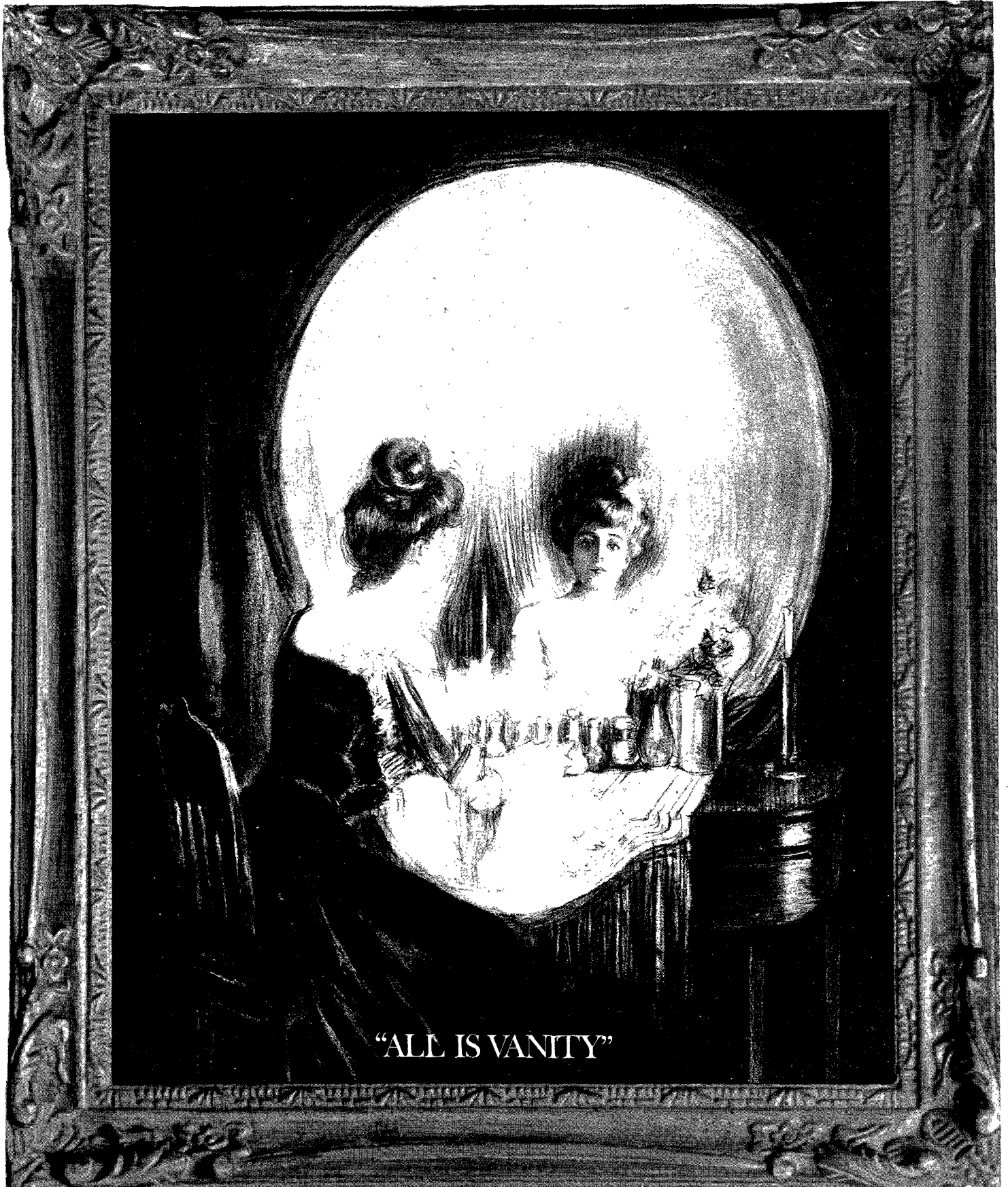


# the Ministry

MAY 1975



"ALL IS VANITY"

ters retiring in areas that are already too salty with salt!

We do not deny the fact that balmy breezes, sunshiny days, golf courses, sandy beaches, lovely shopping centers, and gorgeous scenery are most appealing. But what about those towns and villages gripped by Siberian winters and Death Valley summers where thousands of precious people live and yet no Seventh-day Adventist has knocked on their doors bringing light from Heaven?

It is fully recognized that there are some retired ministers who may need to be close to medical facilities owing to poor health. But those who have good health, a strong mind, and a deep love for souls could retire at least for a few years in areas where they could do dark-county evangelism of one type or another. Imagine what would happen if even one thousand of our retired workers would settle in dark counties or in areas where a small company of believers need help.

We are not advocating that a person spend the rest of his life this way, but at least a few years of retirement in such a locality would greatly strengthen God's church and be a marvelous blessing to the retiree.

Some months ago, while in England, I met Pastor and Mrs. W. C. S. Raitt, workers who had retired  
*Continued on page 8*

## COVER CLOSE-UP

Several months ago the editor was visiting in the Robert E. Cowdrick home when a picture on the wall caught his attention. Set this magazine upright and move about six or eight feet away and you'll see what caught his attention. We wish to thank the Cowdricks, members of the Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, church, for lending us their copy of the picture, and Takoma Picture Framers for making the frame available for our use. The picture *All Is Vanity*, by C. Allan Gilbert, was copyrighted by the Life Publishing Company and published by Renthall and Newman, New York. It appeared in numerous publications around the turn of the century.



# the Ministry

VOLUME XLVIII, NO. 5

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST MINISTRY

## IN THIS ISSUE

If you suspect some intentional tie-in between the emphasis on Christian dress and Pierson's "Playing With Fire," you're right. Not that women's revealing manner of dress can be directly blamed for a minister's fall—but it is part of the package of loose morals so characteristic today. At the time we received the letter that triggered the dress emphasis, we also received a manuscript release from the White Estate that is appropriate to this area of concern. A portion of it appears this month. Although the first part included in the article was published in *Testimonies*, volume 6, page 96, most has never appeared in print before. Center-spread art is by Elfred Lee, who has climbed Mount Ararat with groups searching for Noah's ark.

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PUBLIC INTEREST in the search for Noah's ark continues to swell in spite of the fact that a number of expeditions to the traditional Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey have been unsuccessful in locating it. Symptomatic of such interest is the number of books on the subject rolling off the presses. Examples of such works published recently are *Noah's Ark, Fact or Fable?* by Violet Cummings (San Diego: Creation Research Society, 1972); *The Quest for Noah's Ark*, by John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1972); *The Ark File*, by Rene Noorbergen (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1974); and Fernand Navarra's book translated from the French and published under the title *Noah's Ark: I Touched It* (Plainfield, N.J.: Logos International, 1974).

Considering the amount of time, energy, and expenditures that have been invested in the pursuit of this project and the publication of these pursuits, it behooves the Christian interested in this matter to obtain the most reliable information on it available. The Bible itself is rather brief on the point of where the ark landed. It simply says, "The ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat" (Gen. 8:4, R.S.V.). Both laymen and scholars alike have noted that the word "mountains" in this phrase is in the plural. Thus even though the toponym Ararat is given, the location is not precise.

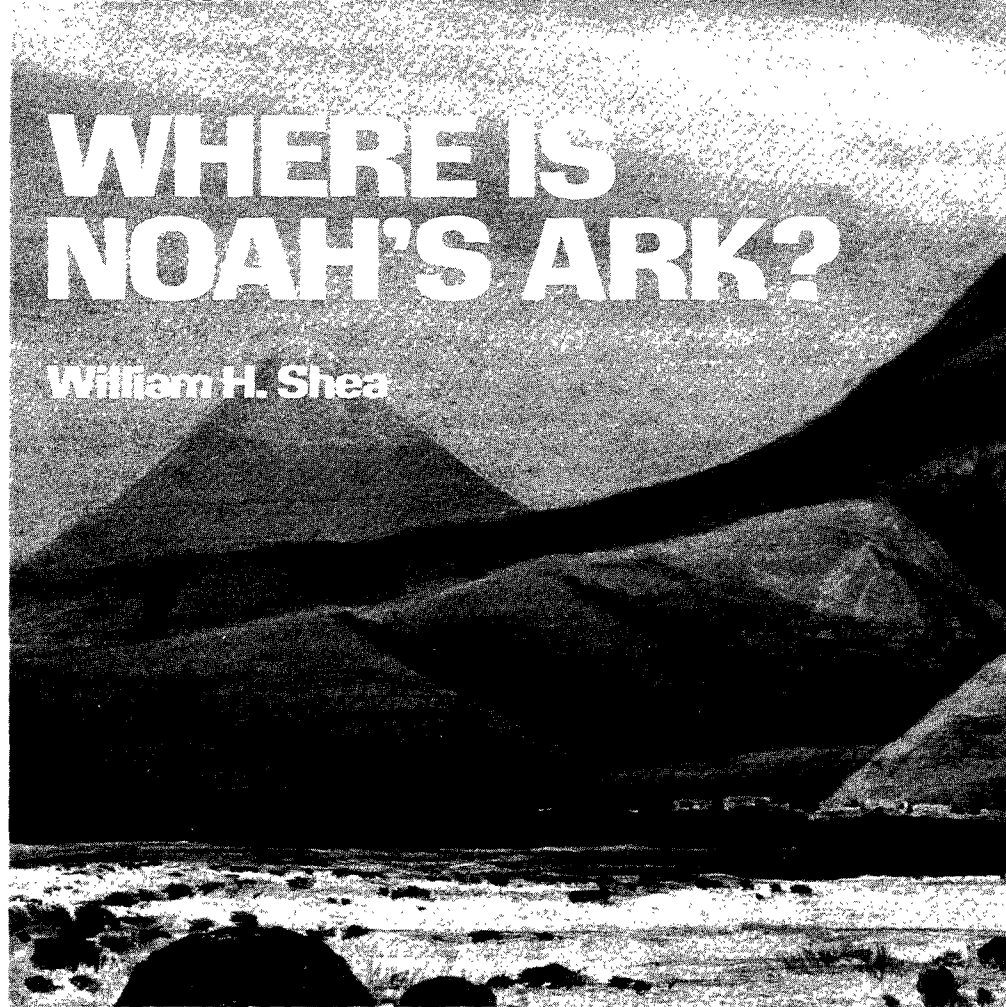
A series of the most ancient epics known in the earliest language written by man, Sumerian, appear to refer to the same region. This cycle of texts is known as *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* and they refer to relations between the king of Uruk (Biblical Erech) in the southern Mesopotamian plain and the ruler of Aratta whose residence lay over the mountains to the north. These early texts add little more information, however, that would help in locating that region more precisely.

At this point, then, the Adventist

*William H. Shea, M.D., is assistant professor of Old Testament, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University.*

# WHERE IS NOAH'S ARK?

William H. Shea



Christian is naturally interested in any statements Ellen G. White may have made concerning the location of the ark after the Flood. Even a cursory perusal of her comments on this subject is sufficient, however, to reveal that she never voiced her opinion on where the ark landed in any more precise geographical terms than those found in the Bible. In spite of this specific silence, there is a statement in her writings that bears some relation to the current quest for Noah's ark.

"The waters had been fifteen cubits above the highest mountains. The Lord remembered Noah, and as the waters decreased, he caused the ark to rest upon the top of a cluster of mountains, which God in his power had preserved and made them to stand fast all through that violent storm. These mountains were but a little distance apart, and the ark moved about and rested upon one, then another of these mountains, and was no more driven upon the boundless ocean. This gave great relief to Noah and all within the ark. As the mountains and hills appeared they were in a broken,

rough condition, and all around them appeared like a sea of roiled water or soft mud."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 77.

The mountains referred to here are described as a "cluster" and they are said to have been "but a little distance apart." They were sufficiently close together that they formed a haven for the storm-tossed ship and they were even close enough together that the ship touched first one and then another of the cluster.

From this description the question arises, How well does the traditional Mount Ararat (Agri Dag), the focus of current expeditions in search of the ark, fit these requirements? One feature of Mount Ararat that stands out in photographs is that it is a very solitary peak. Though there are other high mountains in the vicinity of Mount Ararat, including "little" Ararat, none of them is close enough to Agri Dag that the ark would have floated back and forth between them, nor do they form a cluster that could have provided the haven for the ark as described above. It is also difficult to locate this "cluster" among the



peaks at the top of Mount Ararat itself.


The site on the mountain that has attracted the most attention in the search for the ark is an ice pack that rests on a cross-rock barrier on the north end of the mountain at 14,000 feet of elevation. As for the rest of the mountain, a geologist who has worked on it wrote me, "If it [the ark] went down the mountain in any other direction the steepness of the mountain would have rolled it to its destruction ages ago." Given these features of the traditional Mount Ararat, it does not seem to be a very likely landing place for the ark if we try to harmonize it with the comment of Ellen White quoted above.

The second point of interest from this quotation relates not so much to the location or configuration of the landing site as it does to the basic make-up of the mountain. Of this cluster of mountains she writes, "God in his power had preserved and made them to stand fast all through that violent storm." The logical conclusion from this statement is that the mountains in

question were antediluvian in origin. It might be interesting in this connection to speculate on the general question of mountain building and about the heights to which antediluvian mountains may or may not have reached. Our specific concern here, however, is with the make-up of the traditional Mount Ararat.

Agri Dagh clearly is volcanic in origin and even though its volcano is no longer active, it still lies in a region known for earthquake activity. The geologist referred to above wrote that the lava flows from Mount Ararat extend out from the mountain for a radius of about twenty miles. If such volcanic activity was intradiluvian or postdiluvian, as creationist scientists commonly hold, then it is difficult to connect this volcanic Mount Ararat with the antediluvian mountains implied in Ellen White's statement. One could argue, I suppose, that an antediluvian shield lies underneath the volcanic cap and cover of Agri Dagh, but in that case the ark could hardly have escaped incineration by the flows of lava that must have engulfed it if it

landed there. As a volcanic mountain, therefore, Agri Dagh falls short of Ellen White's requirement for an antediluvian mountain as the landing site of the ark.

Our results from this brief investigation are negative. The traditional Mount Ararat, Agri Dagh, fails to satisfy the requirements of Ellen White's statement on the subject on the two counts, both on the basis of its topography, and its origin and character. If the search for the ark is pursued further, it would seem wise for those involved in such a pursuit to examine other areas in addition to Agri Dagh. 

### A Note on the Name "Ararat" in the Bible

In the light of the foregoing article, it may be apropos to look again at the Biblical usage of the toponym Ararat. In 2 Kings 19:37 (identically paralleled in Isaiah 37:38) we have the sons of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, escaping north to "the land of Ararat" (R.S.V.) after murdering their father. In Jeremiah 51:27, Ararat is called a kingdom. From these references it is obvious that "Ararat" is the name of a country.

This Biblical country of Ararat is known from extra-Biblical Assyrian sources as Urartu. Linguistically, these two names are the same, a fact supported by its being spelled 'wrrt in Isaiah 37:38 of the famous Dead Sea Isaiah scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) from Qumran. Covering approximately the same territory as Armenia, Urartu has recently produced its own written records and archeological data in eastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, and the Caucasus region of the Soviet Union. As a political unit, Ararat (Urartu) flourished between the ninth and sixth centuries B.C.

Ararat's fame is now based mostly on Genesis 8:4, where it says the ark of Noah "came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat" (R.S.V.). On comparison with other Old Testament texts, it is clear that the name of a country or region is involved here too; another way of saying it would be "the mountains in the region of Ararat." As Dr. Shea has pointed out, since the word *mountains* is in the plural, no specific mountain can be referred to. Though the most popular tradition (among many others) associates the name Ararat with Mount Agri Dagh in the ancient territory of Urartu, we must remember that this tradition preserves the name in a very restricted sense. L. T. G.