and several books, including *The Gleaner of Bethlehem* (Southern Publishing Association, 1930), *They That Be Teachers* (SPA, 1937), *A Workman Not Ashamed* (SPA, 1942), *I Shall Be Satisfied* (Review and Herald, 1947), and *Down Nature's Path* (SPA, 1953). During the early 1960s she wrote a short history of Southern Publishing Association that became the entry about the publishing house for the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* first published in 1966. Although she officially retired from Southern Publishing in 1958, Moore continued to volunteer as its librarian through the 1960s. Her struggles with vision problems led her to volunteer as a teacher at the Tennessee School for the Blind. Eventually, she moved away from the Nashville area with her sister, Julia, and died December 21, 1975.⁵

SOURCES

"Mary Hunter Moore." *Madison Survey and Alumni News*, March 1976.

"Moore, Mary Hunter" obituary. *ARH*, February 26, 1976.

NOTES

1. This article draws on the author's personal conversations with Mary Hunter Moore during his years of service at Southern Publishing Association, beginning in 1967.
2. "Mary Hunter Moore," *Madison Survey and Alumni News*, March 1976, 7.
3. Kit Watts, "The Rise and Fall of Adventist Women in Leadership," *Ministry*, April 1995, 9-10.
4. "Moore, Mary Hunter" obituary, *ARH*, February 26, 1976, 23. The unsigned columns or "Departments" were titled "The Watchman Answers" in *Watchman*, "Scripture Problems Answered" in *Our Times*, and "Please Explain" in *These Times*.

5. "Mary Hunter Moore."

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