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ABSTRACT

THE 1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

by

Michael W. Campbell

Adviser: Jerry Moon

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: THE 1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

Name of researcher: Michael W. Campbell

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Jerry Moon, Ph.D.

Date completed: June 2008

The Topic

The 1919 Bible Conference was held immediately after World War I during a heightened interest in the apocalyptic and soon after the death of Ellen White. Patterned after the Fundamentalist prophetic conferences of 1918 and 1919, it was arguably the first “scholarly” conference held by Seventh-day Adventists. During a theologically turbulent time, Adventists found the emerging Fundamentalist movement attractive for its biblicist theology, its opposition to modernism and evolution, and the apparent popular appeal of its prophetic conferences.

The Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the significance of the 1919 Bible Conference for Seventh-day Adventist history and theology.

The Sources

This was a documentary study based on published and unpublished sources, most of which were produced by Seventh-day Adventists between 1910 and 1922. The most heavily used primary source was the collection of original transcripts of the 1919 Bible Conference. Although these transcripts are not entirely complete, they are extensive. These transcripts were supplemented by other primary sources that included periodicals, correspondence, and other archival materials.

Conclusions

The 1919 Bible Conference illustrates the polarization in Seventh-day Adventist theology that took place as Adventists grappled with conservative evangelicalism (what later became known as Fundamentalism). Adventist theologians became divided, most notably, between “progressives” and “traditionalists,” both of whom were influenced by the emerging Fundamentalist movement. Some issues were quite controversial at the time, such as the identity of the king of the north in Dan 11, while others such as the covenants and the Trinity would become more important with the passing of time. The topics that had the most lasting effect upon Adventist history and theology were the discussions about Ellen G. White’s writings and their relationship to the Bible. These hermeneutical issues evidenced a theological polarization that continues to shape Adventist thought.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

THE 1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Michael W. Campbell

July 2007

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Adventist	Seventh-day Adventist ¹
CAR	Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan
DF	Document File, an archival category in the Ellen G. White Estate.
EGW	Ellen G. White
EGWE-GC	Ellen G. White Estate, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland
EGWE-LLU	Ellen G. White Estate Branch Office, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California
FLD	Folder
GCA	General Conference Archives, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, Maryland
GCM	General Conference Executive Committee Minutes
RBC	“Report of Bible Conference, Held in Takoma Park, D.C., July 1-19, 1919.”
<i>RH</i>	<i>The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald; Review and Herald</i>
SD	Shelf Document
<i>ST</i>	<i>Signs of the Times</i>
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
TMs	Typed Manuscript

¹Other Adventist groups will be differentiated with a modifier. For example, Millerites will be referred to as “Millerite Adventists” in this dissertation.

PREFACE

From its earliest beginnings, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been a movement driven by its understanding of biblical prophecy.¹ The denomination originated from the Millerite Adventist movement of the 1840s when William Miller used the assumptions of Scottish common-sense realism² to deduce that Christ would return literally to this earth “about 1843.”³ When Christ did not come as anticipated, the

¹Douglas Morgan, *Adventism and the American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2001); Jonathan Butler, “Adventism and the American Experience,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 173-206.

²Scottish common-sense realism was a democratic philosophy that did not rely on subtle arguments, but appealed to the testimony of consciousness, and readily settled all questions by elevating disputed opinions into indubitable principles. For an overview of this philosophy see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, “The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology,” *Church History* 24, no. 3 (September 1955): 257-72. George R. Knight attributes common-sense realism to William Miller, describing it as belief in the ability of the “common person” to understand almost anything, including theology. Before Scottish realism, theology had been primarily the domain of trained theologians, but for William Miller, God could lead faithful persons into truth even though “they may not understand Hebrew or Greek” (*Mid-night Cry [sic]*, Nov. 17, 1842, 4; cited in George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000], 36. See also Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989], 134-35, 167-79, 183).

³The classic biography of William Miller is Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller, Generally Known as a Lecturer on the Prophecies, and the Second Coming of Christ* (Boston: J. V. Himes, 1853), recently republished with a critical introduction by Merlin D. Burt (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005). For an overview

experience became known among Adventists as the “Great Disappointment,” and became, among evangelical Christians, a severe blow to the credibility of historicist premillennialism.¹

While many Millerite Adventists gave up their belief in the “near” Second Advent altogether, a minority sought to discover a biblical explanation for the Disappointment. One such group who clung to the belief in the premillennial return of Christ also developed an interest in the seventh-day Sabbath. Leaders in this development were Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain; James White, who was an ordained minister from the Christian Connexion; and Ellen G. Harmon (later White), who received what she believed were prophetic visions, beginning in December 1844. By 1850 these Sabbatarian Adventists had developed a unique system of prophetic interpretation that led them to see themselves as God’s remnant charged with warning the world about its demise. In 1860 they took the name “Seventh-day Adventist,” and in 1863 formed the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists with some 3,500 members. By 1900 denominational membership had grown to more than 75,000, necessitating a major restructuring of the

of the Millerite movement see George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993).

¹Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875-1982*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1983), 15-16; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 49-55.

church organization at the 1901 and 1903 General Conference Sessions.¹ This restructuring helped to meet the growing demands of an increasingly international church, and by 1919 the membership had grown to 178,000 members.²

In spite of this rapid growth, and partly because of it, by 1919 Adventist leaders perceived that they had reached a point of unprecedented crisis. While this dissertation does not seek to analyze all the many factors, several are paramount. The most obvious indicator of crisis during this time was World War I,³ which permanently changed the geopolitical structure of Europe. More significantly for Adventist eschatology, the prophetic significance of the nation of Turkey or the “Eastern Question,” as it was called, had been a favorite topic of Adventist prophetic expositors, but the changes in Europe required them to reexamine their interpretations.⁴ Other significant influences were those

¹For a survey of the development of Seventh-day Adventist organizational structure see Andrew G. Mustard, *James White and SDA Organization: Historical Development, 1844-1881*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 12 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), and Barry David Oliver, *SDA Organizational Structure: Past, Present, and Future*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 15 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1989).

²*Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1921).

³Weber states that World War I was the single most important event in reviving interest in the premillennial return of Christ during the late 1910s (Weber, 105). The impact of World War I was similarly felt within the Seventh-day Adventist Church (see Howard B. Weeks, *Adventist Evangelism in the Twentieth Century* [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1969], 77-83; and Gary Land, “The Perils of Prophesying: Seventh-day Adventists Interpret World War I,” *Adventist Heritage* 1, no. 1 [1974]: 28-33, 55-56).

⁴Bert B. Haloviak points out that the central issue of the 1919 Bible Conference was the “Eastern Question.” “In the Shadow of the ‘Daily’: Background and Aftermath of the 1919 Bible and History Teachers’ Conference” (Unpublished paper, General

of evolution and modernism. The Adventist Church dismissed both as unbiblical, but this controversy also forced them to reexamine their beliefs.¹ Adventists during this period joined Fundamentalists in condemning these so-called “twin perils.” With a mutual enemy, Adventists now found themselves on common ground with Fundamentalists. It appears that both Adventists and Fundamentalists kept a close eye on each other.²

One final background factor was the death of Ellen G. White in 1915 which raised questions about the continuing authority of her writings and whether the church had authority to revise them.³ These concerns largely originated in 1911 when Ellen White

Conference Archives, 1979). For examples of Adventist rhetoric on the Eastern Question before World War I, see H. E. Robinson, *The Eastern Question in the Light of God's Promises to Israel: Prophetic and Historic* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1897). For an example of revisions after World War I see Owen S. Roderick, *The Eastern Question and Its Relation to Armageddon: The Downfall of Turkey and What It Means to the World* (Los Angeles, CA: Southern California Tract Society, ca. 1920).

¹It appears that Adventist educators were the most cognizant of the dangers of modern thinking and evolution because of their impact upon Adventist education. See Warren E. Howell, “An Emergency in Our Educational Work: How Shall We Meet the Exigencies of the Situation?” *RH*, May 1, 1919, 2, 21-22. For a background and overview see Gary Land, “Shaping the Modern Church, 1906-1930,” in *Adventism in America*, rev. ed., ed. Gary Land (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 113-37.

²Michael W. Campbell, “Seventh-day Adventist Reactions to the Prophetic Conference Movement,” Term paper, Andrews University, 2005, CAR.

³This question came after a lengthy controversy over revisions in Ellen G. White's book, *The Great Controversy*. White was concerned that as far as possible the 1911 edition utilize historical sources that were readily available and from recognized historians. She assigned C. C. Crisler, W. W. Prescott, H. C. Lacey, and others to work on this project for her. Some who held to inerrancy believed that any changes were wrong. The suggestion to change or revise her writings at the 1919 Bible Conference was viewed as a continuation of what she had asked when she was alive. For an overview of the controversy concerning the 1911 edition of the *Great Controversy* see Arthur L. White, “W. W. Prescott and the 1911 Edition of the *Great Controversy*,” *SD*, 1981; Ellen G.

made some minor revisions to her seminal eschatological work, *The Great Controversy*.

By 1919, without a living prophet to guide them, the leaders of the denomination believed that the unity of the church was in jeopardy.¹

To consider the direction the church should take in response to this collective crisis, Seventh-day Adventist church leaders began to call for a prophetic conference similar to those being held within Fundamentalist circles.² Leading denominational thinkers believed that limiting such a conference to a select group would allow invitees to discuss controversial issues more candidly. Such discussions, they believed, would help to unify the Adventist denomination and thereby prepare it to meet the crises it was facing.³ These were the circumstances that prompted Adventist administrators to plan a prophetic conference to be held in Takoma Park, Maryland, during the summer of 1919.

White Estate, "The 1911 Edition of 'The Great Controversy' An Explanation of the Involvements of the 1911 Revision," rev. ed., SD, 1989.

¹Paul E. McGraw, "Without a Living Prophet," *Ministry*, April 2000, 11-15.

²The term "prophetic conferences" is used here to designate a series of religious gatherings focused on the interpretation of Bible prophecy. Although such gatherings had been held from the late nineteenth century, from 1917 through 1919 they took on a special significance in the context of the Fundamentalist movement that was reaching a new peak of influence immediately following World War I.

³1919 Bible Conference chairman and General Conference president Arthur G. Daniells saw the 1919 Bible Conference chiefly as a unifying influence in the denomination. This was the goal he set at the beginning of the Conference, and in his evaluation of the Conference afterward he saw it as meeting his expectations for bringing church unity. See RBC, July 1, 1919, 10.

Statement of the Problem

During the decades following the 1919 Bible Conference,¹ it became an all-but-forgotten chapter in Adventist history. The discovery of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts in 1974 coincided with a re-awakened historical consciousness within Adventism.² However, the publication of excerpts from these transcripts in *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums*³ has led to misperceptions about the

¹The 1919 Bible Conference was actually composed of two concurrent conferences. The primary conference was the 1919 Bible Conference which extended from July 1 to 19, 1919. During the evening there was an additional series of teachers' meetings that extended beyond the Bible Conference until August 1, 1919. Both will be collectively referred to in this dissertation as the "1919 Bible Conference."

²The discovery of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts occurred in 1974 within the newly formed General Conference Archives (Tim Poirier, "How the 1919 Bible Conference Transcripts Were Discovered," SD [Ellen G. White Estate, 1982]). For information on the historical awakening of Adventist historiography during the 1970s see Benjamin McArthur, "Where Are Historians Taking the Church?" *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* (Autumn 1979): 9-14; idem, "A New Look at the Old Days: Adventist History Comes of Age," *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* (Autumn 1988): 36-42.

³"The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Teaching of Bible and History, July 30, 1919," *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 10 (May 1979): 27-44. Up to now historical attention to the 1919 Bible Conference has been limited almost exclusively to the discussions about inspiration at the end of the 1919 Bible Conference, and does not include the discussions about inspiration that occurred earlier in the Conference. Therefore the publication of excerpts about Ellen White at the end of the Conference has led some to believe that the 1919 Bible Conference was focused exclusively on this discussion over the inspiration and authority of Ellen White, and/or, that church leaders tried to suppress such knowledge of such candid discussion afterward. In reality, the discussion about Ellen White was not on the original agenda of the Conference, but appeared only indirectly in the context of revising her seminal work on eschatology, *The Great Controversy* (1888, 1911), see page x, footnote 3. Herbert Douglass notes that suggestions not to publish the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts also arose regarding heated discussions over the "Daily" of Dan 11 (see Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen White* [Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1998], 434-43).

precise background, nature, content, and results of the Conference. Until this dissertation no study has comprehensively analyzed the events leading up to and surrounding the 1919 Bible Conference. Therefore, the Conference needed to be comprehensively examined within its context, including the relationship of the 1919 Bible Conference to parallel developments within the Fundamentalist movement. Such a study (1) clarifies the complex interaction between Adventists and Fundamentalists, (2) shows to what extent Fundamentalist thought impacted the Adventist Church, and thus (3) sheds light on a complex and often misunderstood period in the development of Adventist theology.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the significance of the 1919 Bible Conference for Seventh-day Adventist history and theology. In order to achieve that purpose this dissertation will trace the historical context of the conference, explore the personal dynamics taking place among the various Adventist conferees, and analyze the content of the conference in relation to both the past and the future of Adventist theology.

Scope and Delimitations

The period examined begins in 1910 with the publication of the *Fundamentals* series, which became the precursor to the Fundamentalist movement,¹ and extends to the end of the General Conference presidency of Arthur G. Daniells in 1922.² Consideration

¹George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

²Arthur G. Daniells was not reelected at the 1922 General Conference session in large part due to the influence of J. S. Washburn and Claude E. Holmes who mounted a vitriolic campaign to remove him from office. Their opposition to Daniells originated as a

is also given to later perspectives about the 1919 Bible Conference, beginning with the discovery of the transcripts in 1974 up through 2007. This dissertation will not exhaustively examine the complex relationship between Fundamentalists and Seventh-day Adventists, but will examine that relationship only to the extent necessary to understand the 1919 Bible Conference.

Justification

While much of early Adventist history has been intensely scrutinized, comparatively little research has been done on the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the twentieth century—a situation that is only beginning to be remedied by a series of recent dissertations.¹ As noted above, the 1919 Bible Conference itself was almost entirely lost sight of until the rediscovery of the unpublished transcripts in 1974. This dissertation seeks to shed light on an often overlooked period in Adventist history.

result of concerns about what had occurred at the 1919 Bible Conference. While neither Washburn nor Holmes was present at the 1919 Bible Conference, their suspicions were aroused. They saw “this Bible Institute” as one of “the most terrible thing[s] that has ever happened in the history of this denomination” (J. S. Washburn, “An Open Letter to the General Conference,” N.p., [1922], CAR).

¹See e.g., Juhyeok Nam, “Reactions to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and *Questions on Doctrine*, 1955-1971” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2005); and Paul E. McGraw, “Born in Zion?: The Margins of Fundamentalism and the Definition of Seventh-day Adventism” (Ph.D. diss., George Mason University, 2004).

Review of Literature and Prior Research

Published Documents

A bibliography by Gary Shearer¹ highlights Adventist periodical articles and references within standard Adventist historical texts that mention the 1919 Bible Conference. Most of these references are cursory in nature and refer to the discussion about the inspiration and authority of Ellen White's writings at the end of the Conference. Other pertinent published references include the following:

1. The approximately 2500-word article on "Seventh-day Adventists" in the *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*² presents a detailed historical sketch of the origins of Adventism. The author, Ronald Lawson, argues that the intellectual origins of Adventism may be traced to Millerism and the common-sense realism of the day, both of which employed a "proof-text" hermeneutic of Scripture. Lawson suggests that in the twentieth century, the need for accreditation of Adventist colleges and the development of the Seminary led the denomination to "embrace" modern biblical scholarship, which in turn placed Adventists in tension with Fundamentalism. Lawson's article, however, makes no reference to the 1919 Bible Conference.

2. George R. Knight, in *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs*,³ discusses the development of Adventist theology during the late 1910s

¹Gary W. Shearer, "The 1919 Bible Conference: A Bibliographical Guide to Sources in the Heritage Room, Pacific Union College Library" (4th rev. ed., unpublished paper, 2001).

²Ronald Lawson, "Seventh-day Adventists," *The Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 444-49.

³Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 128-59.

through the 1920s. His brief survey highlights a few primary sources illustrating the general sympathy Seventh-day Adventists had toward Fundamentalism, and especially toward the embracing of a rigid, verbal view of inspiration.

3. Gilbert Valentine in his biography¹ of W. W. Prescott includes a section on the 1919 Bible Conference. He showcases the event from Prescott's perspective. For example, the veiled statement made by Prescott during the 1919 Bible Conference of his own "tremendous struggle" over the past year refers to the death of his only son Lewis. Valentine describes Prescott as the chair of the planning committee, but there does not appear to be any evidence supporting this claim. He does, however, rightly point out the "prominent part" upon the overall meeting, and furthermore highlights how Prescott published a synopsis of his presentations in the book, *The Doctrine of Christ*.²

4. Floyd Greenleaf's revision of the denominational history textbook, *Light Bearers*,³ provides a few glimpses into the Fundamentalists' relationship with Adventists. This work provides useful information on the 1919 Bible Conference and the response of Adventists to the issue of inspiration during the 1930s. Unfortunately, it provides little in-

¹Gilbert M. Valentine, *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Forgotten Generation* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2005), 275-83; idem, *The Shaping of Adventism: The Case of W. W. Prescott* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992), 238-44; idem, "William Warren Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1982), 504-19.

²Valentine, *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant*, 276.

³Richard Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, rev. ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2000), 627-33. The first edition (Pacific Press, 1979) makes no mention of the 1919 Bible Conference.

depth analysis of the issues beyond the scope of the 1919 Bible Conference and only a brief discussion of the creation/evolution debate.¹

5. Paul McGraw provides an interesting discussion of the Fundamentalist debate within Adventism in the context of discussing Adventist reactions to the death of Ellen White, but he highlights only a few key points during the period.²

6. Herbert E. Douglass, in his apologetic work on the life and ministry of Ellen G. White, devotes an entire chapter to the 1919 Bible Conference. The chapter focuses on the discussions on inspiration at the Conference and suggests that the Conference did little if anything to change popular views of verbal inspiration in the Adventist denomination.³

Unpublished Documents

Arnold C. Reye⁴ has written a helpful survey of the relationship between Adventism and Fundamentalism. His paper provides a detailed background and historical study of Fundamentalism and then proceeds into a historical, doctrinal, and psychological analysis of Adventist attitudes toward Fundamentalism. Reye includes in his broader overview, however, only a cursory reference to the 1919 Bible Conference.

¹Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 434-38.

²McGraw, "Without a Living Prophet," 11-15.

³Douglass, 434-43.

⁴Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant Fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s," 1993, TMs (photocopy), CAR.

Todd Miller in a term paper¹ touches on Adventism and Fundamentalism but spends the bulk of his paper looking at the relationship of the Adventist Church to other conservative Christians from the 1930s through the 1980s. He makes no reference at all to the 1919 Bible Conference.

Graeme S. Bradford has written two papers about Fundamentalist views within Adventism. The first deals mostly with the Evangelical-Adventist dialogues in the 1950s.² In another version of this paper Bradford develops these ideas more fully in broad strokes beginning with the 1919 Bible Conference and continuing with debates related to Ellen White through the 1980s.³ In three published versions of Bradford's research he devotes several sections to the 1919 Bible Conference.⁴

Bert Haloviak has written the most helpful survey to date on the background and aftermath of the "daily" controversy (taken from Dan 11) within Adventism. Haloviak uses this as an interpretative tool for understanding the four major discussions about inspiration during the 1919 Bible Conference. But his paper by his own admission does

¹Todd Miller, "Are Adventists Fundamentalists? A Comparison of Fundamentalism with the Seventh-day Adventist Church Today," 1990, TMs (photocopy), CAR, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

²Graeme S. Bradford, "Fundamentalist and Evangelical Seventh-day Adventists in Conflict," 1994, TMs (photocopy), CAR.

³Graeme S. Bradford, "In the Shadow of Ellen White: Fundamentalist and Evangelical Seventh-day Adventists in Conflict," 1994, TMs, CAR.

⁴Graeme S. Bradford, *Prophets Are Human* (Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 2004); idem, *People Are Human* (Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing Company, 2006); idem, *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again the Real Ellen White* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2006).

not purport “to be a thorough exposition of the many involved episodes that it [the 1919 Bible Conference] touches.”¹

In the only master’s thesis on the topic, Steven G. Daily argues that the “most significant debate” within the Seventh-day Adventist Church from 1885 to 1925 was “the question of inspiration as it related to the writings and authority of Ellen G. White.”² He contends that a “balanced understanding” of inspiration can be achieved only by studying the historical context of the writings thought to be inspired. Daily seeks to achieve this understanding through a historical contextualization of the biblical higher criticism debate within Protestantism and in relationship to Seventh-day Adventism. Unfortunately, his research is flawed on two levels with regard to understanding Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism. First, Daily asserts an incomplete picture of the factors contributing to the rise of Fundamentalism. He sees Fundamentalism as stemming entirely from the debate over biblical higher criticism, while most historians of Fundamentalism see the rise of that movement as the result of a variety of cultural factors. Second, Daily notes only parallels between Adventism and Fundamentalism. He does not actually deal with interactions between the two movements. Daily’s thesis comes the closest to the scope of this dissertation, but does not extensively examine the 1919 Bible Conference.

¹Haloviak, “In the Shadow of the ‘Daily’,” 2.

²Steven G. Daily, “How Readest Thou?: The Higher Criticism Debate in Protestant America and Its Relationship to Seventh-day Adventism and the Writings of Ellen White, 1885-1925” (M.A. thesis, Loma Linda University, 1982), 2.

Because there is no comprehensive treatment of the 1919 Bible Conference in existence, the present research seeks to fill that void.

Methodology and Primary Sources

This dissertation is a documentary study based on both published and unpublished primary sources. Secondary sources are used where appropriate to provide background, historical context, and insightful perspective.

Published Sources

Periodicals

Periodicals provided the largest substantive resource for understanding the theological landscape within Adventism during the period under study. Significant periodicals consulted included:

1. *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. A page-by-page analysis has yielded over 200 articles dealing directly with Fundamentalism and/or inspiration, including several important series of articles by George McCready Price,¹ W. W. Prescott,² J. F. Neff,³ and M. C. Wilcox.⁴

¹George McCready Price, “Back to God’s Word,” *RH*, Feb. 7, 1924, 1.

²A series of 6 articles entitled “The False and the True in Modern Science” begins on Oct. 14, 1920, and continues through Dec. 9, 1920.

³J. F. Neff, “Evolution and the Church,” *RH*, Mar. 13, 1924, 15-16.

⁴A series of 12 articles entitled “Fundamentalism or Modernism—Which?” begins on Jan. 15, 1925, and continues through Apr. 2, 1925.

2. *Signs of the Times*. A popular monthly for presenting Adventist beliefs to a general readership, included occasional articles against evolution and modernism.

3. *Watchman Magazine*. An Adventist periodical edited by W. W. Prescott that dealt with current events and world issues.

4. *The Youth's Instructor*. A weekly periodical for Adventist youth, which occasionally carried articles on modernism and evolution.

Books and Pamphlets

Pertinent books and pamphlets dealing with Fundamentalism and intra-denominational controversies relating to the 1919 Bible Conference were examined.

Among these controversial works were books about Ellen White by A. G. Daniells, W. C. White, W. W. Prescott, J. S. Washburn, C. E. Holmes, M. C. Wilcox, and others.¹

¹Arthur G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1936). Daniells was a frequent contributor to the *Review and Herald* and the chairman of the 1919 Bible Conference. Daniells's acquaintance with Ellen White stretched back to the 1870s in Texas when as a young minister he lived for a time with James and Ellen White in their home. Daniells later worked closely with Ellen White while they were both missionaries in Australia, and then Mrs. White became his confidante and advisor when he was elected chairman of the General Conference Committee in 1901. William C. White and D. E. Robinson, *Brief Statements Regarding the Writings of Ellen G. White* (St. Helena, CA: Elmshaven Office, 1933). Although W. C. White was not present at the 1919 Bible Conference, he certainly participated in events leading up to and surrounding this pivotal Conference. W. C. White was invited, but his age (65), workload, and the fact that the planned agenda did not include any discussions on Ellen White, were among his reasons for not attending the conference (Jerry Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship Between the Prophet and Her Son*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, no. 19 [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993], 452-53). William W. Prescott, *The Doctrine of Christ: A Series of Bible Studies Covering the Doctrines of the Scriptures, for Use in Colleges and Seminaries, as Outlined and Recommended by the Bible, and History Teachers' Council, Held in Washington, D. C., from July 20 to August 9, 1919*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, ca. 1920). Judson S. Washburn, *The Startling Omega and Its True Genealogy* (Philadelphia, PA: [By the author], 1920). Claude E. Holmes, *Beware of*

Unpublished Sources

Correspondence

Because the debate over inspiration involved key players in the church, some of the best insights into the background and relationship between individuals were gained from correspondence. Collections include the following:

1. The largest single collection of Adventist correspondence extending from the late 1910s into the 1920s is the W. C. White letter file housed at the Ellen G. White Estate main office in Silver Spring, Maryland. The files include both letters received and letters written by W. C. White.

2. The General Conference Archives in Silver Spring, Maryland, is the official repository of documents and correspondence for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These holdings include sources pertaining to key denominational leaders such as W. W. Prescott¹ and A. G. Daniells.²

3. The Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, holds a number of special correspondence collections including those of W. W. Prescott,³ William A. Spicer,⁴ and others who were active in the debate over

the Leaven (Doctrines) of the Pharisees and Sadducees (N.p., 1919). Milton C. Wilcox, *The Surety of the Bible: God's Multiplied Witness* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, ca. 1925); idem, *Questions and Answers: Gathered from the Question Department of the Signs of the Times* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1919).

¹See W. W. Prescott Collection (GCA).

²See Presidential Papers, A. G. Daniells (GCA).

³William Warren Prescott Papers (Collection 143), CAR.

⁴William A. Spicer Papers (Collection 3), CAR.

inspiration. Some of these collections contain letters and other documents relating to this study.

Records and Manuscripts

Records and manuscripts are not as plentiful as the letters in terms of quantity but are the most significant resource for analyzing the 1919 Bible Conference. These sources include:

1. The 1300-page stenographic transcript of the 1919 Bible Conference. These transcripts were the most extensive and thorough for the purpose of this study. While they are not exhaustive (at several times A. G. Daniells asked for the stenographic recordings to be struck from the record; at other times they simply are missing), they are the primary resource for study of this Conference.

2. The General Conference Executive Committee minutes contain official records of actions taken by church leaders regarding events surrounding the Conference.¹

Design of Study

This study is organized topically. Each chapter begins with an overview to establish a context for topical discussion and analysis. The first two chapters set the historical context of the 1919 Bible Conference. Chapter 1 traces the origins and background of Fundamentalism, including a brief overview of the birth of modernism and

¹The General Conference Minutes for the period under consideration are text-searchable online at: <http://www.adventistarchives.org>.

evolutionary thought, the resulting modernist-fundamentalist rift, and the issues that separated the two camps.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of Seventh-day Adventist reactions to Fundamentalism. The chapter begins with the 1910 publication of *The Fundamentals* which set a criterion by which Fundamentalists sought to rally support within the broader Christian community. Among those attracted were Seventh-day Adventists, who saw Fundamentalists as an ally in the battle against modernism.

Chapters 3 through 5 analyze the 1919 Bible Conference itself. Chapter 3 gives the Adventist theological context for the 1919 Bible Conference. Chapter 4 analyzes the content of the Bible Conference discussions. Chapter 5 examines the Conference as an educational meeting. Most of the conference topics related to prophetic interpretation, but other issues concerned the inspiration and authority of the Bible and Ellen G. White's writings. Chapter 6 assesses the impact of the Conference upon subsequent SDA history and theology, followed by conclusions in chapter 7.

Acknowledgments

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I am grateful to have had on my committee individuals who were not only conversant in the area of my study but were also able, because of their own background, to critically examine the data and my conclusions. It has been said that the closest academic relationship is that of a doctoral student and adviser. For me this has certainly

proved true. Words are not adequate to express my appreciation and respect for not just one, but two individuals: George R. Knight, my first adviser, who guided me through the stages of doctoral coursework, choosing a dissertation topic, and writing the proposal; and Jerry Moon who became the adviser upon Dr. Knight's retirement, just as I was beginning chapter 1. Thanks are also due to Gary Land and Woodrow Whidden whose helpful suggestions have greatly strengthened this dissertation.

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¹RBC, July 22, 1919, 1152-1153, had, until 2006, portions of both pages that were "restricted" because they contained "statements" that could hinder the church's work in specific parts of the world "because of past or present political considerations."

went the extra mile to facilitate this dissertation. Others to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude for helping in various ways are Lisa Beardsley, Emily Brandt, Jonathan Brauer, Merlin D. Burt, Jerry Daly, Herbert E. Douglass, Mary and Chad Erickson, Billy and Nathalia Gager, Richard Hart, Stanley D. Hickerson, James Jerkins, Dan and Becky Kuntz, Jud S. Lake, Doug Morgan, Eike Mueller, Julius Nam, James R. Nix, David and Cathy Olson, Hans N. Olson, Timothy L. Poirier, George W. Reid, Nikolaus Satelmajer, Mindy Sterndale, Brian E. Strayer, Jonathan L. Vigh, James and Laura Wibberding, Carol Williams, Gerald R. Winslow, and Kenneth H. Wood.

This dissertation is dedicated to two individuals. The first is the late Dr. C. Mervyn Maxwell who first suggested that I become an Adventist historian, urged that it was never too early to choose a dissertation topic, and especially encouraged me to think about a topic related to twentieth-century Adventism. The second is Heidi Olson Campbell, my college sweetheart whom I fell in love with eight years ago, and without whose encouragement and support this dissertation might never have been written. We have been especially blessed over the past four months with our daughter Emma who let me rock her to sleep at night as I read to her from my dissertation.

CHAPTER 1

THE ORIGINS OF FUNDAMENTALISM, THE PUBLICATION OF *THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH*, AND THE RISE OF THE PROPHETIC CONFERENCE MOVEMENT

Introduction

The word “fundamentalism,” in the broadest use of the term, refers to a conservative milieu within a particular type of religion or culture.¹ In a historical sense, “Fundamentalism” is utilized to describe a specific, recognizable movement of American Protestantism during the first few decades of the twentieth century. This movement was comprised of a loose coalition of conservative Christians who constructed their identity and worldview around the Bible, which they regarded as being divinely inspired and beyond the reach of human criticism. These “Fundamentalists,”² as they came to be

¹Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby in the “Introduction” to their five-volume *Fundamentalism Project* series note the inadequacy of the term “Fundamentalism.” Despite the problematic nature of defining the term, they insist that the term “fundamentalism” is the best term available for four reasons. First, the term “fundamentalism” they argue is here to stay and creates a “distinction over against cognate but not fully appropriate words such as ‘traditionalism,’ ‘conservatism,’ and ‘orthopraxis.’” Thus the term should be used for lack of a better word. Second, the term is one that can be communicated across cultures and has been accepted by popular forms of media. Third, “all words have to come from somewhere and will be more appropriate in some contexts than in others.” And, fourth, from the viewpoint of the editors, “no other coordinating term was found to be as intelligible or serviceable.” Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), viii.

²The term “fundamentalist” was a title coined in 1920 by Baptist editor Curtis Lee Laws. See “Convention Side Lights,” *Watchman-Examiner*, July 1, 1920, 834. For an

known, were evangelical Christians who emphasized the importance of being “born again” and who viewed the sharing of the good news of salvation as the highest task entrusted to mankind.¹

The historical Fundamentalist movement arose as a response to profound social and intellectual change that became self-evident after the American Civil War (1861-65).² It was the response of Fundamentalists to this change that distinguished them from other evangelical Christians. What set them apart from other evangelicals was their “conspicuous militancy in defending what is regarded as the traditional Protestant Gospel against its major twentieth-century competitors.”³ More specifically, Fundamentalists were particularly disturbed by modernism or liberalism in theology, secularism or “secular humanism” in cultural values, evolutionary naturalism, Marxism, Socialism, Roman Catholicism, and religious cults. All of these were seen as threats to White Anglo-Saxon Protestantism as American religion became more diverse and complex. Fundamentalism, therefore in its most basic sense, was a cross-denominational trend to militantly oppose the erosion of traditional Protestant faith in American churches.

overview of Law’s contributions, see John W. Bradbury, “Curtis Lee Laws and the Fundamentalist Movement,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal of History and Theology* 5 (January 1962): 52-58, 67.

¹For an overview of the fundamentalist movement, see George M. Marsden, “Fundamentalism,” *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience: Studies of Traditions and Movements*, ed. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Scribner, 1988), 947-62.

²Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

³*Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, s.v. “Fundamentalism.”

Despite the tendency to use the term fundamentalism in a generic sense (referring to militant conservative religionists) or in a doctrinal sense (referring to those who insist on traditional doctrines), Fundamentalism (capitalized) was a historical movement within American Protestant Christianity. In order to better understand the historical Fundamentalist movement of the 1920s and 1930s, it is important to recognize the major traits that distinguish this movement.

The Traits of Fundamentalism

The rise of Fundamentalism can be attributed to numerous factors. Among the many books that have been written on the topic,¹ church historian George Marsden, in his book *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, points to four paramount emphases that had a significant impact upon the historical Fundamentalist movement: revivalist evangelicalism, dispensationalist premillennialism, the Holiness Movement, and efforts to defend the faith.² Each of these four traits will be examined from the perspective of their contribution to the historical Fundamentalist movement.

Revivalist Evangelicalism

Revivalist evangelicalism is by far the most conspicuous trait to shape Fundamentalism. As a religious and social force, it was the dominant expression of

¹For a summary of historiographical works and overview of the movement see the *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

²Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 11-118.

Protestant faith in nineteenth-century America.¹ Although a definition for evangelicalism can seem elusive because it is such a broad term, church historian David Bebbington has identified four major characteristics of evangelicalism: a strong commitment to the Bible, the Cross (that is, salvation through the atoning work of Christ on the cross), conversion, and activism (mobilizing the whole community for evangelism).²

The first and most obvious characteristic identified by Bebbington is a strong commitment to the Bible. The authority of the Bible alone (*sola scriptura*) was claimed as the supreme authority in the life of believers. Anything deemed to be “unbiblical” was immediately suspect. Threats to the authority of the Bible came from historical criticism, which undermined confidence in the integrity and reliability of the Scriptures.

The central story of the Bible, for evangelicals, is the story of salvation. Thus, the account of Jesus’ death on the cross is central to evangelical theology. The cross has even become an iconic figure, and many churches prominently display the cross in their architecture. The word “cross” is often used by evangelicals as theological shorthand to refer to the importance of salvation, which is merited only through Christ’s death.

Another closely related topic to the emphasis along with the cross is the importance of conversion. Nothing is more important for evangelicals than the application of the cross through their “conversion.” “Believers” are individuals who have

¹*Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, s.v. “Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism”; Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1989); idem, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005).

accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. They believe in the efficacy of Christ's death as an atonement for their sins.

Once a person is converted their highest calling is to share their faith with others. This activism can take many forms, from foreign missions to activities in the local church. Church members must be mobilized for action in whatever form God may call them since the church is called to bring sinners to repentance and conversion. Modern evangelicals use the latest techniques in communications, fund-raising, promotion, education, organization, camp meetings, and voluntary societies. To explore such subjects, argues church historian Leonard Sweet, "is to look at the center of American social and religious life."¹

Evangelicals were a prominent influence as an educational force in nineteenth-century America. This was partially due to the influence of the Sunday school in educating children about learning, piety, and citizenship. The ultimate purpose of the Sunday school was its use as an evangelistic tool. Sunday schools were also an important tool of evangelical revivalism, which church historian Perry Miller calls "the defining factor" of religious life in the nineteenth century. Every activity for evangelicals had at its foundation the ultimate end of bringing revival to Christian communities.²

George Marsden argues that the conservatism of Fundamentalism was largely shaped toward maintaining the major emphases of the nineteenth-century evangelical

¹*Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, s.v. "Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism."

²Perry Miller, *Life of the Mind in America, from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1965).

movement. Fundamentalists, therefore, desired to return to a time in which evangelical life was supreme in the consciousness of ordinary Americans. In addition, revivalism and its twentieth-century Fundamentalist heirs had many ethical considerations in common. Both Fundamentalists and their evangelical counterparts preached against the vices of bars and theaters. Thus, one test of loyalty was whether one totally avoided drinking, smoking, dancing, card playing, and theater or movie attendance. These themes harked back to Methodist prohibitions and suggested continuing Puritan themes. Yet, unlike their Puritan forefathers, Fundamentalists tended to be weak on strict Sabbath observance.¹

Dispensationalist Premillennialism

The most distinctive of the traditions that shaped the core of the Fundamentalist movement was dispensationalist premillennialism (or dispensationalism).² Dispensationalism teaches that according to the Bible all history is divided into various dispensations—generally seven. These dispensations were historical time periods in which God tested humanity. People failed each test and were punished with a judgment that ended the era. Dispensationalists believe that humanity is currently in the sixth dispensation, or the “church age.” This period, they argue, is rapidly drawing to a close because modern civilization, even the so-called Christian civilization, has failed another divine test. Even churches, rife with paganism and apostasy, are ripe for God’s judgment. In the meantime, God is preparing for the advent of the last dispensation, or the

¹Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 45.

²For an extended treatment, see Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 13-42.

“millennial age.” To Dispensationalists, the clearest evidence of this preparation is the rebirth of the state of Israel, predicted in Scripture and foretold by nineteenth-century dispensationalists. Israel, they believe, will be the site of the political kingdom in which Jesus, having returned to earth, will reign for the last thousand years of this planet’s history. After the millennium there will be a final judgment, and then a “new heavens and a new earth.”

Dispensationalism first took distinct shape in Great Britain during the 1820s and 1830s. At that time a number of British prophetic interpreters, of whom Edward Irving is the best known, taught that if biblical prophecies were interpreted literally, people would learn the essentials of the impending judgment on this dispensation, the promised return of the Jews to Palestine, and the coming millennial reign of Christ on earth. John Nelson Darby, the major figure in the new Plymouth Brethren movement, developed further distinctive teachings. He proclaimed that churches and Christendom were in ruin and that the only true church was a spiritual fellowship. The resulting Plymouth Brethren movement was an attempt to restore New Testament practice while avoiding the corruptions of institutionalization. Their unique doctrinal contribution was the teaching that the return of Christ would take place in two stages. First there would be the “secret rapture” of the saints, who would suddenly disappear from earth to meet Christ in the air. Then there would be a seven-year series of cataclysmic events, known as the “tribulation,” involving the rise of the military empire of the Antichrist, the conversion of many Jews and their persecution, and a series of wars culminating in the return of Christ with his saints, the battle of Armageddon and the final establishment of the millennial kingdom.

Darby traveled widely, and after the Civil War era he found some receptiveness in America. Only a few of his American followers, however, fully accepted his views on the total ruin of the church and separation from their denominations. During the 1870s some American prophetic interpreters, mostly Presbyterians and Baptists, established their own dispensationalist movement with the founding of the annual Niagara Bible Conferences in 1876. They also instituted a series of International Prophecy Conferences that took place every decade beginning in 1878. Some of the best-known leaders of this movement included James H. Brookes, William E. Blackstone, Adoniram J. Gordon, Arthur T. Pierson, James M. Gray, Amzi C. Dixon, and Reuben A. Torrey. Cyrus I. Scofield aided the wide dissemination of classic dispensationalist teaching with the publication of the *Scofield Reference Bible* in 1909.¹

The Holiness Movement

The Holiness Movement within Fundamentalism developed from the Victorious Life Movement, which emerged out of summer Bible conferences on both sides of the Atlantic.² The Victorious Life teachings took shape, beginning in 1875, at summer Bible conferences held at Keswick, England, and became known as “Keswick Holiness” teachings. John Wesley had earlier taught the doctrine of Christian perfection, and many American Methodists had revived the perfectionistic Holiness teaching, leading to the

¹Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 180.

²*Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, s.v. “Keswick Movement.”

founding of various separate Holiness denominations.¹ Such doctrines were also promulgated within the Reformed tradition, most notably by Asa Mahan from Oberlin and by other more popular Holiness teachers, such as William E. Boardman and Hannah Whitall Smith. The Keswick teaching itself quickly developed some unique emphases. The key to the holy life, it said, was a second intense spiritual experience, subsequent to conversion, in which one “yielded” or surrendered everything in one’s life to God. But whereas in Holiness teaching this “yielding” would result in sinless perfection, Keswick teaching upheld a more modest result. The yielding would lead to the experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit, having a closer walk with Christ, and living a life of constant victory over sins. As long as Christ, through his Spirit, filled one’s life, sin would not triumph despite occasional lapses (which might be expected). In Holiness thought the symptoms of the victory could best be seen by a life of avoidance of specific vices or pleasures, such as drinking, smoking, dancing, which no doubt accentuated the importance of these sins.

The Keswick doctrine was adopted by Dwight L. Moody and most of his associates. The movement gained a tremendous boost with the conversion of Charles G. Trumbull, editor of the influential *Sunday School Times*. For Moody and Trumbull the Keswick emphasis on holiness played two important roles in the emerging prophetic conference movement. First, it provided subjective confirmation of their faith, rooted in the Bible and common sense. Second, although many premillennialists did not believe in

¹Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996); William C. Kostlevy, *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2001).

the pervasive power of the Holy Spirit to permeate society (the wickedness of the world would only increase before the second coming of Christ), the Keswick teaching gave them a sense of personal victory over sin. Thus personal optimism could abound.

Efforts to Defend the Faith

A fourth major Fundamentalist emphasis was the effort to defend the faith. For Fundamentalists, these efforts took two primary forms. First, the movement coalesced around the publication of a series of booklets aimed at defending the faith. Second, the movement held a series of prophetic conferences that drew attention to the second coming of Christ and furthered Fundamentalist apologetics.

Publication of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*

Generally most historians attribute the rise of the Fundamentalist movement to the publication of a series of booklets referred to simply as *The Fundamentals*. The expanded title, *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*, reflects their original purpose: to widely disseminate core values and beliefs to a culture that no longer placed authority in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. The project was funded by two tycoons of the Standard Oil Company, Lyman and Milton Stewart. These two brothers, Christian philanthropists, had financed a wide range of projects from missions in China to the education of Bible teachers. Lyman Stewart in 1908 devoted the largest portion of his giving to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), reserving only token financial gifts to other worthy endeavors after the founding of that school.¹

¹*Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, s.v. "The Fundamentals."

The initial impetus for founding BIOLA, according to Lyman Stewart, was to create a theological safe haven where the authority of the word of God was never questioned. Lyman Stewart became concerned when a teacher, during the 1890s at Occidental College, began to use historical-critical textbooks that undermined confidence in the supernatural aspects of the biblical narrative. Lyman Stewart had funded not only that teacher's position but the entire Bible department at Occidental College. He felt that his funds were being used to promulgate "positively devilish" teachings that destroyed faith in the "absolute inerrancy" of the Scriptures. To make sure that his funds would not again be employed in such ways, Stewart envisioned a modest Bible school where such things would not happen.¹

Lyman Stewart also had a larger vision of warning Christians everywhere of the "positively devilish" teachings of Bible teachers who sought to undermine the reliability of the Scriptures. He envisioned publishing Christian literature that would refute modernist authors who undermined the Scriptures. This publishing effort would be the largest use of his funds for any particular project after starting BIOLA.

¹Lyman Stewart to L. H. Severance, June 8, 1909, BIOLA University Archives & Special Collections, Letter notebook #1, pp. 121-23. "Several years ago," wrote Lyman Stewart, "I undertook to provide for the Bible department at Occidental College. Two or three years ago [ca. 1906-07] we secured a teacher who was recommended very strongly by Dr. Holden of Wooster,- Dr. Maxwell,- who introduced as text books Rhees' "Life of Jesus of Nazareth," and Gilbert's "Life of St. Paul," both of which, I am very sorry to say, were positively devilish in their teaching, and how they could ever be of service in the study of the Scriptures, I have never been able to understand. I am very thankful that such literature was not placed in my hands in my youth, as I am sure it would have so undermined my confidence in the inspiration of the Scriptures as to have made me an infidel." Ibid., 122.

To head this project, Stewart recruited A. C. Dixon, pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago. Stewart suggested that Dixon begin contacting potential authors to produce a “series of articles” to warn “all the Anglo-Saxon Protestant ministers, missionaries[,] and theological students in the world.”¹ From 1910 to 1913, Dixon edited *The Fundamentals*. He was later succeeded as editor by R. A. Torrey and Louis Meyer, but the purpose remained the same: to warn Christians everywhere about the dangers of liberal forms of Christianity that undermined the supernatural authority of the Bible. By the beginning of World War I (1914), Lyman and Milton Stewart had financed the circulation of 3 million copies of *The Fundamentals* at a cost of \$200,000. This publication gave the movement its enduring name.²

The content of the booklets reflected the original purpose set forth by its financier, Lyman Stewart. In total, there were ninety articles from sixty-four different authors including “a broad range of conservative and millenarian scholars, ministers, and laypersons” from America, Britain, and Canada. *The Fundamentals* addressed three main themes. Approximately one third of the articles dealt with the inerrancy of Scripture. A second third focused on traditional theological issues including apologetics and the doctrines of the trinity, sin, and salvation. The remaining third of the articles included personal testimonies, attacks on competing forms of belief (i.e., Mormonism, Roman Catholicism, etc.), the relationship between science and religion, and appeals for missions and evangelism. These articles show that while the emerging fundamentalist movement

¹Lyman Stewart to Charles C. Cook, Feb. 28, 1910, BIOLA University Archives & Special Collections, Letter notebook #3, p. 127.

²Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 119.

did not have a clearly defined set of beliefs, they stood vehemently for the Bible and were against anything that might compromise this.¹

The impact of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* is difficult to assess from contemporary literature. Historian Ernest R. Sandeen argues that *The Fundamentals* “had little impact upon biblical studies.” With the exception of a few conservative theological journals that hailed their publication as a “notable undertaking,” most scholarly journals “ignored the whole enterprise.”² The average Christian lay member was unaware of historical criticism and very unlikely to read the works of Wellhausen and other higher critics. Despite this, *The Fundamentals* became a wakeup call for the average church member who had not previously paid attention to these scholarly works. It thus became “the origin of their crusade.” For many lay members, this publication was their first introduction to the debates pertaining to the critical investigation of Scripture. They served a secondary purpose by providing a corpus of literature for an emerging fundamentalist coalition who were concerned about the changing world in which they lived.³

The Prophetic Conference Movement

The loose nature of the Fundamentalist movement allowed it to transcend denominational affiliations. The largest number of Fundamentalists come from Presbyterian or Baptist backgrounds, but there were significant numbers from other

¹*The Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, s.v. “The Fundamentals.”

²Sandeen, 188-207.

³Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 118-23.

religious groups. What tended to unite them were the four distinguishing characteristics: (1) a revivalistic, evangelical heritage; (2) dispensational premillennialism; (3) the Holiness Movement; and (4) efforts to defend the faith. Fundamentalists during the formative period (up to 1918) held a wide variety of religious meetings. It is a series of Prophecy Conferences that particularly concerns this dissertation.¹

Perhaps one of the best examples of how Fundamentalism transcended denominational boundaries is found in the life of Arthur T. Pierson.² Born in 1837, Pierson held several Presbyterian pastorates from Detroit to Philadelphia. In the 1870s he called for a more active engagement in world missions, in order to evangelize the entire world by 1900. After the death of the famous Baptist preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon, Pierson was called to the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. He held that prestigious position for two years before returning to the United States to teach at Moody Bible Institute. He later served as a consulting editor to C. I. Scofield for Scofield's well-known dispensationalist reference Bible, and also served as one of three primary editors of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*.³ Pierson loomed large on the Bible/prophecy conference circuit. During the 1880s he spoke at the two most prominent

¹For an overview of the prophetic conference movement, see Donald W. Dayton, "Introduction," in *The Prophetic Conference Movement*, vol. 1 (New York: Garland, 1988).

²For Pierson's life, see Delavan Pierson, *Arthur T. Pierson* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1912); Dana L. Robert, "Arthur Tappan Pierson and the Forward Movements of Late Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1984); idem, *Occupy Until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 134.

³*Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*, "The Fundamentals."

Bible conferences: D. L. Moody's Northfield Prophecy Conference and the Niagara Bible Conference (already referred to above), both held annually during the 1880s. Pierson had not yet become a premillennialist at the time of the first Niagara Bible Conference in 1878, but was a prominent speaker at later Niagara Bible Conferences. He was also a key speaker at the second American Prophetic Conference held in Chicago in 1886, as well as at the third one held in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1895. Similarly, he was a featured speaker at the International Prophetic Conference held in Boston in 1901. Pierson found the sympathy of a group of Philadelphia clergymen who assisted him in organizing his own Niagara-type conferences in 1887, and some of them later edited the published conference proceedings. As Pierson circulated in these conservative circles, denominational allegiance seemed secondary to him. It is perhaps for this reason that he converted to the Baptist denomination toward the end of his life.¹

The Bible Conference circuit became a loose network of conservative, evangelical Christians who held to the reliability and inspiration of the Bible. The Bible Conferences renewed faith in the second advent of Christ. While not all of those who attended these conferences were premillennialists, it appears that the majority of them were. And as dispensationalism became more prominently taught within premillennial circles, a growing number of those who attended these conferences adhered to a dispensationalist point of view for interpreting biblical prophecy.

This Bible Conference movement incorporated both revivalism and the new premillennialism that grew side by side. Historian Timothy Weber notes that "every

¹Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*.

major American revivalist since Dwight L. Moody has been a premillennialist.” This belief in the Second Coming gave them an extremely effective conversion tool. Despite this, revivalists were, according to Weber, reluctant to “make premillennialism a major part of their preaching until after World War I, when the schism within Protestantism made it less necessary to appeal to wide segments in the churches.” By 1920 this group, previously cognizant of their previous minority status in the evangelical mainstream, became more forceful about their eschatological views.¹

Fundamentalist Opinions About Seventh-day Adventists

The Millerite disappointment was a severe blow for premillennialism in American Christianity. Dispensationalists were careful to prove how the historicist views of the Millerites were different from their own futurist views. During the 1910s Fundamentalists were not interested in Seventh-day Adventists, partial heirs of an event they eschewed.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Fundamentalists largely ignored the Seventh-day Adventists. One notable exception to this generalization occurred in a publication edited by T. C. Horton that was submitted for inclusion in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*. Lyman Stewart responded by writing, “Under the heading of Seventh Day [*sic*] Adventism I think it would be wise to eliminate the statement that no scholar of any repute is with Bullinger that ‘the Lord’s day’ is ‘the day of the Lord.’ [The writer] Seiss, in Lectures on the Apocalypse, not only holds this view, but emphasizes it very strongly.”²

¹Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*, 52.

²Lyman Stewart to T. C. Horton, Nov. 11, 1909, Biola University Archives. It appears that the article Horton reviewed was never published although another article

Later, during the New York 1918 prophetic conference, there was a disclaimer in the program against certain heretical groups including Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and "Seventh Day Adventists."¹ Overall Adventists were not significant enough to even mention with other heterodox groups, and if they were it appears that Fundamentalists lumped them with other groups they labeled as unorthodox.

The Historiography of Fundamentalism

There are several different views on Fundamentalism. Some of the earliest views, published soon after the infamous 1926 Scopes Trial, described Fundamentalism as an aberrant episode in American religious history. Fundamentalism, for these early interpreters, was an extreme defense of a former way of life.

The historiography of Fundamentalism came of age during the 1970s. There are several models for interpreting the historical Fundamentalist movement. Among the leading ones are the views of Ernest R. Sandeen and George M. Marsden. Their combined work, although they differ in their analysis of Fundamentalism, helped create a genre of serious historical study about this movement.

Ernest R. Sandeen was first to publish his views in his 1970 book, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*. He argued that Fundamentalism at its core was a "millenarian" movement with direct links to a series of Bible institutes and prophecy conferences from the late nineteenth century. These millenarians found a way around the debacle of the

denouncing Christian Scientistism was included in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*.

¹"Conference on the Return of the Lord," ca. 1918, Billy Graham Center Archives, SC108.

1844 Great Disappointment through the Dispensationalist teachings of James Nelson Darby. This gave new credibility to American premillennialism. In order to justify their eschatology they afterward adopted “inerrancy” from Presbyterians at Princeton Theological Seminary. Nonetheless millenarianism was the primary interpretative framework. Also underlying Sandeen’s thesis was his conviction that Fundamentalism was at its core an innovative apocalyptic tradition that grew during the late nineteenth century.

The second approach to Fundamentalism was articulated by George M. Marsden in his *Fundamentalism and American Culture* published in 1980. The author was clearly informed by Sandeen, and even argued that millenarianism and Princeton theology were “basically correct” for understanding Fundamentalism. He went on to critique Sandeen for his failure to deal adequately with the “militantly anti-modernist evangelicalism of the 1920s.” “This broader fundamentalism,” Marsden argued, “in turn had wider roots, cultural as well as theological and organizational.”¹ In this way Marsden finds greater continuity between the historical Fundamentalist movement and the intellectual roots which produced it.²

Together Sandeen and Marsden caused a resurgence of interest in Fundamentalism. Although Marsden’s thesis builds upon the work of Sandeen, each author represents a distinct school of thought about the origins of Fundamentalism. Sandeen’s thesis that Fundamentalism’s distinctiveness comes from its discontinuity and

¹Marsden, 4-5.

²Ibid., 6. See also George M. Marsden’s comments on Sandeen in “Defining Fundamentalism,” *Christian Scholars Review* 1 (Winter 1971): 141-51.

therefore theological innovation contrasts sharply with Marsden who sees the movement in continuity with much deeper theological roots. Current proponents of Sandeen, such as Donald W. Dayton, continue to critique Marsden, especially his bias toward Presbyterian contributions to the Fundamentalist movement.¹

Seventh-day Adventism in the 1920s had points of contact with both streams of thought (inerrancy and eschatology). The Sandeen emphasis on millenarianism is especially instructive for understanding Adventism in 1919. Adventists, who viewed other religious groups of their day as part of fallen “Babylon,” were clearly attracted to millenarianism because of their premillennialist views. This may help explain why Adventists were attracted to the rising Fundamentalist movement and participated in their prophecy conferences. In comparison, most Adventists appear to have ignored the publication of *The Fundamentals*. This may also help explain why Adventists were so imprecise in their use of the term “verbal inspiration” with regard to Scripture. While most Fundamentalists equated the “verbal inspiration” of the Bible to mean that it was divinely inspired, they typically took that farther to also mean that it was “inerrant” (free from errors). In this dissertation I have tried to reflect this difference by using “verbal inspiration” when Adventists were upholding the divine inspiration of the Bible in polemic against modernism, and using “inerrancy” to describe a rigid, dictation model of inspiration. All Adventists believed in the “inspiration” of the Bible, but some went

¹One of the most recent debates between Donald W. Dayton and George M. Marsden occurred in 1993 in the *Christian Scholar's Review*. See papers from the “George Marsden’s History of Fuller Seminar as a Case Study,” symposium, *Christian Scholar's Review* 23:1 (September 1993), 34-40.

farther and even agreed with Fundamentalists that the Bible (or Ellen White's writings) could also be "inerrant."

Perspective

The Fundamentalist movement arose as a convergence of several nineteenth-century movements. Fundamentalists were evangelicals who were seeking to hold on to nineteenth-century American Protestantism. They were living in a society that, by World War I, in their view, was openly turning away from God. Fundamentalists sought to return to the theological and ethical norms of the Bible and, at the very least, to identify with those who had similar values. Fundamentalists were very much a part of the prophetic conference movement that arose out of nineteenth-century premillennialism. They were especially moved to action immediately before and during World War I because the war brought a heightened sense of the apocalyptic.

Members of the Fundamentalist movement tended to cross denominational boundaries. The movement began to coalesce around the publication of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (1910-15), which consisted of a wide variety of articles published by conservatives and moderate theologians who were concerned about changes in theology. What was significant is that these tracts drew the attention of ordinary church members to a world that was changing around them.

Fundamentalism was primarily a millenarian movement. There were very few lists of doctrines beyond the "Five Point" declaration that the Presbyterian Church (USA) passed in 1916 and 1923. This declaration included the virgin birth, inerrancy, the validity of miracles, and the literal death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. These later declarations constructed a theological basis for a growing movement. It also helped to

clarify that the loosely connected groups who comprised Fundamentalism were allied against a common enemy: modern thought and theology.

As heirs of the revivalist, evangelical tradition, Fundamentalists organized many summer Bible conferences and Bible schools to reinforce their teachings. It is, therefore, no surprise that as the American Dispensationalist movement arose, it garnered strength through a series of prophecy conferences beginning in the 1870s. It was at one of these conferences that the idea for the *Fundamentals* came about. Also unsurprising in retrospect is the development, during World War I, of a series of prophecy conferences to draw attention to the second coming. Chapter 2 notes another religious group that had been proclaiming the second advent of Christ since the mid-nineteenth century. They would notice these prophecy conferences and begin to actively look at this prophecy conference movement.

CHAPTER 2

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST REACTIONS TO
FUNDAMENTALISM, 1910-1922

Introduction

Despite significant differences, Seventh-day Adventists and Fundamentalists shared common beliefs and concerns during this period. For example, they believed that the second advent of Christ was imminent. They believed in the literal Genesis creation account, and they emphasized the importance of the conversion experience. They also had religious periodicals, Bible schools, and a strong emphasis on foreign missions.

Adventists and Fundamentalists were also particularly concerned about the tendency of higher critical scholarship to undermine the authority of the Bible, and the broader erosion of Protestantism within American culture.

The Fundamentalist movement consisted of a loose coalition of religious conservatives who held a socially conservative set of core values and disliked change in American culture. They were especially concerned about the “menace of modernism,” which they believed was the greatest threat to Christianity in its history. Adventists resonated with these concerns and saw the rise of Fundamentalism as one of the most important events in Christian history.¹ They viewed modernism to be as much a threat as

¹F. M. Wilcox, “A Significant Religious Gathering: A Bible Conference on the Return of Our Lord,” *RH*, June 13, 1918, 2, 4-5.

Fundamentalists perceived it to be. Both Adventists and Fundamentalists espoused an eschatology that led them to believe that the rise of modernism and the Fundamentalist response were signs that the second coming of Christ was near.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Adventist reactions to the emerging Fundamentalist movement from 1910 to 1922. Although Seventh-day Adventists continued to be involved in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy after 1922, that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The chapter begins with the historical context of Seventh-day Adventism from 1910 to 1922, examining some of the prominent events that influenced Adventists. The next section describes Adventist theological concerns that resonated with Fundamentalism. The last section examines Adventist attendance at the Fundamentalist prophecy conferences of 1918-19.

Historical Introduction to Seventh-day Adventism, 1910-1922

The Seventh-day Adventist Church went through significant transitions during the years 1910 to 1922. Two major events dominated this period for Adventists. One was the death of Ellen G. White (1915). The length of her ministry extended significantly beyond the other two co-founders of Seventh-day Adventism: James White, her husband (d. 1881), and Joseph Bates (d. 1872). Her prophetic ministry had from its inception provided a stabilizing influence within the Church by moderating extremism, encouraging change, and spiritually nurturing church members.¹ Her death forced church members to question how the church would continue without a living prophet.² A second pivotal

¹Douglass, 144-69.

²McGraw, "Without a Living Prophet," 11-15.

event was World War I (1914-18)—the dominant event of this time period for the whole world although it did not directly impact the United States until 1917.¹ The war affected Adventists in several important ways. In addition to evangelists citing the conflict as proof of the nearness of the second advent, the war had personal ramifications.² Church leaders once again were confronted with the problem of military service. Overseas missionaries suffered financial and communication breakdowns as well as physical ailments and even death. Adventists were also brought into question about their loyalty to a country which in their eschatology they identified as the lamb-like beast in Rev 13.³ In addition to these two pivotal events, other major phenomena that concerned Adventists during this period included Sunday law legislation, the influenza pandemic (1918-19), temperance, foreign missions, education, and anti-Catholicism.

¹John F. Piper, *The American Churches in World War I* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1985).

²Weeks, 74-98.

³E. R. Palmer, General Manager of the Review and Herald, was tasked with revising *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* during World War I to make it less offensive to U.S. officials in the justice department. Palmer would later recount his experience in revising *Bible Readings* during the 1919 Bible Conference. See RBC, July 17, 1919, 979-82.

The Final Years of Ellen G. White, 1910-1915

By 1910, Ellen White, then eighty-two, had been a prominent leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church for over six decades.¹ Ellen White considered her writings to be a permanent legacy that would continue to testify until the Second Coming of Christ.² Her driving passion during the last years of her life was the publication of books and articles on a variety of concerns. Of particular significance was an updated edition of her work on the interpretation of Christian history, the *Great Controversy* (1911), and a new work on the earliest period of the church, the *Acts of the Apostles* (1911). Trusted literary assistants did historical research and helped her prepare these and other volumes.³ Anticipating her approaching death, her literary staff also assembled a new edition of her autobiography, *Life Sketches* (1915)—published originally in 1880 and jointly authored by herself and her late husband, James. The 1915 edition was updated by her editorial assistant C. C. Crisler.⁴ The publication of her final writings, and planning for the disposition and control of her literary estate were matters of particular importance to Ellen White as she anticipated her death. In 1912 she prepared her last will and testament,

¹Ellen White turned 83 on November 26, 1910.

²W. C. White, “Confidence in God,” *General Conference Bulletin*, June 1, 1913; Ellen G. White, *The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, [1913]), 13-14.

³*Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Literary Assistants.”

⁴Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, Being a Narrative of Her Experience to 1881 as Written by Herself; With a Sketch of her Subsequent Labors and of her Last Sickness, Compiled from Original Sources* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915).

creating a self-perpetuating board of five trustees to control her literary estate. She gave 25 percent of her estate to her family and the remainder to the church.

On February 15, 1915, Ellen White broke her hip. This accident portended that the end was near. Over the next five months the church paper, the *Review and Herald*, carried frequent reports about her condition until her death on July 16, 1915.¹

In anticipation of her death, news stories and pictures had already been prepared for publication in church periodicals.² This coverage attracted media attention from major newspapers across the country.³ Three funerals were held: one on the lawn of her “Elmshaven” home in St. Helena, California; a second in the San Francisco Bay area; and a third in the Adventist church, known as the Battle Creek Tabernacle, in Battle Creek, Michigan, after which she was interred in the nearby Oak Hill Cemetery. Thousands came to pay their respects. The church honored her through tributes published in church periodicals, with the most prominent being entire memorial issues of the *Review and Herald* and *Signs of the Times*.⁴

¹For an overview of the last few months of Ellen White’s life, see: Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 6, *The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 418-31; Jerry Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship Between the Prophet and Her Son*.

²Clarence C. Crisler, “The Death of Sister White,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, July 22, 1915, 1-2.

³“Adventist Church Founder’s Life History Remarkable,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 18, 1915; “Mrs. White Had No Idea of Successor,” *The Battle Creek Enquirer*, July 25, 1915; “Life of Service to Ideals Ends and Adventists Grieve,” *Oakland Tribune*, July 18, 1915; “Mrs. E. G. White, Eminent Seventh-day Adventist, Dead,” *Mountain View Register-Leader*, July 23, 1915.

⁴*RH*, July 29, 1915. The cover contained a poem written by A. W. Spalding entitled “And Israel Mourned.” *ST* Aug. 3, 1915. The issue was the “Mrs. E. G. White

In many ways, Adventists continued as if they still had a living prophet. Articles were reprinted from her writings and published in church periodicals. One book manuscript on Old Testament history had been almost ready for publication at the time of her death.¹ The last two chapters of *Prophets and Kings* were pieced together from previously published articles and unpublished manuscripts. This volume completed the five-volume Conflict of the Ages series covering the history of Christianity from the beginning of sin to its final eradication at the last judgment.²

Not until the 1919 Bible Conference did church officials seriously discuss the implications of the death of Ellen G. White and the legacy of her writings for the church. Church leaders struggled with what the church would do without a living prophet.³

World War I and Seventh-day Adventists, 1914-1918

As political tensions increased in 1914, Adventists saw the emerging conflict as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Their eschatological beliefs led them to believe that the end would be soon. Just how soon that event would occur varied significantly among various Adventist interpreters.

Memorial” issue with Rev. 14:13 on the masthead. See also, A. L. White, *Ellen G. White*, 6:432-48.

¹Moon, W. C. *White and Ellen G. White*, xx; Ellen G. White, *The Captivity and Restoration of Israel: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Lives of Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1917).

²*Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Conflict of the Ages Series.”

³McGraw, “Without a Living Prophet,” 13-14.

Much of Adventist prophetic interpretation was based on Uriah Smith's seminal work on Bible prophecy, *Daniel and Revelation*, first published as *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (1865) and *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Daniel* (1873). In these works, Smith argued on the basis of geographical location, that the modern nations of Egypt (the king of the south) and Turkey (the king of the north) would escalate in a three-way conflict with France at the beginning of the "time of the end" (which Adventists believed began in 1798). He argued that Turkey would be propped up until "he shall come to his end" (Dan 11:45). This would mark the beginning of Armageddon.¹ Interest in the "Eastern Question" (the fate of the Ottoman Empire or Turkey) increased in 1912-13 when Turkey suffered defeats from the armies of the Balkan League. Drawing upon Dan 11 and Rev 16, Adventists were convinced that the fulfillment of prophecy was at hand. Interpreting Turkey as the "King of the North" described in Dan 11:40-45, they believed that the Turks would be driven from Europe, temporarily relocating to Jerusalem, and then would come a "great time of trouble."²

Adventists used the uncertainty generated by the war as an opportunity for evangelism.³ The *Review and Herald* printed a *War Extra* that sold 50,000 copies a day during its first week and an *Eastern Question Extra*. Both sold well over a million copies. Despite additional cautions in the *Review and Herald* not to sensationalize the war and

¹Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*, (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1897), 302-18.

²Gary Land, "The Perils of Prophecy: Seventh-day Adventists Interpret World War One," *Adventist Heritage* 1 (1976): 28-33, 55-56.

³Weeks, 78-85.

Bible prophecy, Adventist prophetic expositors such as Percy T. Magan asserted that “‘*Mene, Mene*’ is written across the lintel of the Turkish house.”¹

Church historian Gary Land, in his analysis of Adventists’ involvement in World War I, concludes that Adventist predictions were supplanted by rapidly changing events because they had no explanation for the British victory over the Turks at Jerusalem on Dec. 9, 1917, and Turkey’s retreat back to Europe, a shift in emphasis occurred among Adventist prophetic expositors. Whereas Adventists continued to maintain a “general expectation of impending disaster,” they began to be much more cautious in their interpretations. Over the next several years “Adventist interest in Turkey continued to flicker” with articles continuing to argue that “Turkey’s end was very near.”²

World War I affected the church in other ways beyond the interpretation of prophecy. Adventist church members in Europe faced the question of military service, which split the church in Germany.³ Church members in North America were especially concerned by the devastation caused by the war and channeled their energies into constructive, humanitarian efforts. They were encouraged to donate to the American Red Cross, and soon after the war the denomination organized international relief activities to

¹Percy T. Magan, *The Vatican and the War; A Retrospect and Forecast: Being a Review of the Past Attitude of the Vatican Towards Civil and Religious Government, and an Analysis of Her Latest Utterance Upon These Matters as Related to the European War* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1915); F. M. Wilcox, “A Time to Pray,” *RH*, Aug. 13, 1914, 6.

²Land, “Seventh-day Adventists Interpret World War One,” 33, 55-56.

³The split over military service quickly spread to other countries. The group since that time has continued to split. The core group from Germany now comprises the Seventh-day Adventist Reform Church with its headquarters in Roanoke, Virginia.

regions devastated by the war.¹ Adventist eschatology prevented Adventists from working with other churches behind the war effort. Neither were they ready for efforts at church unification.²

Other Events from 1910-1922

Adventists were affected by a number of other concerns in addition to the death of Ellen G. White and the impact of World War I. Some of these concerns were indirectly related to these two events, and others were not.

Adventists believed that religious persecution would occur right before the end of time.³ Thus, they were very concerned about religious liberty, and in particular, about attempts to legislate Sunday rest. The 1880s and 1890s witnessed a movement to legislate Sunday rest, concluding with the Johnston Sunday Bill proposed in 1910.⁴ As the Johnston Bill gained attention, Adventist religious liberty advocate W. A. Colcord revised and enlarged an earlier edition of *American State Papers* outlining the importance of religious liberty in American history.⁵ Adventists vigorously opposed the bill, but

¹*SDA Encyclopedia* [1996], s.v. “Adventist Development and Relief Agency.”

²[F. M. Wilcox], “Seventh-day Adventists Can Not Federate,” *RH*, Feb. 3, 1910, 6.

³Morgan, 1-15.

⁴W. W. P[rescott], “The Johnston Sunday Bill in the United States Senate,” *RH*, Feb. 3, 1910, 20-21; K. C. Russell, “Making History,” *RH*, Feb. 3, 1910, 24.

⁵William Addison Blakely, comp., *American State Papers: Bearing on Sunday Legislation*, rev. and enl. W. A. Colcord (Washington, DC: Religious Liberty Association, 1911); idem, *American State Papers Bearing on Sunday Legislation* (New York: The National Religious Liberty Assoc., 1891).

attempts to legislate Sunday sacredness continued even as the U.S. Congress kept busy with the war and other matters.¹

The growth of missions in new areas of the world was also seen as a sign of the nearness of the end. Adventists had sent their first official missionary to Europe in 1874, and by 1910 some 100,000 church members were giving about two million dollars a year, which in turn supported 4,346 missionaries annually.² In looking over the 1910 statistical report, General Conference president A. G. Daniells noted that since 1874 the church had “representatives and an organized work in nearly every civilized and heathen country in the world.”³ While this was an overstatement, missions played a vital role in the lives of Adventists. Reports about the growth of missions were emphasized in the *Review and Herald*. Adventist young people were strongly encouraged to devote their lives to missionary service, and the church published mission story books for children. By the 1920s the Adventist denomination would reach the “golden age” of its missionary outreach.⁴

Adventists did not overlook changes in the broader American culture.⁵ Statistics about declining attendance in American churches made the front page of the *Review and*

¹C. E. Holmes, “Two Sunday Bills Reported On,” *RH*, Jan. 30, 1913, 7; idem, “Report of the Religious Liberty Department,” *RH*, May 16, 1918, 11-15.

²H. E. Rogers, “The Statistical Report for 1910,” *RH*, Aug. 24, 1911, 13-28.

³A. G. Daniells, “Our Statistical Report for 1910,” *RH*, Aug. 24, 1911, 32.

⁴George R. Knight, “Historical Introduction,” in *Historical Sketches of Foreign Missions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), xviii-xxii.

⁵George McCready Price, “Threatening Shadows of Oblivion: Signs of Disintegration in Twentieth Century Culture,” *ST*, Sept. 30, 1919, 1-2.

Herald.¹ Adventists also decried the significant rise in the number of divorces in the United States.² Moreover, Adventist leaders cautioned members against participating in “worldly sports” such as “baseball, football, [and] boat races” as well as “theater parties, and moving-picture shows, to say nothing of the grosser forms of dissipation.”³ Church officials, observing the mass immigration into the United States, encouraged members to conduct evangelism for this mass influx.⁴

The influx of new immigrants provided new opportunities for evangelism, yet it also disturbed many Adventists who felt that the increase of Roman Catholics threatened Protestant America.⁵ Adventists had long identified the Roman Catholic Church with apostate Babylon as portrayed in Revelation. Thus Adventists, especially in the *Review and Herald*, focused on activities within the Roman Catholic Church more than they did on other Christian churches.⁶ Adventists viewed themselves as true Protestants and

¹K. C. Russell, “Why Church Attendance Is on the Decline,” *RH*, Dec. 21, 1911, 3-4.

²F. M. Wilcox, “The Divorce Evil,” *RH*, Nov. 30, 1911, 9-10. Wilcox notes that there was a rise from 28 divorces per 1,000 people in the United States in 1870 to 73 per 1,000 people in 1906. See also D. H. Kress, “The Skeleton in the Home: How Shall We Remove the Menace?” *ST*, July 15, 1919, 5.

³F. M. Wilcox, “Worldly Sports,” *RH*, Nov. 2, 1911, 8-9.

⁴N. Z. T[own], “The Home Foreign Mission Field,” *RH*, Aug. 17, 1911, 19-21.

⁵J. W. Christian, “Growth of the Catholic Church,” *RH*, March 30, 1911, 6; C. M. S[orenson], “Catholic Immigration,” *RH*, Feb. 9, 1911, 24.

⁶E.g., one of the editors comments that “one of the most significant events in the history of this country . . . was the fiftieth anniversary of the election of James Cardinal Gibbons . . . to priesthood in that church.” *RH*, June 15, 1911, 24. See also C. M. S[orenson], “The Catholic Convention at Columbus,” *RH*, Oct. 12, 1911, 9.

believed that other Christian churches were in danger of being deceived and corrupted by Catholicism.¹

The influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 also impacted Adventists. In the United States 25 million people contracted the disease, and of those, 675,000 died. Although influenza epidemics usually take the highest toll among the very young and those with compromised immune systems, this particular pandemic had its highest rate of mortality among the twenty- to forty-year-old population. The armed forces were particularly hard hit, and more men died of influenza than were killed in battle.² Adventists published articles in church papers on influenza treatment, circulated books on healthful living, and gave demonstrations of simple remedies for curing influenza.³ There were times when efforts to educate people were interrupted by outbreaks of influenza. Evangelistic meetings had to be stopped as a result of outbreaks and Adventist schools struggled with finances because of declining enrollment when students contracted influenza and left school.⁴ Adventists believed that this “pestilence” was yet another sign of the end.⁵

¹*The Protestant Magazine* was published by the Review and Herald and edited by W. W. Prescott. This magazine called Adventists to be faithful Protestants by not uniting in federation with other fallen Christian churches, which were according to Adventist eschatology, part of “Babylon.”

²Carol R. Byerly, *The Fever of War: The Influenza Epidemic in the U.S. Army during World War I* (New York: New York University Press, 2005). Adventist physician Daniel H. Kress, M.D., noted this in an article published in an Adventist journal at the conclusion of the war. See D. H. Kress, “Influenza More Deadly Than War,” *Watchman Magazine*, March, 1919, 20-22. Adventists in the military were also affected by influenza. See S. B. Horton, “They Died in Service,” *RH*, Nov. 28, 1918, 29.

³G. H. Heald, “After-Effects of Influenza,” *RH*, Oct. 16, 1919, 29-30.

⁴L. K. Dickson, “Portland, Oreg.” *RH*, Aug. 14, 1919, 26.

⁵L. L. Caviness, “The Earthquake in Java,” *RH*, June 12, 1919, 5-6.

One way in which Adventists contributed to the concerns of the broader American society revolved around the prohibition movement. Ellen White, as early as 1848, had warned against the dangers of alcohol and tobacco.¹ Adventists supported the movement to prohibit the “liquor traffic.”² They furthermore rejoiced when the Eighteenth Amendment prohibiting alcohol consumption was passed in 1917 and subsequently ratified in 1919. Church leaders credited the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and other affiliated organizations for this victory. Yet their optimism was also filled with caution about the need to continue to educate the world about the dangers of alcohol.³

Another major area of focus was the growth of Adventist education. By 1910, this system was starting to professionalize. In that year the General Conference Education Department launched its first journal, *Christian Education*.⁴

¹A. L. White, *Ellen G. White*, 1:224. Tobacco at first was tolerated but its use was discouraged among Sabbatarian Adventists through various articles in the *Review and Herald* citing scientific and scriptural arguments against tobacco. See D. E. Robinson, *Story of Our Health Message* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1965), 66-70.

²*The Shadow of the Bottle: Published in the Interest of Nation-Wide Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915); Matilda Erickson, *Temperance Torchlights: Studies, Stories, Songs, Poems, and Useful Information on Temperance Topics* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1910); J. E. White and L. C. Ave, *The Man That Rum Made: With Temperance Lessons and Stories* (Marshall, MI: Nashville Book Company, 1912); M. C. Wilcox, *Story of a Dry Town, One of Many* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1922).

³D. H. Kress, “Making National Prohibition Safe,” *Watchman Magazine*, January, 1919, 18-19, 29; idem, “A World-wide Fight Against Alcoholism,” *Watchman Magazine*, October, 1919, 31; F. A. Coffin, “The Fight Against Alcohol,” *RH*, Feb. 1, 1923, 14-15.

⁴“Launch of Christian Education,” *RH*, Jan. 13, 1910, 2.

From 1910 to 1917, Adventist leadership became increasingly aware of its relationship to other religious denominations. As early as 1910 the editors of the *Review and Herald* noted that the new U.S. Government census report (the first since 1890) recorded 186 denominations, 154 of which were grouped into 27 different denominational “families.” One of these families, Adventists, consisted of seven distinct denominations.¹ This consciousness about how the Adventist Church was perceived contributed to the establishment of a press bureau to portray the church to news media in a positive light.²

In summary, Adventists grew concerned about changes occurring within American culture. These changes included mass immigration and the rise in number of Roman Catholics in the United States. Some of their concerns had to do with lifestyle and culture, including sports and popular forms of recreation. Adventists chose to deal with change in two ways. First, they channeled their energies into productive missionary activities. Second, they sought to warn the world about some of the dangers ahead.

Seventh-day Adventists and Shared Concerns with Fundamentalism

Adventists worried about the world in which they lived. In many ways, these concerns reflected shared anxieties with the emerging Fundamentalist movement.

¹The *Review and Herald* editors noted that all of the major denominations had grown since the last statistical report “except [for] the small denominations more closely related to ours; and these have all fallen off very decidedly, while ours has grown more in proportion than any of the others given.” A. C. Ames, “Religious Statistics,” *RH*, Jan. 6, 1910, 11.

²“Our Press Bureau,” *RH*, Dec. 14, 1911, 9-10.

Concerns About Evolution

Perhaps what troubled Adventists the most during this time period was the unfolding of life over eons of time which threatened faith in the biblical account of Creation.¹ To invalidate the Creation account would abrogate the rationale for the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. While Adventists had opposed the notion of evolution from its beginnings,² the topic took on increased meaning over time from almost no interest during the 1860s, to increasing interest during the late nineteenth century, decreasing somewhat during the 1910s. Adventist literature on the topic correlated to this pattern.³ Among the best examples of anti-evolutionary literature during the early twentieth century are the writings of George McCready Price, who published numerous articles and several books attacking the theory of evolution.⁴

In 1914 Price published a set of companion articles about evolution. The first, titled “Some Things We Ought to Know,” argued that the theory of evolution threatened

¹For an overview of the debate over creationism and evolution, see Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

²*Spiritual Gifts*, 3:93; cited in *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “Evolution.”

³A text search of the *Review and Herald* on the General Conference Archives web site (www.adventistarchives.org) on April 4, 2006, compared hits for “evolution” beginning in 1850 through 1917. The results were: 1860-69: 6; 1870-79: 3; 1880-89: 68; 1890-99: 46; 1900-1909: 132; 1910-17: 82.

⁴George McCready Price, *The Fundamentals of Geology and Their Bearings on the Doctrine of a Literal Creation* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913); idem, *God’s Two Books; or, Plain Facts About Evolution, Geology, and the Bible* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1911, 1922); idem, *Q. E. D. or New Light on the Doctrine of Creation* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1917).

the core Adventist belief in the validity of the seventh-day Sabbath. He added that the theory of evolution was far more complex than simply assuming “that evolutionists believe that man came from the monkey.” The “real key” to refuting evolution, argued Price, was geology. The geological record was the true weakness of evolution, he said, because modern scientific discoveries confirmed the biblical story of a universal flood. Geology thus demonstrated the validity of the Creation account and by extension the validity of the seventh-day Sabbath. In his subsequent article entitled “Denying the Record of the Flood,” Price explained the importance of defending the Flood account.¹

Price later elaborated his views defending flood geology in the book *Back to the Bible*. Advertisements stated that the purpose of the book was to restore the confidence of those who “have been losing faith in the Bible,” and called Adventists to “vindicate” the Bible “against so-called science already grown arrogant and dogmatic through the numbers of its adherents.”² A separate advertisement carried an endorsement from Fundamentalist A. C. Gaebelein, who described it as “most excellent” and promised to promote it through his own magazine.³

Adventists from 1910 to 1922 were particularly bothered that the theory of evolution was being taught in public schools (which became yet another justification for the Adventist educational system).

¹George McCready Price, “Some Things We Ought to Know,” *RH*, Aug. 20, 1914, 3-4; idem, “Denying the Record of the Flood,” *RH*, Aug. 27, 1914, 3-4.

²“Back to the Bible,” *RH*, Sept. 7, 1916, 23.

³Ibid.

Concerns About Modernism

Seventh-day Adventists were very concerned about the rise of modernism.

Adventist writer C. M. Sorenson expressed concern that modernism did not recognize the fallen condition of humanity and therefore could not see a need for salvation.¹

Modernists, according to Sorenson, were not only un-Christian, but they were also another sign of the end-time and that the second coming of Christ was imminent.

Despite many Adventists' dismissal of modernism, its spread was not completely ignored. Adventist editor F. M. Wilcox noted in an editorial that the Roman Catholic Church was trying to stem the tide of modernism within their church by requiring Catholic clerics to sign a pledge.² Adventists were also disturbed by the spread of modernism in Protestant churches, but their view of both Protestants and Catholics as "fallen" churches was congruent with their observation of modernism spreading in both these religious groups.

Although Adventists generally saw modernism as a sign of the end of time, they did not perceive it as an internal threat to Adventism. Therefore, Adventists had done relatively little to combat the spread of modernism, as their leaders admitted at the 1919 Bible Conference. W. W. Prescott and A. G. Daniells, however, also stated that the work being done by Fundamentalists to combat modernism was a work that every Adventist

¹C. M. S[orenson], "Modern Salvation," *RH*, June 15, 1911, 11-12.

²F. M. W[ilcox], "The Modernist Movement," *RH*, April 20, 1911, 20-21.

should be doing.¹ Adventist rhetoric about the dangers of modernism would increase during the 1920s.²

Concerns About the Authority of the Bible

A more foundational concern for Adventists that went beyond modernist thinking in general was the specific issue of higher criticism of the Bible that directly undermined its authority. Such accusations by higher critics were to Adventists a manifestation of the unbelief that Christ predicted would characterize the time of the end. Furthermore, Adventists believed that higher criticism led directly to atheism.

Particularly disturbing to Adventists was the charge that the Bible was not divinely inspired. One Adventist writer, C. M. Sorenson, took offense that higher critics interpreted the voice of God in Heb 1:1 as the inner voice of conscience within each person, implying that anyone could have the same authority as the biblical writers. He argued the Bible was the “great El Capitan of the universe” that could withstand higher criticism.³

The most extensive treatment by an Adventist author was a book entitled *The Bible in the Critics' Den* (1917). The author, Earle A. Rowell, was a self-professed “converted infidel.” He wrote how “all the moral and intellectual forces of the centuries have mustered their strength in attack and defense of this one Book, and its product,

¹RBC, 12.

²See William G. Wirth, *The Battle of the Churches: Fundamentalism or Modernism, Which?* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1924); Carlyle B. Haynes, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1924).

³C. M. S[orenson], “God’s Voice or the Higher Critic,” *RH*, Feb. 17, 1910, 3-4.

Christianity.” Rowell specifically defended the Bible as inerrant.¹ William G. Wirth, in an article written in 1919 about “the new theology,” argued that modernist thinking undermined Christ as creator and redeemer, and ultimately denied that Christ “is the author of the Bible.” “The Bible is the Word of God in writing,” he added.²

Observations by Adventists About the Emerging Fundamentalist Movement

Adventists gradually came to perceive the “menace of modernism” from almost the same perspectives as those conservative Christians who were becoming known as Fundamentalists.³ Adventists’ reactions to the emerging Fundamentalist movement can be discovered by looking at their response to the two major landmarks from this era: the publication of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (1910-15) and the Fundamentalist prophetic conferences (1918-19).

Adventists and The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth

*The Fundamentals: A Testimony for the Truth*⁴ was a series of pamphlets that the publishers intended to send to every Christian leader in North America. The majority of Adventists either did not receive them or did not view them as important enough to mention. The absence of any comments about *The Fundamentals* extends to the major

¹Earle A. Rowell, *The Bible in the Critic’s Den* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1917), 7-9, 18.

²William G. Wirth, “As He Walked,” *ST*, Nov. 11, 1919, 5-6.

³William B. Riley, *The Menace of Modernism* (New York: Christian Alliance, 1917); A. G. Daniells, “Response from Elder A. G. Daniells,” *RH*, April 17, 1919, 4-6.

⁴See chapter 1.

Adventist periodicals, including the *Review and Herald*, *Signs of the Times*, and *The Protestant Magazine*. Apparently the first time *The Fundamentals* was mentioned by an Adventist writer is in a list of recommended literature in W. W. Prescott's *The Doctrine of Christ* (ca. 1920), which was a Bible textbook condensed from his lectures at the 1919 Bible Conference.¹ Adventists were cognizant of the dangers of modernism, but only gradually became aware of how serious this danger was in the 1910s when Adventist church leaders attended the Fundamentalist prophetic conferences. Perhaps this explains why General Conference president A. G. Daniells lamented at the 1919 Bible Conference that the Fundamentalists were doing a work in warning the world about the dangers of modernism that Adventists should already have been doing.²

Adventist Attendance at the Prophetic Conferences

Adventists, as their name implies, believe in the soon return of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, not surprising that church leaders during the late 1910s noticed a series of prophetic conferences with the primary purpose of drawing attention to the second coming of Christ. Lee S. Wheeler, an Adventist pastor from Pennsylvania, wrote a cover page article for *Signs of the Times*, an Adventist evangelistic journal, about several recent Fundamentalist prophetic conferences held during the previous year (1914-15). He highlighted their premillennial views, their ability to awaken interest in the mind of the public about the "subject of Christ's second coming," and the large amount of interest they had attracted to their teachings in light of the "dark cloud of the present European

¹Prescott, *The Doctrine of Christ*, 2:160.

²RBC, July 1, 1919, 12.

war.” Wheeler furthermore traced the origins of what he described as the “great spiritual awakening” in the form of the then present prophetic conferences back to the work of Dwight L. Moody who first held a significant prophecy conference in 1878.¹ After this initial report highlighting several prophecy conferences that occurred toward the beginning of World War I, within three years after this initial report highlighting several prophecy conferences that occurred toward the beginning of World War I, Adventists were not only noticing these prophetic conferences, but Adventists actually attended at least three prophecy conferences and in their published reports described them as important events in modern church history.

Adventist leaders drew the attention of the denomination to these prophetic conferences through reports in denominational periodicals. Church leaders also talked with their colleagues at their denominational headquarters in Takoma Park, Maryland, about their visits. These written and oral reports caught the attention of General Conference president A. G. Daniells and played a significant role in the minds of those who were preparing for the 1919 Bible Conference.

The 1918 Philadelphia Prophetic Conference

The first known visit by Adventist church leaders to the 1918-19 Fundamentalist prophetic conferences was by a couple of individuals at the 1918 Philadelphia prophetic conference (held May 28-30, six months before the end of World War I). Wilcox was

¹Lee S. Wheeler, “A Deepening Conviction: Prominent Men of Many Persuasions Earnestly Proclaim the Doctrine—The Events of the Time Compel Serious Reflection,” *ST*, June 1, 1915, 337-38.

accompanied by Carlyle B. Haynes, a prominent Adventist evangelist, along with possibly one or two others.¹

Wilcox wrote the most extensive trip report describing his visit. He believed that the conference revealed a “general expectancy” about Christ’s second coming. “While these believers [at the conference] do not view the second coming of Christ in the same perspective [as do Adventists],” he wrote, “they are agreed as to many of the conditions in the great world which indicate his [*sic*] coming [is] near.” He added that the prophetic conference was called by ministers of different denominations who were “impressed that the time had come when they should meet and give study to this vital question [the second coming].”²

Wilcox continued with detailed descriptions of the well-attended meetings, the international diversity of the conferences, and excerpts from conference proceedings. Conference organizers planned several simultaneous meetings. Those sessions, Wilcox observed, were “calculated” to give a “definite note regarding the coming of the Lord.” While Wilcox agreed with most of what was presented, he did note some differences in opinion. “In listening to some of these addresses one might have imagined that he was attending a Seventh-day Adventist camp-meeting [*sic*], were it not for some of the misleading conclusions reached by these men.” He described how one presenter, a Dr. Philpott from Toronto, believed in the literal return of Israel to their own land before the Second Coming. Adventists, Wilcox noted, could not concur with this view.³

¹Carlyle B. Haynes, “The Creed of a Popular Movement,” *ST*, March 4, 1919, 7-8.

²Wilcox, “A Significant Religious Gathering,” 2, 4-5.

³*Ibid.*

In summarizing his article, Wilcox expressed hope that this prophetic conference would be “only one of many such conventions which will be held in the future.” He added, “These gatherings are significant” because they are one of the “most important events” in modern church history. Such a significant event raised the obvious question: What relationship would Adventists have to such a movement? “It surely should not be that of criticism,” Wilcox answered. God would use these prophetic conferences, he believed, to draw attention to the second coming and, through this avenue, open minds to a study of Bible prophecy. Thus, despite differences in their understanding of prophetic interpretation, Adventists shared a cherished “common hope” through their mutual interest in the second coming. Such attention would generate new opportunities for Adventists to evangelize those who became interested in Bible prophecy.

Carlyle B. Haynes, in his somewhat shorter trip report in *Signs of the Times* agreed with Wilcox that this prophetic conference was significant because it was drawing attention to the second coming, a doctrine that had lost its force among Protestant Christians. But Haynes could not agree with the speakers who taught the secret rapture, Fundamentalist expectations of the conversion of the Jews, or that the League of Nations would fall under the leadership of the antichrist. Haynes promised in his article that the *Signs of the Times* would publish a series of articles that explained more clearly how Adventists viewed end-time events.¹

Another Adventist journal, *The Watchman Magazine*, also provided a brief review of the 1918 Philadelphia prophetic conference published proceedings, *Light on Prophecy*.

¹Haynes, “The Creed of a Popular Movement,” 7-8.

The unsigned article noted that “readers will surely be impressed with the earnest expressions of faith in Christ and the everlasting gospel as it is contained in the Bible.” This review also noted the problematic teaching of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine. “Yet while these positions seem due to a misunderstanding of some of the prophecies relating to the millennium following Christ’s return,” the author wrote, “we heartily rejoice in the utterances of these scholarly men of God that lead to a study of the prophecies relating to ‘that blessed hope.’”¹

From these initial observations, it appears obvious that Adventists had a keen interest in the prophetic conference movement. Such a positive report by a church leader ensured that Adventist church leaders would continue to attend upcoming prophetic conferences.

The 1918 New York Prophetic Conference

The second prophetic conference was held Nov. 25-28, 1918, at Carnegie Hall in New York City.² Wilcox did not attend, but he sent his younger colleague and associate editor, Leon L. Caviness. Caviness appears to have been accompanied by Charles T. Everson, an evangelist from New England, and possibly a couple of other individuals. Caviness and Everson published their observations in denominational periodicals.

The first report by Caviness summarized key topics at the prophetic conference. He noted in particular that “the keynote of the first meeting, as well as of the whole

¹“Books We Have Seen,” *The Watchman Magazine*, February, 1919, 31.

²Arno C. Gaebelin, ed., *Christ and Glory: Addresses Delivered at the New York Prophetic Conference, Carnegie Hall, November 25-28, 1918* (New York: Our Hope [ca. 1918]), 3-6.

conference, and the point emphasized by every speaker, was the personal, literal, imminent, premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Such widespread interest in this conference was indicative, he said, of unparalleled opportunities for Adventists to share their beliefs. “As believers in the third angel’s message, we have long looked forward to the time of the loud cry. With the prevailing indifference to the message of Christ’s advent, we are sometimes inclined to feel as the prophet Elijah did,—who is indeed a type of the Advent people, that we alone remain faithful to the ‘blessed hope.’” This conference proved to Caviness, just as God had shown Elijah, that there were yet thousands of other Christians who had “not bowed the knee to Baal.”¹

In a follow-up article, Caviness described several significant aspects of the conference that Adventists should heed. First, he noted the presentation of W. Leon Tucker who “put himself definitely on record as opposed to the evolutionary interpretation of the days of creation.” He then added that if the speaker were to follow this point to its logical conclusion, Tucker would have to believe in a literal seventh-day Sabbath. This comment highlights an attitude held by Caviness that likely reflected perceptions by other Adventist leaders that Fundamentalists who attended these conferences were Christian brothers and sisters who just had not taken their literal interpretation of the Bible far enough. If they did so, Caviness believed, they would become Seventh-day Adventists.²

¹L. L. Caviness, “The Prophetic Conference, New York City,” *RH*, Dec. 12, 1918, 1-2.

²L. L. Caviness, “Notes on the Prophetic Conference,” *RH*, Dec. 26, 1918, 4-7.

Another item of interest for Caviness was a series of presentations on the infallibility of the Bible. “In spite of some mistaken ideas held by some speakers,” he mused, “the general impression gained by those attending the conference was a good one.” Unfortunately, he did not elaborate on what these “mistaken ideas” were beyond the views of some about infallibility.

Everson affirmed that the meeting “was one of the most successful religious gatherings held in this city [New York] in recent years.” Such an enthusiastic religious convention was “out of the ordinary” for such a city and expressed a growing interest in the study of Bible prophecy. He noted in his article that Adventists were pessimistic that the Leagues of Nations could guarantee human civilization from future wars. He noted that J. Wilbur Chapman, one of the more prominent speakers at the prophetic conference, found inspiration from Dwight L. Moody for his enthusiasm for preaching about the second coming. Everson focused his observations on their enthusiasm for the second coming and did not write about any significant differences.¹

In summary, the report by Everson and the two reports by Caviness affirmed the position taken by both senior editor Wilcox and Carlyle B. Haynes, who showed great

¹Charles T. Everson, “The Prophetic Bible Conference,” *The Watchman Magazine*, March 1919, 23, 29-30.

interest in the prophetic conference movement. Both Caviness and Everson regarded these meetings as significant because they affirmed faith in the second coming. Like Wilcox, Caviness was careful to qualify his endorsement by noting theological differences. It appears that he saw Fundamentalists as on the right track, but as not having taken their literal interpretations of the Bible far enough. In reporting a series of presentations on the infallibility of the Bible, he noted that although some “mistaken ideas” were taught about inspiration, by and large the work of the Fundamentalists was positive because it reinforced faith in the validity of the Bible.

The 1919 Philadelphia Prophetic Conference

The last and largest of the three major prophetic conferences took place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 25-30, 1919.¹ Adventist editor F. M. Wilcox, who attended the first prophetic conference, attended these meetings with L. L. Caviness, and there again seems to have been a small delegation of other denominational leaders.² Wilcox’s report consists largely of lengthy excerpts regarding the aim of the conference, short biographical descriptions of presenters, and summaries of the topics discussed.

The most significant topic discussed by conferees, according to Wilcox, was their clarion call for “a new Protestantism.” More specifically, they noticed that the “inroads of

¹*God Hath Spoken: Twenty-five Addresses Delivered at the World Conference [on] Christian Fundamentals, Philadelphia, May 25 to June 1, 1919* (Philadelphia: Bible Conference Committee, 1919), 7-9.

²Arthur G. Daniells at the 1919 Bible Conference referred to a church delegation who had attended the recent prophetic conference held in Philadelphia; see 1919 RBC, 17. It seems likely that Meade MacGuire was a part of this delegation. See Meade MacGuire, “The World Conference on Christian Fundamentals,” *The Watchman Magazine*, Sept. 1919, 26-27.

higher criticism, [and] of evolution, . . . are making fearful onslaughts. A subtle species of infidelity [radical disbelief] is being taught by many who stand in the sacred desk.”

Clearly, Fundamentalists at this conference saw themselves in grave danger. The world they lived in was changing.¹

After quoting the general doctrinal statement of belief adopted by the conference,² Wilcox proceeded to differentiate in much clearer terms than he had the year before how Adventists dissented from the majority of fundamentalists. “Seventh-day Adventists, of course,” he wrote, “could not accept as Bible doctrine the statement regarding the conscious eternal punishment of the wicked.” In addition to this, he raised a second objection. “Seventh-day Adventists would also differ from the teachings of the

¹F. M. Wilcox, “A Conference on Christian Fundamentals,” *RH*, June 19, 1919, 2, 5-8.

²The statement of belief adopted states: “World Conference on Christian Fundamentals 1919. Doctrinal Statement. I. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life. II. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. III. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. IV. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed. V. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all that believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood. VI. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in his ascension into heaven, and in his present life there for us, as high priest and advocate. VII. We believe in ‘that blessed hope,’ the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. VIII. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God. IX. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting, conscious punishment of the lost.” Quoted by F. M. Wilcox, “A Conference on Christian Fundamentals,” 2, 5-8.

Philadelphia Conference [*sic*] regarding the premillennial reign of Christ.” Whereas Adventists did believe in the premillennial return of Christ, they did not embrace John Nelson Darby’s dispensational views. While not all conferees were dispensationalists, the majority were. Wilcox added, “While we believe for the most part these fundamental principles of Bible doctrine as enunciated by this conference, we believe that the list is by no means complete.” He then proceeded to describe in detail the fundamental beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists.¹

“Seventh-day Adventists as never before should prove both by their teaching and their lives that they are men and women of the Book [the Bible], that they believe with childlike simplicity its holy principles. . . . They cannot hope to stay the invasion of skepticism or unbelief so far as the world, or even the majority of the great Christian church, is concerned.”² Wilcox failed to discuss any differences between Adventists and Fundamentalist views on the nature of inspiration. Instead, he suggested Adventists had a unique opportunity to use the interest generated by these prophetic conferences to evangelize others.

Meade MacGuire, an Adventist writer and minister who was beginning to rise to prominence in the denomination, published a trip report in *The Watchman Magazine*. He described this Conference as “one of the significant movements which indicate that God is dealing definitely with the world in preparation for impending events of stupendous importance.” This was particularly important because it represented a separation from

¹F. M. Wilcox, “A Conference on Christian Fundamentals,” 2, 5-8.

²Ibid.

“the teaching of the modernists, familiarly known as the Higher Critics.” MacGuire was impressed with the deep interest in Bible prophecy by those present. Yet Adventists could not agree with them entirely. Adventists differed in their view of “the future punishment of the wicked or in their teaching that the millennium would occur on this earth before the earth is made new. As a whole, he added, the meeting was significant because it showed that “the spirit of God is stirring up the minds of devout men everywhere to study the Scriptures and discern the signs of the times. . . . As in the days of Christ’s first advent, there will now be those who believe and study the prophecies and who will be ready to welcome his return.”¹

These reports underlined earlier concerns raised by Adventists who attended previous prophetic conferences. It seems that Adventist attendance at this third conference, held almost a year after the initial one in Philadelphia, clarified in their minds fundamental eschatological and theological differences between Adventists and Fundamentalists. Whereas they had a common interest in the premillennial return of Christ, dispensationalist views held by Fundamentalists prevented Adventists from embracing their beliefs completely. Interestingly, Adventists saw this as a unique opportunity to evangelize Fundamentalists, which may help to explain why Adventists were not openly embraced by their fellow premillennialists.

¹MacGuire, 26-27.

References to the Prophetic Conferences During the 1919 Bible Conference

The three visits by Wilcox, Caviness, and others were significant to discussions that occurred at the Adventist 1919 Bible Conference. On the opening night of the Conference, the chair and General Conference President Arthur G. Daniells spoke of visiting William B. Riley's church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Riley was a prominent leader at all three of the prophetic conferences, and at the 1919 Philadelphia prophetic conference, he was elected president of the newly formed World Christian Fundamentals Association. "I heard him," Daniells noted,

make quite an extended report of the purpose of these conferences, and of the few meetings already held. The statement was very fine. He went on to show the influence of modern teaching, the effect it was having upon men who once believed the Word of God, the doubt it was engendering[,] the unbelief, the higher criticism. Then he stated his position that the Bible was God's Word from Genesis to Revelation, that it was the only book that God had given the world to save the human race, the only one that gives the truth regarding the deity of Christ, and His plan of salvation, and that it was an inspired Book, and it was the Book that all men, high and low, rich and poor, learned and illiterate must come to and bow before; and unless that view could be brought back to the church, the church was going away and would be lost. There is no hope for the popular church today unless it comes back to the Word of God. He said the object of these Bible Conferences is to draw in men and emphasize the divine origin of the Book and the deity of the Son of God and to lead men away back to the original faith of Protestantism for salvation.¹

Daniells had obviously been impressed with Riley's work. On the opening night of the Bible Conference, Daniells was joined up front in leading the meeting by W. W. Prescott, who had also attended the Philadelphia prophetic conference. Both Daniells and Prescott believed that the Christian church had reached a serious crisis as the direct result of modernist, liberal thinking within Protestant churches. Adventists, they urged, must meet

¹RBC, July 1, 1919, 11-12.

this threat, which they perceived as undermining American Christianity as they knew it at the time.¹

In order for Adventists to meet this crisis in the outside world, Daniells believed they needed greater theological unity among themselves. The purpose of the 1919 Bible Conference, he said, was to achieve this unity through the study of various phases of “our truth,” and to conduct Bible studies that would fill this need. It was only through a “deeper and more cooperative study of the Word of God” and a “careful study of the major questions, the great essentials, the Fundamentals,” that they could bring unity among themselves. “It means greater light and intellectual advancement.” In contrast, he hoped to avoid “unhelpful controversy” between those who were present and others who had not been invited.²

Prescott defined “these Fundamentals” as those issues which were “absolutely necessary for salvation.”³ It appears that Prescott and Daniells wanted the conference to center around themes that emphasized a practical knowledge of Jesus Christ; in actuality, most of the conference focused on prophetic interpretation. These two men saw the two different themes united in Christian history. Prescott in particular argued that all the great themes in the Bible led to a culminating point in world history, the second coming of Christ. Thus, it was to be expected that there would be a great apostasy within

¹RBC, July 1, 1919, 17-20.

²Ibid., 10-12.

³Prescott wrote: “I distinguish between the things that are fundamental, the very foundation of the message, and the things that are nonessential, that are not absolutely necessary for salvation, and concerning which we can have a difference of view, and both be giving the [distinctive Adventist] message.” RBC, July 8, 1919, 322.

Christianity brought about by modernist thinkers within Protestantism. It likewise should not surprise Adventists, he stated, to discover others who were proclaiming the nearness of Christ's return. But it was more important to focus on unity within the church. The best way to achieve this was through a discussion of differences among Adventists who held different views on the interpretation of prophecy. It was in this way that they could fulfill their mandate to present a united proclamation of Christ's soon return to the world.

Daniells perceived that Adventists' apocalyptic expectations were nearly fulfilled. In Prescott's words: "Religious men recognize that we have come to a crisis, [Daniells: 'Yes, they do!'] and there are men in various denominations who recognize this, [who] are seeking to meet it in some way. This Bible Conference at Philadelphia showed that such men feel that the very fundamentals of the gospel are being taken away from the people, and that a new gospel . . . is being put in its place, and they are seeking some way to meet that crisis." As if this were not bad enough, Prescott observed, there was a professor at the University of Chicago who derided premillennialism. This professor undermined the foundations of millennial belief by attacking the reliability of the Bible itself. Prescott tried to startle his fellow Adventists with the notion that Protestantism faced a serious dilemma and that, more than any other Christian body, Adventists had a responsibility to meet this crisis. Yet they had already been beaten in meeting this threat. It was high time for Adventists to support the work Fundamentalists were doing in warning the world of its danger.¹

¹RBC, July 1, 1919, 12.

Seventh-day Adventists, Prescott and Daniells believed, also had a contribution that they could make to the Fundamentalist movement. Later on during the Bible Conference, when Prescott brought up the subject of the creation account versus evolution, Daniells pressed home the point that he felt Riley was “floundering around” on the subject of the “origin of things.” As a result he “goes wrong on the law and the Sabbath because he is lost there.” Adventists had a clear concept of the creation account that would be helpful at a time when evolutionary thought was becoming increasingly popular.¹

Daniells was obviously impressed by the work that Riley was doing. Although he had been unable to attend any of the prophetic conferences in New York City or Philadelphia, as noted above, he did attend Riley’s church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, prior to attending the 1919 Bible Conference.² Daniells noted at several points throughout the Conference that he was so “impressed” by Riley’s report of the recent Philadelphia meeting that he felt Adventists could hold a conference similar to those the Fundamentalists had organized. He hoped that the present Bible Conference could be the beginning of such a movement among Seventh-day Adventists. “If we can get through with this thing as we ought to, next year we should plan for another, and enlarge it

¹RBC, July 13, 1919, 675.

²RBC, July 13, 1919, 675. Unfortunately there are no details about Daniells’s visit other than the references he made to it in the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts. The presidential papers at the General Conference Archives are missing any diaries or correspondence by Daniells that might shed additional light.

perhaps, and go on with this until we find ourselves traveling along the road better than we have been for a good many years. I feel very hopeful about it.”¹

In addition to Daniells’s opening talk, these Fundamentalist prophetic conferences were referred to again at the conclusion of the 1919 Bible Conference. R. D. Quinn, who had attended the 1918 prophetic conference in New York, reflected upon his visit. He stated again that these conferences were an inspiration for the work that Adventists should be doing.²

Perspective

Adventists appear to have been largely unaware of the publication of *The Fundamentals*, but they were nonetheless aware of some of the issues being debated. From 1910 to 1922 they published articles on the fulfillment of end-time events, the validity of the Bible, and evolution.

The immediate result of Adventist attendance at these prophetic conferences was that they felt that Adventists should be doing the work being done by Fundamentalists. Fundamentalists were drawing attention to the second coming of Christ. As such, these conferences were significant events in modern church history.

These conferences also alerted Adventists to an enemy they had in common with Fundamentalists: modernism. While Adventists had gradually become aware of this problem, the absence of discussion indicates that church leaders became attuned to the gravity of the problem primarily by attending the Fundamentalist prophecy conferences.

¹RBC, July 1, 1919, 12.

²RBC, July 19, 1919, 1063-65.

Fundamentalists portrayed Christianity on the brink of a crisis; its very foundations were imperiled—rhetoric the Adventists afterward repeated.

In spite of the fact that Fundamentalists preceded Adventists in proclaiming a voice of warning about the perils of modernism, Adventists realized that this provided a unique opportunity to draw attention to the second coming. In addition, Adventists believed that Fundamentalists were doing a great work in defending the validity of the Bible but had not taken their study of the Bible far enough. Yet based on the premise that some Fundamentalists were earnest seekers after truth, Adventists felt that Fundamentalists needed only to be redirected to a greater conception of that truth. Thus, the prophetic conferences were an opportunity for Adventists to attract attention to their special message to the world.

Perhaps the most tangible impact of Adventist attendance at Fundamentalist prophetic conferences (or, in the case of A. G. Daniells, attendance at W. B. Riley's church in Minneapolis) can be seen in the planning of a Seventh-day Adventist Bible Conference. Both Daniells and Prescott articulated at the outset of the 1919 Bible Conference that they wanted Seventh-day Adventists to follow the example set by these conferences because Adventists should have been doing the very work the Fundamentalists were doing in warning the world about the perils of modernism. The prophetic conferences thus became a model for the 1919 Bible Conference. Interestingly, while hoping for a similar result to the Fundamentalist conferences, Adventists did not follow their example and open the meeting to whomever wished to attend. Adventists desired to resolve their internal differences before they held a public meeting.

It is no accident that these prophetic conferences occurred during or soon after World War I; these prophetic conferences were revived at the beginning of the "Great

War.” As Adventists compared their understanding of end times with that of Fundamentalists, they discovered many similarities and differences:

1. Both believed in the premillennial return of Christ, but the dispensationalist views held by Fundamentalists divided them.

2. Both held a high regard for the authority of the Bible and saw attacks on the veracity of the Scriptures as a sign of the end. Adventists concluded that Fundamentalists had not taken their literal views of interpretation far enough, for if they did, they would keep the seventh-day Sabbath.

3. Adventists and Fundamentalists shared a common enemy in the form of modernism. Fundamentalists at these prophetic conferences represented a wide array of denominations and viewed liberalism as an enemy that existed within their own churches. Adventists also saw modernism creeping into their midst, and was therefore a serious threat to theological hegemony. The largest amount of attention was directed to the rise of modernism outside the denomination. Adventists took this as another fulfillment of how Protestant churches would apostatize at the end of time, as anticipated by Adventist eschatology. Adventists would combat modernist teachings but with the eventual view that such efforts within other churches would fail and that only Adventists would eventually be left warning the world before the eschaton.

A noticeable result of Adventist attendance at the prophetic conferences is that Adventists adapted their own plans for an upcoming Bible Conference, transforming it into an Adventist extension of the prophetic conferences. While this was not the initial

impetus for this conference,¹ at the opening meeting of the 1919 Bible Conference, A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott, the most visible figures at that conference, made it clear that they intended for the Fundamentalist prophetic conferences to serve as a model for the 1919 Bible Conference. Yet it appears that Prescott and Daniells did not think Adventism was ready to engage the modernists directly. Instead, they examined their need for internal unity. In doing so they adopted an insular posture to protect themselves from what they saw as harmful influences. The 1919 Bible Conference centered on achieving unity among leading denominational thinkers. Church leaders hoped that this unity would be achieved through a rousing series of spiritual messages and Bible study. As the 1919 Bible Conference continued, the greatest need was that of solving eschatological differences among themselves.

¹See chapter 3. M. C. Wilcox made a personal request to A. G. Daniells for such a Bible Conference as early as 1913.

CHAPTER 3

ON THE CUSP OF A WAR: THE “BIG GUNS ARE FIRING BROADSIDES”

Introduction

Adventist theology has its foundation in a Restorationist¹ impulse that mandated the final authority of the Bible for all aspects of faith and practice. Referring to themselves as “the people of the book,”² Adventists emphasize the Bible as their only creed. The earliest Sabbatarian Adventists were militantly anti-creedal. In 1872 Uriah Smith drafted the first extensive list of Adventist beliefs. Later, Smith, as head elder of the Battle Creek Tabernacle (the denomination’s largest church), also developed a list of “points of faith” that would begin to define the uniqueness of Adventist theology. This list would continue to be refined and republished in later years, especially in response to inquiries by non-Adventist believers. Challenges by critics forced the church to publish a list of beliefs again in 1931.³

¹*Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Restorationism.”

²In 1918 one Adventist writer in the *Review and Herald* wrote that “Adventists are often called ‘The People of the Book’” (Stemple White, “A Key to the Bible,” *RH*, Sept. 12, 1918, 6). Furthermore, the phrase “a people of the book” was used by M. E. Kern as a reason for the existence of the Advanced Bible School, forerunner of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (M. E. Kern, “The Advanced Bible School,” *RH*, June 5, 1936, 174).

³[Uriah Smith], *A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the SDA

The belief that truth is progressive is foundational to Adventism. This led to particular emphasis that greater light would continue to be discovered from inspired writings.¹ The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath was interpreted as a part of a restoration of biblical truth that would occur during the “time of the end.” The distinctive beliefs of Adventism, especially the doctrines of the Sabbath and the Sanctuary, were integrated into a comprehensive theology known as the “great controversy” theme which interpreted history through the lens of an ultimate and final victory of truth over evil (or Christ over Satan). Adventists were encouraged to continue to study the Bible for further light. Due to the general emphasis on the Bible as the final authority on matters of faith, Sabbatarian Adventists developed a number of different scriptural approaches for solving conflict.²

Publishing Association, 1872); [idem], *Membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Battle Creek, Mich., As it stood May 4, 1890; with Names of Officers, Trustees, Committees, Meetings, Points of Faith, etc., etc.* (Battle Creek, MI: [Review and Herald], 1890). [A. O. Tait], “A Statement of Belief,” *ST*, Dec. 9, 1919, 9. The unsigned article, written presumably by *Signs of the Times* editor A. O. Tait, states: “Seventh-day Adventists . . . when inquiry is made concerning their creed, [state] ‘Our creed is the truth of God as revealed in the sixty-six books of the Bible, which we believe to be divinely inspired, hence infallible.’” The list goes on to describe 22 points of belief. A list of Adventist beliefs was developed as a direct response to challenges by A. F. Ballenger in *The Gathering Call*. For an overview of the development of a statement of Adventist beliefs, see LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 409-19.

¹Albert R. Timm, “Historical Background of Adventist Interpretation,” in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid, Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 1-14.

²For an overview of the integration of the Sabbath and Sanctuary doctrines, see Merlin D. Burt, “The Historical Background, Interconnected Development and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White’s Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844 to 1849” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002); Alberto R. Timm, “The Sanctuary and the Three Angels’ Messages 1844-1863:

Solving doctrinal conflict would thus take a number of different institutional forms. The most widely recognized were Bible conferences. The earliest of these conferences were known as the Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences, held from 1848 to 1850, during which the core beliefs of Sabbatarian Adventism (especially the Sabbath and the Sanctuary) were integrated. The brief records kept of these earliest conferences show that they were times filled with intense Bible study and prayer. There also appears to have been frequent disagreements.¹ A second way for settling doctrinal conflict was through discussion in Sabbatarian Adventist journals. These periodicals were the lifeblood for the early church members and in addition to theological articles, they also contained itineraries for church leaders.² A third way was through position papers. This was the means J. N. Andrews used to settle the conflict over the time for beginning the biblical seventh-day Sabbath. He presented a paper on the topic at an 1855 “general” conference that settled debate upon the topic.³ These three methods would primarily be used by Adventist thinkers to settle doctrinal conflict.⁴

Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1995).

¹Jerry Moon, “Lessons from the Adventist Pioneers in Dealing with Doctrinal Controversy,” Unpublished presentation outline, *Adventist Theological Society Symposium*, May 16, 1997.

²Adventist journals included the *Review and Herald*, and its immediate predecessors *Present Truth* and the *Advent Review*. The publication of religious periodicals became an expression of the democratization of American religion. See Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*.

³James White, “Time of the Sabbath,” *RH*, Dec. 4, 1855, 76-78.

⁴*Ibid.*

An additional dimension that intensified the urgency to settle doctrinal conflicts at the time of the 1919 Bible Conference was a conscious realization that the earliest generation of Adventist leaders was passing away. The “messenger of the Lord,” Ellen G. White, had died only four years before (1915). Three years later (1918) only a small handful of “pioneers” and leaders were still alive whom had had some contact with the early stages of the denomination (G. I. Butler, J. N. Loughborough, and S. N. Haskell). They were well-respected as pioneer icons. They wrote about the early days of the church, gave counsel, and even sold pictures of themselves to raise money for special church projects.¹ By 1919 there was certainly a clear sense that Adventism’s earliest generation was passing from the scene of action. Now a second and even a third generation of denominational leaders were providing leadership. By 1919, it had been seventy-five years since the Great Disappointment of 1844.²

Pertinent Events in the Formation of Seventh-day Adventist Theology Prior to the 1919 Bible Conference

At the 1919 Bible Conference, participants were particularly cognizant of several major events that had occurred in the formation of Seventh-day Adventist theology. These events shaped discussions at the 1919 Bible Conference. A brief synopsis of these

¹See *RH*, April 11, 1918, 3.

²W. W. Prescott would present a devotional during the October 1919 Fall Council reflecting upon the fact that it had been 75 years since the Great Disappointment. While this talk was given after the 1919 Bible Conference, it does give some indication that Adventists in 1919 were cognizant of the passing of time since 1844. *GCM*, Oct. 22, 1919.

events is important to provide the historical context of the presentations and discussions generated during that meeting.

The 1888 General Conference Session

Delegates at the 1919 Bible Conference invoked the 1888 General Conference session more than any other event in Adventist history.¹ It was during the 1888 conference that a major shift in Adventist theology occurred. Two young ministers, Alonzo T. Jones² and Ellet J. Waggoner,³ preached a message of righteousness by faith that emphasized a more Christ-centered dimension to Adventism. Ellen G. White had written that Adventists had preached the law until the church was as dry as the hills of Gilboa. The repeated emphasis upon what made Adventists unique from other Christians minimized the more basic aspects about what made Adventists Christian.⁴

¹*Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s. v. “General Conference Session of 1888.” For allusions to the 1888 General Conference session during the 1919 Bible Conference, see RBC, July 3, 1919, 137-38, 154, 162-66.

²For a biographical treatment, see George R. Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1987).

³*SDA Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “Ellet J. Waggoner”; David P. McMahon, *Ellet Joseph Waggoner: The Myth and the Man* (Fallbrook, CA: Verdict Publications, 1979).

⁴Ellen G. White, “Christ Prayed for Unity Among His Disciples,” *RH*, March 11, 1890. For an overview of the 1888 General Conference session, see George R. Knight, *A User-Friendly Guide to the 1888 Message* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998); A. V. Olson, *Thirteen Crisis Years: 1888-1901, From the Minneapolis Meeting to the Reorganization of the General Conference* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981); A. V. Wallenkampf, *What Every Adventist Should Know about 1888* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1988). The terms “what is Adventist about Adventism” and “what is Christian about Adventism” come from Knight, *A Search for Identity*.

Among the debated issues of the 1888 General Conference session were (1) whether the “law” referred to in Galatians was the moral or ceremonial law, and (2) a reinterpretation of the ten horns of Dan 7. Butler believed that viewing the law in Galatians as moral would undermine the sacredness of the Ten Commandments, especially the seventh-day Sabbath, and Uriah Smith believed that Jones’s questioning of the previous interpretation of the ten horns would bring all of Adventism’s apocalyptic interpretations into question. While these two controversies raged, far more important to Ellen White was Jones’s and Waggoner’s christological emphasis that placed salvation through Christ alone at the center of Adventist beliefs. This was a theological breath of fresh air for Adventist theology, according to Ellen G. White.¹

By the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, A. G. Daniells credited Jones and Waggoner with enlightening him in his own understanding of justification by faith. In addition, W. W. Prescott had traveled and preached with Jones and Waggoner and had been identified as a supporter of this Soteriology. Together Daniells and Prescott sought to promote a more Christ-centered theology that emphasized righteousness by faith. They

¹“The Lord in his great mercy sent a most precious message to his people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to his divine person, his merits, and his changeless love for the human family. . . . This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of his Spirit in a large measure.” Ellen G. White, *Special Testimony to the Battle Creek Church* (N.p., 1896), 35-36.

were also keenly aware of the opposition they had received for presenting their views and cognizant that the denomination still needed a more Christ-oriented theology.

At several times throughout the 1919 Bible Conference delegates mentioned the subsequent apostasy of Jones and Waggoner. Jones in particular held to an anti-organizational ecclesiology, which nonetheless did not prevent him from joining Dr. J. H. Kellogg in a power struggle for control of the church. Later, after they had lost to A. G. Daniells, both Jones and Waggoner would join Kellogg in his departure from the church. Several conferees in 1919 criticized Jones for poor historical research and his tendency to jump to conclusions. What led him down this path was his inerrantist view of inspiration, which led him to “hang a man upon a single word.”¹

The “Daily” Controversy

The translation of the word “daily” for the Hebrew word *tamid* (Dan 8:11-13; 11:31; 12:11) was the focus of an intense theological debate within Adventism from about 1898 to 1910. By 1919 the controversy had diminished, but the underlying exegetical issues still remained and would be debated in other contexts. Thus the controversy over the “daily” would haunt the interpretative discussions at the 1919 Bible Conference.²

¹C. M. Sorenson noted that Jones read things into the Bible and history. “That is one of the evil legacies left us by A. T. Jones’ leadership. His books are full of that practice, and we have consigned them to the scrap heap. They contain some facts, but the facts are biased by a preconceived notion.” RBC, July 3, 1919, 154.

²Haloviak, “In the Shadow of the ‘Daily’: Background and Aftermath of the 1919 Bible and History Teachers’ Conference”; Jerry Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White*, 415-27.

Two main interpretations dominated the discussion. Both views originated from the Millerite movement and centered on what the “little horn” of Dan 8 or the “king of the north” of Dan 11 took away. In each example the “apostate form of worship” designated as “the transgression of desolation” (Dan 8:13) or “the abomination that maketh desolate” (Dan 11:31; 11:11) is put in its place.¹ The more dominant nineteenth-century Adventist view, known as the “old view,” argued that the substantive adjective *tamid* modifies the word “abomination.” “Thus,” according to historian Jerry Moon, “the ‘daily [abomination]’ represented the ancient pagan religion of the Roman Empire which was ‘taken away’ by the rising papacy.”² A second view contended that the “daily” or “continual” referred to the heavenly priestly ministry of Christ, “which was ‘taken away’ in the sense of being supplanted by the usurpations of a human priesthood, auricular confession, human priestly absolution, etc.”³

Both views had many similarities. They both emphasized the papacy as the agent in taking away the “daily.” Both agreed that this occurred in the sixth century. Apart from minor details, Jerry Moon argues that the “new view” offered two basic changes over the “old view.”

First, the new view simplified the exposition of Dan 8 by identifying the three occurrences of the English word “sanctuary” in vss. 11, 13, and 14 as the same sanctuary, the heavenly (although two different Hebrew terms stand behind the English word “sanctuary” in these verses). Second, the new view changed the focus of attention to the ministry of Christ, thus highlighting “the true sanctuary service” as the context of Dan 8:14. The new view also claimed to correct some of the historical

¹*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “The Daily.”

²*Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s.v. “The Daily.”

³*Ibid.* See also Schwarz and Greenleaf, 609-11.

argumentation set forth by supporters of the old view, although the historical *conclusions* of the two sides were virtually identical.¹

Thus the disagreement was ostensibly a debate over which view represented the best exegesis of the passages in Daniel. But Haskell revealed the deeper issue when he said that the question would not “amount to a hill of beans” had not Ellen White made a statement about it. In the end the controversy boiled down to her own authority about how to interpret the single reference she made in *Early Writings*. In this passage she reported on a vision she had in 1850, and furthermore she stipulated that her writings should not be used to settle this conflict.²

In May 1910 Ellen White and W. C. White proposed a joint meeting on the topic. When proponents of the old view refused to meet, Ellen White issued a statement squelching discussion of the topic, and specifically asking that her writings not be used to settle the debate.³

The Battle Creek Crisis, 1902-1907

Conferees at the 1919 Bible Conference were also keenly aware of the departure of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and a number of his supporters from the Adventist

¹*Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s.v. “The Daily.”

²S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, Dec. 6, 1909, EGWE-GC; Ellen G. White, *Early Writings of Mrs. White: Experience and Views, And Spiritual Gifts, Volume One* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1882), 74-75.

³“There is no hope of these old people [adherents of the old view] who lived back in the early days of the Message being converted to this new light,” S. N. Haskell assured Ellen White, “even if they [the new-view men] bring volumes of histories to prove it. Because they [the old-view supporters] give more for one expression in your testimony than for all the histories you could stack between here and Calcutta” (S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, May 30, 1910, cited in *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s.v. “The Daily”); see also Ellen G. White, Manuscript, 11, July 31, 1910 (EGWE-GC).

denomination. This was partially a result of a power struggle second to none for control of the Adventist denomination.

Ellen White had been a close friend and mentor to Kellogg, and she had promised his mother she would look out for him after his mother's death. James and Ellen White had financially helped Kellogg obtain his medical education and encouraged him as he directed the fledgling Health Reform Institute in 1873. Kellogg in the next two decades transformed it into the world-famous Battle Creek Sanitarium.

As Kellogg's medical institution grew, he became responsible for the medical work of the church. At one point there were more employees working for health institutions than there were ministers in the denomination. During the 1890s, when Kellogg's relationship with church leaders became strained, Ellen White sought to be an intermediary between Kellogg and church leaders. When on several occasions he threatened to leave the church, she counseled him that this would be a mistake. By 1898 Ellen White warned Kellogg that he was in grave spiritual danger.¹

The crisis came to a head in 1902 after the Battle Creek Sanitarium burned down. White affirmed that this event was a judgment from the Lord specifically because Kellogg had not heeded the light given to him.² Although she counseled him not to concentrate so much on the Adventist medical work in Battle Creek, Kellogg rebuilt the sanitarium

¹Ellen White warned Kellogg that he was in danger of becoming like the biblical Nebuchadnezzar who had exalted himself, and unless he changed the course of his life, he would be in danger "of making shipwreck of your faith." Ellen G. White, Letter 123, 1898, see also Letter 92, 1900 (EGWE-GC).

²Ellen G. White to J. H. Kellogg, Feb. 5, 1902, Letter 269, 1902 (EGWE-GC); *ibid.*, Aug. 5, 1902, Letter 123, 1902 (EGWE-GC).

much larger than it had been before. In order to fund it, Kellogg donated the manuscript for his book *The Living Temple*, which contained alleged pantheistic teachings that alarmed church leaders, especially A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott. Ellen White wrote some of her strongest warnings against this book. She further noted that Kellogg's greatest danger had been exalting science above the God of science. It eventually became clear that Kellogg had departed from the faith and on Nov. 10, 1907, his name was removed from membership of the Battle Creek Tabernacle.¹

After Kellogg left the church, many Adventists, especially those closely associated with him, were also either disfellowshipped² or chose to leave the denomination. Two of those individuals included E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones of 1888 fame. The departure of these two individuals would leave their mark on the presidency of Daniells.

Another Conference Needed

During World War I it was clear that the church was in need of another doctrinal conference. General Conference sessions had been held annually through 1889, biannually from 1891 through 1913, and quadrennially beginning in 1918. General

¹John Harvey Kellogg, *The Living Temple* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Co., ca. 1903); Ellen White wrote that these pantheistic teachings were the "alpha of a train of heresies" that would face the church before the second coming, see Ellen G. White, Letters 232, 239, 253, 265, 1903 (EGWE-GC); Richard W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.: Pioneering Health Reformer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2006).

²A term used by Seventh-day Adventists in which a church meeting is held where the local church meeting in business session votes to expel a member from membership in that particular congregation.

Conference sessions, however (as 1888 showed), were better suited for formulating church policy than for candid discussions about theological issues.

Another type of denominational gathering that had become quite popular were educational conventions, which had become a significant way for developing a distinctly Adventist curriculum. Beginning with the original 1891 Harbor Springs Convention, the church had held a number of educational councils. The last educational council immediately prior to the 1919 Bible Conference was held in 1917. Educational leaders voted to hold some kind of educational convention every summer, but a convention in 1918 was postponed because of World War I.¹

By 1919, conferences and conventions had become a frequent way of dealing with both theological and pedagogical issues. In 1919 alone there were seven other major conventions in addition to the Bible Conference: a secretaries' and treasurers' convention (February), bookmen's convention (April), educational convention (April), editorial convention (April), "convention of evangelists" (May), foreign workers' convention (May), and Home Missionary Convention (September).²

It was therefore not unnatural in light of the many other conferences and conventions held both prior to and during 1919 that church leaders began to plan for a

¹W. E. Howell, "Bible and History Teachers' Council," *RH*, Sept. 25, 1919, 27-28.

²Valentine, *The Shaping of Adventism*, 239; W. W. Eastman, "The Mountain View Convention," *RH*, Feb. 20, 1919, 29; C. C. Pulver, *Secretaries' and Treasurers' Convention, Columbia Union Conference, Feb. 13, 14, 16, 1919* (Washington, DC: n.p., [1919]); A. W. Spalding, "The First Editorial Convention," *RH*, May 29, 1919, 2; Carlyle B. Haynes, "A Convention of Evangelists," *RH*, June 5, 1919, 2; J. F. Huenergardt, "Foreign Workers' Convention Held in Chicago, May 13-21," *RH*, July 17, 1919, 27-28; C. V. Leach, "Home Missionary Convention," *RH*, Oct. 30, 1919, 2.

major Bible Conference that would facilitate “deeper and more cooperative study of the Word of God.”¹ This conference, although not the largest, would be the longest and most substantial of the eight conferences held that year.² Much careful planning and some political maneuvering were necessary to effect such an important meeting.

Plans for a Bible Conference

The earliest calls for a Bible Conference came in 1913 from Adventist editor M. C. Wilcox, who made a private appeal to Arthur G. Daniells, then president of the General Conference, to hold a Bible Conference for “in-depth” Bible study.³ Unfortunately, plans for such a meeting were put aside because of World War I and the church becoming consumed with other matters.

On April 15, 1918, seven months before the end of the war, the General Conference Executive Committee passed three resolutions. First, it voted to have a “council” that would be held in Washington, D.C., for six weeks beginning July 1. Second, the delegation was to be “made up of the Bible and History teachers in our colleges and junior colleges, leading editors, and such other leading men as the General Conference Committee may designate; also that our twelve-grade academies be invited to

¹RBC, July 1, 1919, 1.

²Foreign Workers Convention, 32 participants; Convention of Evangelists, 76 participants; Home Missionary Convention, 16 participants.

³M. C. Wilcox to A. G. Daniells, March 23, 1913 (GCA). Wilcox nostalgically reminisces at the lack of a meeting for “in-depth” Bible study such as he recalled from a bygone era. He furthermore added that during this earlier period there was not this “awful fear that somebody was going to teach heresy if they held a little different view from what somebody else did.”

send a delegate of their own selection.” And third, that the union or local conferences cover the transportation costs of delegates with some assistance from the General Conference. It was also voted to accept the offer of Washington Missionary College to provide free housing for delegates.¹

As planning for the conference continued, the General Conference Spring Council on April 29 appointed a planning committee of five individuals² to set a date for the “Bible and History Teachers’ Institute” and to lay the groundwork for the upcoming Bible Conference.³ As it became apparent that more time was needed, on May 20 the pending conference was postponed until July 7, and was limited to Bible and history teachers.⁴

The war continued to affect plans for the upcoming Bible Conference. On June 5, 1918, when Daniells suggested to the General Conference Committee that plans for the upcoming Bible Conference be postponed for another year due to the increased difficulty and cost of travel during the war, the committee adopted his proposal.⁵

According to J. L. Shaw, who was present at the meeting, some of the committee members present “finally got their courage up to the point of recommending the holding of such a conference, for the spiritual uplift of our men, and for the purpose of a [*sic*]

¹General Conference Executive Committee Minutes (GCA), April 15, 1918, 10.

²From later correspondence it seems likely that this initial committee of five is the same as that listed on page 70 of this dissertation: W. W. Prescott, M. C. Wilcox, J. L. Shaw, W. E. Howell, and F. M. Wilcox.

³Spring Council, One Hundred Seventh Meeting, General Conference Committee, April 29, 1918, 264.

⁴GCM, May 20, 1918, 36.

⁵Ibid., June 5, 1918, 46.

studying together some lines of truth that appear to need united consideration.”¹ It is unclear as to why Shaw and the other committee members needed to “get up their courage.” According to several comments expressed at the conclusion of the Bible Conference, it seems likely that they feared proposing a meeting at which different viewpoints would be presented.² If there was any question about such a conference, the General Conference Executive Committee minutes briefly recorded the subsequent approval for such a meeting. It voted that a conference be held “at an early date for prayerful study of the Word.” In addition, a committee of five was set up to “recommend the date, topics for study, and men to give consideration to topics named.” The committee of five consisted of W. W. Prescott, M. C. Wilcox, J. L. Shaw, W. E. Howell, and F. M. Wilcox.³ It is unclear who chaired this committee. Based upon extant correspondence, it seems possible that W. E. Howell may have chaired the initial planning committee, although church historian Gilbert Valentine has suggested that W. W. Prescott was chair of this committee.⁴ Three days later, the committee made the following recommendations, among them that:

¹J. L. Shaw to W. A. Spicer, May 18, 1919, Secretariat General Files, Coll. 21, Box 34 (#3316), fld. “1919—Rice to 1919—Stahl” (GCA).

²Dr. Daniel H. Kress remarked at the conclusion of the formal Bible Conference that the meeting had been “a great blessing” to him. At first he had been “doubtful regarding the advisability of holding a meeting to study points upon which there were differences, but . . . [he was] convinced that the meeting had been in the providence of God.” RBC, July 19, 1919, 1075.

³*Ibid.*, May 1, 1919, 273.

⁴Gilbert Valentine, “W. W. Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator,” 507; *idem*, *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism’s Second Generation*, 276.

- (1) a Bible Conference of representative workers be held for a period of three weeks, July 1 to 21 [1919].
- (2) this conference be attended by the following persons:
 - a) Such members of the General Conference Committee in the United States and Canada as can arrange to attend.
 - b) Editors: F. M. Wilcox, A. O. Tait, A. W. Spaulding [*sic*], M. C. Wilcox, C. P. Bollman, D. E. Robinson.
 - c) Teachers: The Bible and History teachers from our colleges, junior colleges, and seminaries.
- (3) the place be left to the General Conference Committee to determine.
- (4) at the conclusion of this conference the Bible and History teachers remain together another three weeks, to work on constructive teaching plans.
- (7) a committee of seven be appointed by the chair to arrange program, place, and all details pertaining to the conferences, including expense. Named: W. E. Howell, F. M. Wilcox, W. W. Prescott, A. W. Spaulding [*sic*], M. C. Wilcox, M. E. Kern, R. D. Quinn.¹

The next day (May 5) the committee returned with the following recommendations. First, that the Bible Conference be held at Petoskey, Michigan, and if proper facilities could not be provided, that it be held at Denver, Colorado. In the event that neither location worked out, that “the matter be referred to the General Conference Committee.” Second, it was voted to pool traveling expenses of delegates and that an “allowance” of 75 cents a day be provided to each delegate by his conference or institution. And third, that the following topics for study be adopted: “The Person of Christ, The Mediatorial Work of Christ, The Nature and Work of the Holy Spirit, The Two Covenants, The Principles of Prophetic Interpretation, The Eastern Question, The Beast Power in Revelation, The 1260 Days, The United States in Prophecy, The Seven Trumpets, [and] Matthew Twenty-four.”²

¹RBC, May 4, 1919, 283-84.

²Ibid., May 5, 1919, 302-03.

On May 13, 1919, W. E. Howell sent out information to potential conferees. Howell stated that he intended to visit Petoskey, Michigan, with Elder William Gurthrie, president of the Lake Union Conference, during the coming week. In his letter Howell stated that he anticipated thirty-five to fifty individuals meeting in a “retired place for prayer and study of the Bible.”¹ Apparently the location for the Bible Conference fell through at both Petoskey and at the backup location in Denver, Colorado.² On May 23, 1919, the General Conference Executive Committee voted that because of the advantages of research files and reference libraries in the Washington, D.C., area, and the “inadvisability” of holding a meeting for six weeks in tents, that the Conference be held in Takoma Park, Maryland. An explanatory note regarding the length of time gives the first clue that there would be two different parts to the Conference: a Bible and History Teachers’ Institute and a Bible Conference, which together would last a total of six weeks.³

¹W. E. Howell to “Dear Brother,” May 13, 1919, Incoming correspondence, fld “Howell, W. E. 1918-1919” (WHT-GC).

²Apparently there was supposed to be a site visit by the committee to Petoskey. As F. M. Wilcox traveled through Michigan City he telegraphed J. L. Shaw asking if such a trip was “mandatory.” Shaw replied that such a trip was not mandatory (Telegram, F. M. Wilcox to J. L. Shaw, May 16, 1919 [Secretariat General Files, Coll. #21, Box 36, “1919—Wilcox, F. M.”]). It seems possible that part of the reason why the 1919 Bible Conference was not held in Petoskey could have been the inability of committee members to reach Petoskey for an on-site evaluation. There is no evidence of anyone else being able to do a site visit. On May 18, 1919, J. L. Shaw wrote of his serious doubts about holding the 1919 Bible Conference in Petoskey, Michigan. “There is talk of holding the conference at Petoskey, Michigan, but I rather think the plan will fail up [*sic*] and that it will be held in Washington, though we are not certain.” J. L. Shaw to W. A. Spicer, May 18, 1919 (GCA).

³GCM, May 23, 1919, 325.

W. E. Howell mailed out the official letters of invitation on June 3, 1919. The letter stated that the location had been changed to Washington, D.C., with the main reason for the change being the “superior availability of libraries and our denominational files and records in the General Conference vault.” The chief objection, he added, was the weather in Washington during the summer. Meetings would be held in the basement of the newly constructed Columbia Hall at Washington Missionary College where it would be cooler. The “conveniences for sleeping quarters and boarding” were additional perks. Howell gave a list of topics very similar to the list voted by the Spring Council on May 5 by the General Conference Executive Committee. This time the list of speakers included topical assignments: (1) the person and mediatorial work of Christ (W. W. Prescott); (2) the nature and work of the Holy Spirit (A. G. Daniells); (3) the two covenants (F. M. Burg); (4) the principles of prophetic interpretation (M. C. Wilcox); (5) the Eastern question (H. C. Lacey and C. M. Sorenson); (6) the beast power of Revelation (M. C. Wilcox); (7) the 1260 days (H. S. Prehier); (8) the United States in prophecy (W. H. Wakeham); (9) the seven trumpets (M. L. Andreasen¹ and C. L. Benson); (10) Matthew twenty-four (W. W. Prescott); and (11) the identification of the ten kingdoms (C. P. Bollman). In concluding, Howell stated that it was their “aim to make the bible [*sic*] Conference strongly spiritual in every respect.” In addition to doctrinal topics, he indicated several more practical presentations in several areas:

The Need of Spiritual Power in Soul Winning Work
 Our Example as Spiritual Leaders
 The Spiritual Element in Our Teaching

¹M. L. Andreasen, for unknown reasons, was apparently not able to attend the 1919 Bible Conference.

Under Discipline to Christ
 The Place of Prayer in Business and Committee Meetings
 The Remedy for Worldly Tendencies in the Church
 The Ministry of Intercession¹

This second list of talks would be of particular concern during the teachers' meetings.

Presentations were to be followed by a season of prayer. He added:

I feel very hopeful about this Bible Conference and Teachers' Council. It will afford an opportunity we have been needing and seeking after for years. I believe that under the blessing of God it will mark a new era of power and unity in our Bible and history teaching both in our schools, in the field, and in our periodicals. Pray that every man may come up to the Conference with his heart open to receive what God has to give us with the Holy Spirit as our teacher.²

Judging by remarks made by A. G. Daniells at the opening of the 1919 Bible Conference, there were a number of individuals who wanted to attend the Conference, but attendance was restricted to those who were invited. Exceptions were made only after application to and special invitation from the General Conference Executive Committee. It is unclear why the only known exception that was made by the General Conference officers was for F. M. Burg, one of the speakers, but he does not appear to have been able to be present and A. O. Tait gave the presentation on the two covenants he had been asked to make.³ It also appears that at the last minute, the General Conference voted (after

¹W. E. Howell to "Dear Brother," June 3, 1919, Incoming correspondence, fld "Howell, W. E. 1918-1919" (WHT-GC).

²Ibid.

³RBC, June 1, 1919, p. 335. Burg served as a Bible teacher at the College of Medical Evangelists from 1914 to 1919. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, Burg was in the process of relocating to the Washington Conference where he soon became president. Obit., *RH*, April 28, 1949, 20. There is no record that Burg actually attended the Bible Conference.

the Bible Conference had begun) to pay the board and room of delegates during the three weeks of the Bible Conference.¹

The 1919 Bible Conference

When all of the planning was finished, the 1919 Bible Conference took place at Washington Missionary College in Takoma Park, Maryland. The main meetings were held in the newly completed Columbia Hall near the center of campus. The building was so new that one conferee rejoiced partway through the conference when screens were put over the windows. The increased ventilation was important in the sweltering heat of summer: the conference began July 1 and continued through August 9, 1919.²

Most of what is known about the Bible Conference is based on stenographic transcripts of some of the meetings and published reports in the *Review and Herald*. While the transcripts are extensive, they are far from exhaustive. When topics became heated, the conference chairman, A. G. Daniells, asked the stenographers to stop recording. At other times, when Daniells wanted to talk candidly to conferees, he also asked the stenographers to stop recording or to have pages already typed struck from the record. The only reason this is known is because the stenographers recorded his request before quitting.³

¹RBC, July 3, 1919, 350.

²Clifton L. Taylor Diary, July 10, 1919, EGWE-LLU. Taylor recorded the temperature each day during the conference. Some of the words in his diary included “sizzling,” “stifling,” and “hot.”

³For example, Daniells asked for 60 pages to be removed. RBC, July 16, 1919, 946. On another occasion, Daniells directed that the first part of Sorenson’s speech not be recorded. RBC, July 6, 1919, 246. In another instance the remarks of the speaker were not clear enough to be heard. July 3, 1919, 182.

The Bible and History Teachers' Council was held simultaneously with the Bible Conference from July 1 through July 19. The Bible Conference took place during the day and the teachers met during the evening to discuss pedagogical issues. Unfortunately, only a small portion (15 percent) of the extant transcripts document the teachers' convention. Despite this, some significant portions of the discussion at the end of the conference relating to Ellen White are among the extant transcripts. The issues from the Bible Conference appear to have impacted the teachers' conference, because many of the delegates for the Bible Conference stayed on for both meetings.

Leadership

As noted above, initially a committee of five reported to the General Conference Executive Committee for planning the Conference. By the time the Conference actually convened, A. G. Daniells chaired the Conference. He spoke on the opening night, setting forth his vision for the Conference. W. E. Howell, secretary of the education department, served as Conference secretary and chair of the history and Bible teachers' meetings. F. M. Wilcox served as chair of the "Editorial Committee." C. M. Sorenson and E. F. Albertsworth were the official "librarians" for the Conference. S. M. Butler¹ served as chair of the "Entertainment Committee." When Daniells had to be absent from the

¹It is unclear what role Sylvester M. Butler (1861-1923) may have had at the Conference beyond his service on the entertainment committee. He is not listed as a participant beyond his role on the "entertainment committee." His name does not appear anywhere in the transcripts. He was a Bible instructor at Washington Missionary College (1914-1919) and then its business manager (1919-1921). Considering both his close proximity, his teaching background, and his involvement on the entertainment committee, it seems probable that Butler participated in the 1919 Bible Conference. For these reasons I have included his name on the list of official conferees (see Appendix A).

meeting to accomplish other church business, he delegated W. T. Knox, the General Conference treasurer, to chair the sessions.¹

Purpose of the Conference

The purpose of the 1919 Bible Conference was for those present to study the “various phases of our truth.” Daniells recognized that there were difficulties in bringing such a group of people together. There was, he remarked, fear of getting into “unhelpful controversy.” He pleaded with conferees that there was a greater need for a deeper and more cooperative study of the word of God. Furthermore, it was important for them to give “careful study to the major questions, the great essentials, the fundamentals.”² The end result, Daniells hoped, was that the Conference would bring greater unity among leading thinkers in the church.

Howell had a similar purpose for the teachers’ council. The Bible and history teachers were to develop specific aims and scope for their classes.³ The teachers carefully considered how to teach each subject as if for the first time. They were also to recommend texts and reference books and the credit to be given toward graduation for their courses.⁴

¹During the July 14, 1919 afternoon session, Knox chaired the session; see RBC, July 14, 1919, 762. Two days later he appears to chair an afternoon session again. He began by telling the conferees that “Elder Daniells turned the program over to me this afternoon.” RBC, July 16, 1919, 926.

²RBC, July 1, 1919, 9-16.

³W. E. Howell, “Bible and History Teachers’ Council,” *RH*, August 14, 1919, 29.

⁴*Ibid.*; *RH*, Sept. 25, 1919, 27.

Schedule

Generally meetings were held everyday including Sabbath afternoons¹ and Sundays. There were frequent opportunities for activities outside of meetings. Transportation by streetcar and automobile facilitated these activities. The meeting was adjourned to observe the Fourth of July holiday. Possibly a group activity was planned for that day, which might explain S. M. Butler's role as chair of the entertainment committee.

During the week, the Conference started each day with an 8:00 a.m. talk (no transcript extant) by A. G. Daniells,² then a 9:00 a.m. "devotional hour" by W. W. Prescott. This in turn was followed by two forty-five-minute topical presentations devoted to "prayer and Bible study."³ The afternoon meetings, typically begun at 3:00, were designated as time to discuss presentations given earlier in the day (or in some cases the previous day). If a topic generated a significant amount of discussion or if a presenter ran out of time, a topical session might be added in the afternoon.⁴

¹A "special meeting" was held on the afternoon of the first and third Sabbaths during the Bible Conference (July 5 and 19).

²There are allusions to Daniells's morning devotionals. The June 3, 1919, invitation by Howell states that Daniells would give a series of talks on the "nature and work of the Holy Spirit" (W. E. Howell to "Dear Brother," June 3, 1919). In one instance during the transcripts there is a reference to Daniells's devotional where he spoke about John the Baptist. RBC, July 8, 1919, 319. The first point of the 1919 Bible Conference consensus statement (see Appendix D) included appreciation to Daniells for his spiritually uplifting devotional series on the work of the Holy Spirit.

³W. E. Howell, "Progress of Our School Work," *RH*, July 31, 1919, 23.

⁴There are references to previous evening meetings for the history and Bible teachers during the formal Bible Conference. Cf. RBC, July 8, 1919, 334.

The diary of Clifton L. Taylor reveals that he went to downtown Washington, D.C., on July 4, where he “heard megaphone announcements of blow after blow as [Jack] Dempsey won the [heavy-weight boxing] World’s Championship in three rounds.” Another major feature was the availability of shopping. Taylor’s diary also reveals that his wife asked him to pick up special buttons and other clothes before he returned home.¹

After the Bible Conference portion of the Conference ended on July 19, 1919,² teachers met more sporadically during the earlier part of the morning, reserving the majority of the day (or at least a significant portion of their time) for research in nearby libraries and archives. Some conferees went to the Library of Congress and the Washington City Library to obtain books. Others chose to study rare early denominational literature and the unpublished writings of Ellen G. White both of which were available for study in the Review and Herald vault.³

Charles Thompson, president of the Northern Union Conference, complained about people wandering into meetings late. Such individuals walked into the middle of conversations unaware of what had previously been discussed.⁴

¹Clifton L. Taylor Diary, July 4, Aug. 4, 1919, EGWE-LLU.

²On Sunday, July 13, 1919, Charles Thompson moved that the Bible Conference conclude the next Sabbath, July 19, 1919. The minutes record that the motion was “carried.” RBC, July 13, 1919, 690.

³According to the diary of Clifton L. Taylor, the ability to do research, particularly during the teachers’ portion of the Conference, was a major attraction for him. Cf. Clifton L. Taylor Diary, July 28, 31; Aug. 3, 5, 6, and 10, EGWE-LLU.

⁴RBC, July 6, 1919, 246.

Topics of Discussion

While the General Conference committee had voted a number of topics for discussion at the beginning of the planning process, the list continued to grow.¹ The June 3, 1919, letter of invitation made it clear that those planning the Conference expected that within a month they would have a good idea who their speakers would be. The lag time between the first and second letters gave planners time to confirm attendance by teachers, editors, and administrators and whether they would be able to speak. A case in point was F. M. Burg who, although a special exception was made for him to be present, was unable to speak on the two covenants. A. O. Tait gave the presentations Burg had initially been scheduled to present.

The most complete list of topics leading up to the Conference included the following topical assignments: (1) the person and mediatorial work of Christ (W. W. Prescott); (2) the nature and work of the Holy Spirit (A. G. Daniells); (3) the two covenants (F. M. Burg); (4) the principles of prophetic interpretation (M. C. Wilcox); (5) the Eastern question (H. C. Lacey and C. M. Sorenson); (6) the beast power of Revelation (M. C. Wilcox); (7) the 1260 days (H. S. Prenier); (8) the United States in prophecy (W. H. Wakeham); (9) the seven trumpets (M. L. Andreasen² and C. L. Benson); (10) Matthew twenty-four (W. W. Prescott); and (11) the identification of the ten kingdoms (C. P. Bollman).³

¹RBC, July 7, 1919, 302-03. For the initial list, see p. 70 above.

²M. L. Andreasen was another speaker schedule to present but did not attend.

³W. E. Howell to "Dear Brother," June 3, 1919, Incoming correspondence, fld "Howell, W. E. 1918-1919" (WHT-GC).

Conferees at the 1919 Bible Conference

A total of sixty-five individuals¹ are known to have attended the 1919 Bible Conference (see Appendix A for a list of names). There were three categories of attendees: teachers, editors, and church administrators. Of these, twenty-nine were educators who represented fourteen schools² (44 percent), eleven were editors (17 percent), and twenty-five were church administrators, support staff, or were present by special invitation (39 percent). In addition, one named stenographer was present, although several other stenographers assisted him.³ Of the sixty-five conferees there were three

¹Appendix C contains brief biographical sketches of each participant. A photograph taken on July 17 during the morning intermission shows 54 participants in attendance (RBC, July 17, 1919, 964). The photograph was published in the *Christian Educator* 11 (October 1919): 29. There are varying numbers of conferees in secondary literature. Gilbert Valentine states that there were 65 present (*W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant*, 277); Herbert Douglass states that there were “about 65” individuals present (434); Richard Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf state there were “about 50” present (628).

²This figure is confirmed by the list of twenty-eight educators whom W. E. Howell states attended the Conference. Those schools represented included: Washington Missionary College, 3; Lancaster Junior College, 2; Southern Junior College, 2; Oakwood Junior College, 2; Oshawa Seminary, 2; Emmanuel Missionary College, 3, Union College, 2; Southwestern Junior College; 2, Canadian Junior College, 2; Pacific Union College, 2; Danish-Norwegian Seminary, 1; Broadview Swedish Seminary, 2; Clinton Theological Seminary, 2; Loma Linda, 1 (W. E. Howell, “Bible and History Teachers’ Council,” *RH*, Aug. 14, 1919, 29).

³Clemen Hamer is listed as a stenographer, but no other names are listed in the transcripts. It seems likely that Hamer, as Daniells’s private secretary, was in charge of the transcription work. He was also responsible for recording Daniells’s talks during the Conference. The transcripts show initials that appear to be the initials of other stenographers in groups of pages that appear to indicate that they took turns writing their notes in shorthand and then typing them up (in sections that appear to be in 10- to 15-minute blocks). This also explains why there are frequent gaps in content because the groups of papers were assembled without being reformatted. This also helped to facilitate the stenographers being able to keep up with the discussions. Cf. July 14, 1919; a set of repeating letters appears to identify a set of five initials in this particular segment of the transcripts: “a” (729-33), “MW” (734-37), “CLR” (738-42), “BPF” (743-47), and “HBM” (748-52). A comprehensive list of the overall initials reveals that there were between

women (5 percent)¹ present; the average age of attendees was forty-five.²

The conferees at the 1919 Bible Conference represented the best-trained group of Adventist leaders and educators ever officially convened to that time. Whereas prior gatherings of church leaders and/or educators certainly contained very intelligent and competent students of the Bible and history, this was the first time so many participants were familiar with biblical languages.³ Some of the discussions at the Conference centered upon the etymology of a word or syntax of a phrase within a given biblical

seven and nine stenographers. See RBC, July 14, 1919, 729-782. Of these sets of initials (with the exception of Clemen Hamer, whom I theorize may have used the initial “a” as head stenographer) I have been able to positively identify four additional stenographers: “BPF” for Bernard P. Foote (1884-1968) who was employed at that time by the General Conference and who later developed a course for Home Study Institute and manuals for the United States government on shorthand (B. P. Foote, comp., *Most-used Civil Service Terms; 5,000 Terms Written in Gregg Shorthand* [New York: Gregg Pub. Co, 1943]; idem, *Denominational Terms in Gregg Shorthand* [Washington, DC: Home Study Institute, 1944]; “CLR” for Chester Leroy Rogers (1894-1947), who in 1919 became secretary to A. G. Daniells and later served as private secretary for a number of later church officials (Obit., *RH*, Jan. 29, 1948, 20); “GDM” for Grace Gertrude (Duland) Mace (1875-1968), who served as a secretary to a number of prominent church leaders, including J. H. Kellogg, Uriah Smith, and G. C. Tenney. In 1919 she worked as a secretary in the General Conference building (Obit., *RH*, Dec. 5, 1968, 24); and, “MW” for Miss Myrtie Wheeler (fl. 1919) for whom I was unable to find any additional information.

¹Flora H. Williams, F. D. Chase, and L. Flora Plummer were the three women known to have been present during the 1919 Bible Conference.

²This is based upon 65 attendees whose total life spans equals 2,938 years (45.2 years of age).

³Early Adventists such as J. N. Andrews and F. C. Gilbert were familiar with biblical languages in earlier church discussions. At the 1919 Bible Conference those present who apparently had a working knowledge of Greek and/or Hebrew included E. F. Albertsworth, J. N. Anderson, L. L. Caviness, H. C. Lacey, W. W. Prescott, C. M. Sorenson, M. C. Wilcox, and W. G. Wirth. Some of the teachers also knew Latin, French, and German.

passage. In addition, conferees utilized multiple translations of the Bible and were familiar with current commentaries, historical research, and related literature. Some conferees had obtained advanced training in historical methods and were familiar with scholarly historical resources, including those published in French and German. A number of conferees had already obtained advanced training, and many more would later seek such training.¹ Thus, in a sense, the 1919 Bible Conference could be considered the first “scholarly” conference in Seventh-day Adventist history.²

There were several groups that stand out among those who attended the 1919 Bible Conference: the Progressives, the traditionalists, the educators, the editors, and the church administrators. In some cases individuals may overlap into more than one category. Those listed below as “critics” do not appear to have actually been present at the Conference.

¹B. G. Wilkinson and E. F. Albertsworth obtained Ph.D.’s from George Washington University in 1908 and 1918 respectively, the first and third Seventh-day Adventists to earn such degrees (M. E. Olsen earned a Ph.D. in 1909). In addition, W. W. Prescott, L. L. Caviness, and C. M. Sorenson had received M.A. degrees (1880, 1913 and 1918, respectively), and J. N. Anderson earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from the University of Chicago in 1901. Four additional conferees would obtain doctoral degrees after the Conference. One of them, William G. Wirth, began graduate training that fall at the University of California, Berkeley, that culminated in an M.A. (1921) and a Ph.D. (1923).

²A. G. Daniells, at the end of the 1919 Bible Conference, would reflect upon the need for another “scholarly” Bible Conference to settle more issues among leading Adventist thinkers. RBC, July 16, 1919, 997.

The “Progressives”

The self-designated “progressives”¹ were the dominant force at the 1919 Bible Conference. General Conference President A. G. Daniells, a proponent of the “new view” of the “Daily” of Dan 8, was an astute church administrator who was careful not to dominate the discussions with his own views. Daniells stated that he was led to this “new view” after studying the issue with W. W. Prescott, the main speaker of the Conference. Both Daniells and Prescott were Trinitarians who emphasized that truth is progressive and that the church needed to grow in its understanding of some of the issues raised during the Conference. “I would like to be understood as being a conservative. I thought I would have to proclaim it to you myself,” Prescott jokingly said during the Conference while trying to assuage fears that he was a “liberal.”² At one point Prescott felt so rebuffed that he refused to continue speaking until a vote from the floor asked him to continue.³ These “progressives” were also joined by H. C. Lacey, a Bible teacher who was to begin teaching at Washington Missionary College in the fall of 1919. At times during the Conference they disagreed quite strongly among themselves.⁴

¹The term “progressives” is used especially by Daniells during the 1919 Bible Conference. See RBC, July 6, 1919, 246.

²RBC, July 3, 1919, 191. On another occasion, Prescott in raising other historical issues prefaced his comments by stating: “Now I don’t want to stir up any trouble or make anybody think I am an apostate and a heretic.” RBC, July 10, 1919, 551, see also 565-66.

³RBC, July 14, 1919, 758-62. The motion was made by F. M. Wilcox.

⁴On one occasion Daniells told Prescott, “No, I beg [your] pardon, but I will finish my statement and then I won’t have to repeat it.” RBC, July 6, 1919, 229.

The Traditionalists or “Conservatives”

A small but assertive group of traditionalists or “conservatives” was concerned during the 1919 Bible Conference that their views were not being given adequate consideration. The main figures in this traditionalist camp were E. R. Palmer, C. S. Longacre, and C. P. Bollman. Toward the end of the Bible Conference, Daniells, looking at Bollman, remarked that Bollman had not converted him to his views, and Bollman replied that Daniells had not been able to convert him to his views either. The minutes recorded that there was laughter after this verbal exchange.¹ Palmer, during the second week of the Conference, suggested a committee of three present the “old view” of the “King of the North.” This group included C. M. Sorenson, C. S. Longacre, and B. G. Wilkinson.² Many of the traditionalists were also the same ones who were concerned about the strong Trinitarian emphasis in Prescott’s talks.³

The Critics

Two individuals, J. S. Washburn and Claude Holmes, vehemently opposed A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott. They held a rigid view of inspiration. They believed that the writings of Ellen G. White and the Bible were free from all human error. The talks at the 1919 Bible Conference about historical inaccuracies in Ellen White’s writings disturbed them because they believed that her writings were inerrant. They published several angry

¹RBC, July 17, 1919, 999.

²RBC, July 10, 1919, 530.

³For an overview of the Trinity controversy at the 1919 Bible Conference, see chapter 4.

pamphlets afterward denouncing the 1919 Bible Conference as a “diet of doubts.”¹ There is no credible evidence, however, that either Washburn or Holmes attended the 1919 Bible Conference.² This is particularly important considering the vitriolic *ad hominem* attacks upon the characters of Daniells, Prescott, and those of similar views.

¹Claude E. Holmes, *Beware of the Leaven (Doctrines) of the Pharisees and Sadducees*; idem, *Have We an Infallible “Spirit of Prophecy”?* (n.p., 1921); J. S. Washburn, *An Open Letter to the General Conference*; idem, *The Startling Omega and Its True Genealogy*.

²Bert Haloviak describes both Washburn and Holmes as being in attendance at the 1919 Bible Conference (Haloviak, “In the Shadow of the ‘Daily,’” 26-35). Gilbert Valentine states that Washburn was not present (Valentine, “W. W. Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator,” 517-18). The discrepancy appears to have been that the transcripts refer to a “Washburn” occasionally. A careful examination reveals that the only “Washburn” who attended the 1919 Bible Conference was H. A. Washburn, a history teacher from Pacific Union College, who gave his testimony at the conclusion of the Bible Conference that the meeting had been held “in the providence of God.” RBC, July 19, 1919, 1076. In addition, I was unable to establish any familial connection between H. A. Washburn and J. S. Washburn. Graeme Bradford agrees with Haloviak that Claude Holmes was present as an “unofficial attendee” during the Bible Conference. Both Haloviak and Bradford base this observation on Holmes’s statement in the beginning of his pamphlet attacking Daniells: “During the Bible Conference during the summer of 1919 I heard it stated again and again . . .” Bradford states that this confirms “his presence as an unofficial delegate.” Holmes, *Have We an Infallible “Spirit of Prophecy”?*; Graeme Bradford, *People Are Human*, 30. What Bradford in particular does not acknowledge is that the statement does not actually state he attended the 1919 Bible Conference but merely that he heard these men state these things. Another plausible interpretation of his statement could be that he heard these things secondhand, or met several of the teachers and talked with them about these issues. This was certainly possible since Holmes was living in Takoma Park, Maryland, at this time. There were other traditionalists, especially B. G. Wilkinson, who may have informed Holmes about the issues presented. This theory is further supported by the fact that Clifton L. Taylor, one of the younger conferees, visited Claude Holmes to obtain testimonies by Ellen White on Sabbath afternoon, Aug. 2, 1919, immediately after the discussions about Ellen White that occurred on July 30 and Aug. 1, 1919 (Clifton L. Taylor Diary, Aug. 2, 1919, EGWE-LLU). The evidence against Holmes actually being present includes (1) Holmes’s name not being mentioned anywhere in the transcripts while all the other 65 conferees have their names mentioned multiple times throughout the extant transcripts (with the exception of S. M. Butler who chaired the entertainment committee). Considering Holmes’s temperament it seems unlikely that Holmes would have attended these meetings silently. Holmes was not afraid of calling anyone, including the General Conference president, into accountability, so it

The Educators

The 1919 Bible Conference was also an important educational meeting.¹ The main Bible Conference was led by A. G. Daniells, but as previously mentioned, the largest group (44 percent) was made up of educators. The educational focus of the Conference was led by W. E. Howell who was the director of the General Conference Education Department. Howell was assisted by his associate, O. M. John.

The Historians

The 1919 Bible Conference had two professionally trained historians familiar with the methods of historical research, the importance of primary sources and how to evaluate them. E. F. Albertsworth was the only Adventist holding a Ph.D. in history, which he had earned from George Washington University. At the time of the 1919 Conference, Albertsworth was teaching history at Washington Missionary College. By 1921 a campaign would be waged against him for being too liberal and he would be forced to

seems likely that if he had attended any of the meetings, there would be a record of him voicing opposition to what he considered to be heresy. (2) Those attending were present by *special invitation only* and exceptions were made by the General Conference committee, yet no exception is listed in the General Conference Committee minutes for Holmes. (3) It seems improbable that an estranged church employee who was fired for copying Ellen White manuscripts from the General Conference vault and who refused to return them (resulting in his termination from church employment) would have been invited to attend. (4) It seems unlikely that conferees would mention their ability to speak with “perfect candor” and “honesty” about issues if there had been critics present willing to misconstrue their words (RBC, July 19, 1919, 1065). (5) If Holmes had been present, he would likely have mentioned presentations by C. S. Longacre and B. G. Wilkinson defending the “old view” of the “daily.” (6) The only evidence in support of Holmes’s presence appears to be an *a priori* reading of Holmes’s statement.

¹Chapter 5 contains an overview of the 1919 Bible Conference as an educational meeting.

leave denominational employment. Another historian, C. L. Benson, had taken some advanced training in history at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and in 1919 was education and youth secretary for the Central Union Conference. These two were the first academically trained Adventist historians.

The Transcripts

The transcripts of the 1919 Bible Conference give the bulk of what is known about the meeting. The two bundles of transcripts, containing 1,303 pages, were discovered by F. Donald Yost on Dec. 6, 1974, in the process of setting up the General Conference Archives. The transcripts were part of thousands of files that had been stored for decades in the vaults at the General Conference.¹ Yost was alerted to the possibility of transcripts in a quest by Donald Mansell to locate additional information about a Bible Conference held in 1919 that discussed the “Eastern Question” and the identity of the “king of the north.” The General Conference Archives processed the papers in an archival box, divided them into six archival folders, and provided an overall pagination (in blue ink) to a duplicate (photocopied) research set.² Most of what is known today about the Conference comes from the records contained in these transcripts.

¹F. Donald Yost, telephone interview by author, September 20, 2006; Donald Mansell, telephone interview by author, September 27, 2006; idem, “How the 1919 Bible Conference Transcripts Were Found,” unpublished paper, July 6, 1975.

²General Conference Archives, coll. 25, Bible Conference Papers, Box 1, fld 1-6, 1919. The original transcripts contained in this box contain only internal pagination for each talk and the blue ink on the duplicate set can be clearly seen in the same collection in Boxes 2-3 of the same collection.

A few additional details about the Conference can be gleaned from other sources. Some notes of the July 30 presentation on the Spirit of Prophecy, presumably written by N. J. Waldorf, at teacher at South Lancaster Academy, survived in the papers of Le Roy Edwin Froom, a youthful minister gathering together historical materials during the 1920s, but do not yield any additional information not contained in the more comprehensive transcripts. One of B. G. Wilkinson's talks is preserved at the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University.¹ The diary of Clifton L. Taylor adds some color about interpersonal dynamics, the weather, and the schedule of the Conference.² W. W. Prescott and Waldorf both published edited versions of their presentations after the Conference. These two books give additional insight into the development of their arguments.³ In addition, A. G. Daniells and W. E. Howell published reports about the Conference, including the official consensus statement (see Appendix D), in the *Review and Herald* and *Christian Educator*.⁴

¹B. G. Wilkinson, "A Reply to the New Interpretation of Daniel 11," TMs, CAR #003272. Internal evidence confirms the authenticity of this document. The document states that this is in response to M. C. Wilcox's 40 objections against the old view of Daniel 11. C. S. Longacre presented the first part, and this presentation was the second part stating his objections to Wilcox.

²Clifton L. Taylor Diary, July 1 to Aug. 10, 1919, EGWE-LLU.

³N. J. Waldorf, *The Vicar of Christ and the Daily* (N.p., [1919]). In the preface Waldorf states: "I am now writing out a brief synopsis of the talks I gave at the Bible Conference, held recently in Washington, D.C." Ibid., 1. Prescott, *The Doctrine of Christ*.

⁴A. G. Daniells, "Report of Bible Conference Held in Takoma Park, D.C. July 1-19, 1919," *RH*, Aug. 21, 1919, 3-4; W. E. Howell, "Bible and History Teachers' Council," *RH*, Aug. 14, 1919, 29, Sept. 15, 1919, 27-28; "Educational Items," *Christian Educator* 11 (September 1919): 23.

The transcripts are particularly significant because they record eleven devotionals by W. W. Prescott and twenty-five topical presentations by other presenters. There were numerous sessions for dialogue. These discussions were usually held following a talk, but at times continued into the next time slot. Included with the transcripts are lecture notes, which appear to have been either read from or included with the transcripts to support whatever material was transcribed. It is regrettable that only a fraction of what could have been recorded has been preserved.

The transcripts reflect the oral nature of the conference discourse.¹ Delegates during the discussion sometimes indicated their uncertainty about a position.² At times A. G. Daniells asked that presentations not be recorded,³ or the stenographers noted that remarks were not distinct enough from where they were sitting to be heard.⁴ This may be why delegates felt free to be so candid about the inspiration and authority of Ellen White's writings during the July 30 and August 1 meetings. At one point, the

¹W. W. Prescott introduced his first devotional talk by stating that his talks were "Bible studies, and not sermons." Members of the audience were frequently asked to read Scriptural passages. Throughout the Conference there appears to have been an atmosphere that was conducive to conferees' interjecting comments (sometimes simply an "amen" or "yes"); see RBC, July 2, 1919, 28, 43; July 14, 1919, 707; July 21, 1919, 1111.

²E. R. Palmer, in a discussion about the "king of the north," indicated: "I *think* I hold the old position." On other occasions it becomes apparent that various individuals were less dogmatic about what stand they held on a particular topic. RBC, July 8, 1919, 377. On another occasion, H. S. Prener noted that he had been convinced by Prescott of the new view but had reverted to "the old position once again." RBC, July 11, 1919, 626.

³RBC, July 6, 1919, 246.

⁴RBC, July 3, 1919, 182; July 11, 1919, 593, 596. At one point one stenographer noted "A few words—did not catch." RBC, July 3, 1919, 141.

stenographers noted that Daniells instructed them not to type an estimated sixty typewritten pages of shorthand notes.¹ The stenographers used shorthand, and at points fell behind in their transcription work.² Sometimes there are gaps in the transcription where one stenographer left off and the next one began. This may partially explain why the stenographers at times summarized the discussion instead of taking down a verbatim transcription.³ On other occasions, the paper being presented was inserted into the transcripts in lieu of transcription.⁴ In rare instances the stenographers faced a passage that did not make sense to them based on their own transcription work and they placed a question mark in parentheses.⁵ The transcripts appear to have had some minor editing for the accuracy of quotations.⁶ Despite this, any summarizing and editing does not appear to have significantly changed the recording of the oral style of the presentations and discussions (with the exception of a few talks where notes from the speaker were substituted for a verbatim transcription).

¹RBC, July 16, 1919, 946.

²RBC, July 16, 1919, 947.

³RBC, July 17, 1919, 983.

⁴Cf. M. C. Wilcox's paper on the "Beast Power of Revelation 12-21." RBC, July 13, 1919, 642 ff.

⁵RBC, July 15, 1919, 830.

⁶One parenthetical note reveals that a quote was not verified for accuracy, implying that the stenographers made at least a minimal attempt to verify quotations. E.g. A. G. Daniells quotes a passage from *Christ's Object Lessons*. Inserted in the transcripts is a parenthetical note that the quote was "not verified with the book." RBC, July 30, 1919, 1199.

W. T. Knox chaired a small committee that considered whether the transcripts should be published or not.¹ While some argued for their publication, it appears that the majority took the view that the issues being discussed would not be of any real help to church members. A. G. Daniells weighed in on the matter. He stated, “I sometimes think it would be just as well to lock this manuscript up in a vault, and have anyone who wishes to do so come there for personal study and research.”² C. L. Taylor expressed his disappointment that the transcripts were not released. This decision, however, did not prevent Prescott and Waldorf from printing their lectures in book form. Since this committee was held on July 16, two weeks before the most controversial discussions about the nature, authority, and inspiration of Ellen White’s life and writings, these discussions do not appear to have been a direct factor in the decision not to publish these transcripts.³ Overall, Clifton L. Taylor summarized the decision succinctly in his diary the following day after the committee met: “committee decides to give out no argumentative papers to members of Council.”⁴

Reactions to the 1919 Bible Conference

Responses to the 1919 Bible Conference were varied. Although discussions on some issues were rather strident at times,⁵ by the conclusion of the Conference during the

¹RBC, July 16, 1919, 893.

²RBC, July 16, 900.

³“Disposition of the Manuscript,” RBC, July 16, 1919, 893-901.

⁴Clifton L. Taylor Diary, July 17, 1919, EGWE-LLU.

⁵Cf. RBC, July 8, 1919, 411.

“devotional service” on Sabbath afternoon, July 19, 1919, there were twenty-five testimonies (nearly half of the known conferees), all of whom expressed immense satisfaction that the denomination had held such a Bible Conference. The testimonies included both the progressives and traditionalists who had participated in the meetings. The Conference marked, according to Prescott, a “turning point” in the denomination. Several conferees remarked that their participation had changed their lives, challenging them to make Christ the center of their teaching and preaching.¹ Dr. Daniel Kress, a physician, recalled his initial caution about having a meeting that discussed varying viewpoints, but now that the main part of the Conference was over, he believed the Conference had been a great blessing.² W. E. Howell, one of the original organizers of the Conference, stated that he had looked forward to this Conference for two years and it had exceeded his expectations. Howell’s testimony matches his published reports of the Conference.³

Many of the twenty-five testimonials on July 19, 1919, also mentioned increased confidence in church leaders and in their fellow participants at the Conference. John Isaac, a Bible teacher at Clinton Theological Seminary, stated that his confidence in the

¹W. H. Wakeham stated: “The one thing that has impressed me most of anything has been this thought of making Christ more and more and more the center of all our teaching and preaching. I believe that is the thing that has helped me the most of anything in the conference.” RBC, July 19, 1919, 1060.

²RBC, July 19, 1919, 1075.

³RBC, July 19, 1919, 1066-67; W. E. Howell, “Bible and History Teachers’ Council,” *RH*, Aug. 14, 1919, 29; Sept. 15, 1919, 27-28.

“Testimonies” of Ellen White had been increased.¹ O. M. John, associate secretary of the General Conference education department, commented that the things he had learned during the Conference helped him to counsel a young person who was having “doubts” about “the inspiration of the Bible and the Testimonies.” H. C. Lacey spoke of the “sweet spirit of brotherly love” that had been present “throughout the entire meeting.”²

Some at the Conference were concerned that disagreements might jeopardize the eventual outcome. The diary of Clifton L. Taylor notes early on during the Conference that the “big guns are firing broadsides with ammunition from Dan. 11.” On the following day (July 8), he noted that while he was away for an errand, the “discussion waxed warm on Dan. 11.” Then again on July 9 he noted the “powerful discourse” by M. C. Wilcox on Dan 11. He added that A. G. Daniells “spoke sligheningly of his 40 indicments [*sic*].” Thus, at least according to Clifton L. Taylor, the interpretation of Dan 11 was one of the divisive issues that threatened theological harmony.³

At several points throughout the Bible Conference, desires were expressed for having another conference like it to continue exploring issues raised. Daniells, during his talk on the opening night of the Conference, expressed his hope that this Conference would mark the beginning of an annual meeting.⁴ Unfortunately, this was not to be, and

¹“Testimonies” was an Adventist term used to refer to the writings of Ellen G. White.

²RBC, July 19, 1919, 1065, 1072, 1077-78.

³Clifton L. Taylor Diary, July 7, 8, 9, 1919, EGWE-LLU.

⁴RBC, July 1, 1919, 12.

there is no evidence that a serious attempt was made to have another Bible Conference until 1952.

Dissenting voices from outside the Conference included Claude Holmes and J. S. Washburn, who viewed this meeting as proof of Adventist apostasy. Their vitriolic attacks¹ during the three years following the Conference were printed in a series of pamphlets and circulated at the 1922 General Conference session in an effort to overthrow Daniells as General Conference president. They rejoiced when this occurred. It is unclear whether their pamphlets actually played a significant role in Daniells's overthrow, but they certainly marked ongoing criticism of Daniells's public ministry and were a clear attempt to undermine his influence.²

Perspective

There were as many purposes for the 1919 Bible Conference as there were attendees. Daniells clearly wanted a Conference that would unify the church. He hoped to accomplish this by carefully discussing issues in an environment where participants felt free to share their views.

¹Holmes, *Beware of the Leaven*; idem, *Have We an Infallible "Spirit of Prophecy"*; Washburn, *An Open Letter to the General Conference*; idem, *The Startling Omega and Its True Genealogy*.

²"Adventists in Acrid Debate Change Leader. William A. Spicer, General Secretary, Named for Presidency," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 23, 1922, 9. On the following day the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that "retiring president A. G. Daniells today took occasion to correct the impression there was friction between himself and the incoming president W. A. Spicer. He also emphatically denied that there had been any personal rivalry between them for office." "Adventists to Extend Church Printing Work," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 24, 1922, 9.

The two primary parts of the Conference reflected the theological and educational contributions of the Conference to Seventh-day Adventism. Underlying the Bible Conference were many different issues related to hermeneutics and the inspiration and authority of Ellen White's writings. The second part, about which less is known, was the Teachers' Conference, which contributed to the development of a distinctly Adventist approach to education.¹

The 1919 Bible Conference was held at a pivotal time in Adventist history. Adventist leaders were confronted with a significant current favoring change. These changes were particularly important in relationship to several existing doctrinal controversies. A major unidentified purpose of the Conference, therefore, was to discover how the church would deal with change, and more importantly, with doctrinal conflict.

Those who were present had a clear sense that they were participating in something new and unprecedented. First of all, it was the first "scholarly" theological conference to be held by the denomination. An influential nucleus among the conferees had obtained advanced education and some were even familiar enough with biblical languages to carry the debates into linguistic analysis of biblical passages in the original languages. Church leaders, especially Daniells, realized the importance of providing a venue for a maturing church that would allow all sides to present their arguments in an atmosphere of frank and open dialogue. Thus, while previous conferences featured a number of very intelligent and knowledgeable individuals, this was the first time when so many persons met and discussed issues in such an in-depth manner.

¹See chapter 5.

Finally, several speakers, most notably W. W. Prescott, emphasized the importance of progressive revelation. Truth is progressive and Adventists needed a Bible Conference to continue to mine the depths of God's word, they argued. Adventist thinkers were feeling the pressure of a number of doctrinal conflicts that made it advantageous to discuss theological issues candidly yet behind closed doors. The 1919 Bible Conference was ultimately an opportunity for leading thinkers in the church to seek both theological unity and spiritual revival.

CHAPTER 4

IN BATTLE ARRAY: PROGRESSIVES AND TRADITIONALISTS

WAGE WAR OVER HERMENEUTICS

Introduction

The 1919 Bible Conference covered a wide array of topics during the course of six weeks of presentations and discussions. The conference, therefore, provides a significant window into the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. Adventists, like many other Christians, were confronted with a world that had changed. More specifically, the broader American culture had changed. Some people viewed this change as yet another sign of the end. It also forced Adventists to re-evaluate their role in an ever-changing world. The 1919 Bible Conference thus represents a “think tank” through which thought leaders, perceiving that Adventism was in crisis, wrestled. How Seventh-day Adventists would cope in this new world was at the heart of what the 1919 Bible Conference was all about.

The 1910s were a tumultuous time in the development of Adventist theology.¹ How Seventh-day Adventists dealt with change, particularly in their understanding of end-time events, was the driving force behind many of the issues addressed during the 1919 Bible Conference. Issues were arising that previously had not been significant, but which now had important ramifications for the theological identity of Adventism.

¹See George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 128-59.

This decade was also a challenging time for examining issues related to Adventist identity. In a culture seen by many conservative Christians as spiritually deteriorating, one recourse for Adventists was to become protective of their traditions. As a result, discussions at times could become rather heated and sharp words exchanged. Most of those who attended the conference seemed to realize that there were theological reasons for the differences. It was therefore imperative that they discuss these differences and some even viewed such dialogues as a healthy trend.

The tension between tradition and openness, retreat and advance, is an important clue to understanding the 1919 Conference. The impulse toward openness allowed discussions about differences and suggested a growing maturity that tolerated differences of interpretation on issues that were not “fundamental” to Adventist theology. On the other hand, many conferees came to the meeting convinced of more traditional viewpoints and, by its close, felt threatened by the expressions of less traditional views. Some conferees openly expressed their own hesitancy and caution. The presence, however, of several strong personalities, most notably W. W. Prescott, meant that feelings would get hurt. In order to deal with potential conflict two procedures were put into place: first, an effort was made to present both sides of controversial issues; second, issues that were particularly divisive (most notably the question of the “daily”) were not to be discussed unless A. G. Daniells was present.¹ These parameters still allowed for discussion. For this reason, Bert Haloviak suggests in his analysis of the Conference, the present-day reader should place greater weight upon the formal presentations than on the

¹RBC, July 16, 1919, 904.

discussions which ensued.¹ Presenters had time to prepare their presentations whereas the sometimes rambling discussions were spontaneous. Neither the presentations nor the discussions, however, represented an official declaration of faith for the denomination.

Despite the robust discussions, according to Daniells the Conference ultimately voted a consensus statement (see Appendix C).² This statement and the circumstances surrounding it are unclear since its resolution and adoption appear only in Daniells's published statement in the *Review and Herald* and no mention of such a statement appears in any of the extant transcripts. Considering that the transcripts were only a partial record, lacking significant portions of the proceedings, it is possible that the Conference voted a formal consensus statement that failed to be recorded. On the other hand, it would seem strange for a formal concluding consensus statement to simply be inadvertently omitted from the record. In any case, the statement clearly reflected Daniells's own viewpoint on the Conference. The statement included four parts: (1) Daniells saw the primary purpose of the Conference as "earnest and prayerful study of the Bible" that would lead to "more light and greater unity" among Adventists; (2) the Conference, therefore, embodied his goal to push toward this "greater light and intellectual advancement"; (3) this meeting was something he had wanted to see happen for several years and was "the first time that all these men [and women] had compared their views and teachings in this way"; and (4) those who attended were "impressed with

¹Haloviak, "In the Shadow of the 'Daily'," 2-3.

²The committee voted at several points for various presenters to expound upon a particular topic.

the great value of the Word of God and the very great importance of closer, more regular, and more continuous study of the Word by the whole church.”¹

All of the issues discussed at the Conference revolved in some way around the twin issues of hermeneutics and inspiration in the context of two bodies of writings Adventists considered to be inspired: the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. There were areas of general consensus, some areas of disagreement, and a few of wide disagreement. It was also recognized that different approaches to Scripture (and Ellen White’s writings) led to different outcomes. Conferees seemed to acknowledge in 1919 that principles of interpretation lay at the foundation of different interpretations of either Scripture or Ellen White’s writings. These hermeneutical areas will be examined in the context of how they contributed to the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology.

The Bible and Hermeneutics

The largest portion of the presentations and discussions at the 1919 Bible Conference centered upon the Bible and hermeneutics. The year of the Bible Conference marked seventy-five years since the Adventist disappointment of 1844. A new generation of thinkers was at the helm of denominational leadership. Traditional interpretive views were being scrutinized.

This scrutiny of traditional Adventist views centered upon eschatology. World War I had increased eschatological interest in the Second Coming, and Adventists hoped to capitalize on this heightened awareness. Soon after the war changes in the geopolitical structure of Europe and Asia Minor forced some Adventist exegetes to re-examine what

¹A. G. Daniells, “The Bible Conference,” *RH*, Aug. 21, 1919, 3-4.

they had taught during the war. While many of these eschatological issues have since been derogated as “minor issues,” they furnish important clues to understanding the underlying hermeneutical issues.

Conferees at the 1919 Bible Conference may not have directly articulated the relationship of these “minor issues” to hermeneutics, but they nonetheless saw their relationship as vital. C. M. Sorenson, referring to a paper on the Ten Kingdoms of Dan 2, spoke on the issue of seemingly minor points: “Sometimes we may think these things do not matter much, that they are not essential to salvation. But they are vital. The interpretation of prophecy is essential to salvation in these last days. But there is a crusade of opposition against it, and an under-current among Seventh-day Adventists to put it away.”¹

Several Seventh-day Adventist leaders had also noted the success that Fundamentalists had achieved through their prophecy conferences. They suggested this was something that Adventists should be doing. The one notable difference between the two was that the 1919 Bible Conference was by invitation only. Although the primary topic in both conferences was eschatology, Adventists felt it was important to present a united front before they held a more public meeting. They thus needed a more intimate setting where Adventist thought leaders could present and study their differences.

Based upon the existing records, it appears that the discussions at times became quite heated.² With so much at stake, Adventist editor C. P. Bollman pleaded that the

¹RBC, July 2, 1919, 101.

²N. J. Waldorf to Clarence Santee, Sept. 24, 1923, TMs photocopy, EGWE-LLU. The original is no longer extant.

issues (which he had raised in relationship to the ten kingdoms) were not as important as some people felt that they were. He called for tolerance with regard to various theological and historical interpretations:

And here we might well dismiss the subject of the identity of the ten kingdoms, were it not for the reason that it affords such an excellent opportunity to make a plea for tolerance of opinion on this and other subjects not vital to our Adventist faith, nor necessarily destructive of good Christian experience. Why should one be considered a heretic, or be even suspected because he believes that the Alemanni and not the Huns should be reckoned as one of the ten [kingdoms]? . . . Not one of these is fundamental, not one of them is one of the pillars of our faith.¹

The issues were important to those present in 1919, because some Adventists saw them as directly connected to Adventist identity, but not all of the issues warranted the same amount of attention. Much depended on what certain individuals felt was at stake.

Underlying the individual issues were deeper hermeneutical issues. Thus whether the issues were deemed “fundamental” or “essential” depended on their interpretative framework. Ultimately, beyond simply studying the Bible, the Conference sought to intensely scrutinize hermeneutical issues underlying the doctrinal issues and by doing so achieve some degree of consensus that could bring unity to the church.

Two hermeneutical schools became evident during the Conference. They represented two different approaches to Scripture that polarized each other. The first group, progressives, focused on the context of a statement. A second group,

¹RBC, July 2, 1919, 74.

traditionalists, emphasized a more literalist interpretation of Scripture. This division became more pronounced as issues were discussed. Two aspects of hermeneutics on which all participants essentially agreed were principles of prophetic interpretation and the importance of biblical languages and various Bible translations.

Principles of Prophetic Interpretation

The first topical presentation (after the initial evening meeting and the devotional session the following morning) was a paper presented by Milton C. Wilcox about the principles of prophetic interpretation. While there are few details about the overall planning and structure of the Conference, it appears that those who were involved intended that participants establish some basic principles of interpretation that would guide them. Wilcox, then sixty-six years of age, was one of the more mature conferees whose copious writings about Bible prophecy gave him significant authority on the subject.

In his presentation (and in the ensuing discussions) Wilcox argued that the church needed to follow *principles* for the interpretation of Bible prophecy. He stated: “Principles are greater than facts. . . . They are to the student of the Holy Scriptures what the ‘blue print’ is to the builder.” These facts cannot be properly interpreted by themselves, he argued. “Left to mere human conjecture, unguided by true principles of interpretation, men are liable to go astray in the placing of the fact.”¹

¹RBC, July 2, 1919, 45.

While Wilcox cautioned that his list of “great principles” was not exhaustive, it was extensive.¹ He initially presented twenty-one principles: (1) unity of the Word; (2) one teaching; (3) law of first mention; (4) law of comparative mention; (5) law of full mention; (6) law of illustrative mention; (7) the Word paramount; (8) revealed, not reasoned out; (9) aid of the Spirit; (10) not of private interpretation; (11) conditional; (12) later lights; (13) nations and persons; (14) double prophecy; (15) great moral principles; (16) evidence is cumulative; (17) willingness to investigate; (18) reasons for prophetic delineation; (19) ending of great prophecies; (20) types and symbols; and (21), world dominion, not territory.² During the afternoon session H. C. Lacey added two additional laws: (22) the law of context, and (23) law of ancient Eastern usage.³ On the following day (July 3) Wilcox accepted these two additional principles and added one final principle: (24) the law of progressive development.⁴ The repeated appeal to “laws” suggested a Baconian mentality, implying that if everyone agreed on the principles of interpretation that they would then arrive together at a correct consensus of truth.

In this list of twenty-four principles, the “law of first mention” (principle #3) and the “law of context” (principle #22) drew the largest amount of attention during the

¹The most extensive list of principles for prophetic interpretation published by Seventh-day Adventists up to that time appears to be a series of articles that lists 18 principles for prophetic interpretation. The series contained 28 parts from 1888 to 1889. The series begins with: D. T. Bourdeau, “Principles by Which to Interpret Prophecy,” *RH*, Nov. 27, 1888, 1-2.

²RBC, July 2, 1919, 45-59.

³RBC, July 2, 1919, 90.

⁴RBC, July 3, 1919, 176.

Conference. Prescott noted that “great care” was needed “when we take statements out of their setting that we give to them the meaning warranted by the setting.”¹ H. C. Lacey noted that the “law of context” was the law most often violated. “I find myself that I have to fight against that. It is so easy to take something in the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy and apply it as being a principle of truth for the present time, when maybe it has an application for the present time, but it had a stronger application at some other time.”²

There would furthermore be a strong appeal to stand by traditional Adventist interpretations. In addition to principles of interpretation, M. C. Wilcox and L. L. Caviness advocated caution when interpreting the Scriptures. An attempt should be made to see what other Adventists “have taught or written when we come to the study of the Scripture.” God had led in the founding of the Adventist movement and, therefore, consideration should be given to the historic development of truth.³

Among the tools that conferees recommended for interpreting Scripture, the first was the need for an understanding of biblical languages or, at the very least, a use of different Bible translations for examining a scriptural passage.

Role of Bible Translations and Biblical Languages

Closely related to prophetic interpretation was the question of which Bible translation Adventists should use. As new translations became available during the early

¹RBC, July 3, 1919, 161.

²RBC, July 2, 1919, 90.

³RBC, July 2, 1919, 87-89.

twentieth century, the question of whether they should be used became particularly relevant.

A number of delegates had a working knowledge of biblical languages. Those who knew Greek or Hebrew could especially appreciate the inability of any single translation to convey the original meaning of a text. H. C. Lacey, a Bible teacher at Washington Missionary College, pointed out that no translation of the Bible is infallible. This was because language is inflected and translations do not necessarily reflect the original emphasis.¹ On other occasions, conferees noted that words had been supplied or that a translator had inserted his or her own meaning in the translation of a particular text.² At one point, H. A. Washburn cautioned care about using the original text without being “very sure” of the Hebrew.³ The use of biblical languages required care so as to not misuse such a valuable hermeneutical tool.

Comparisons between the Authorized and Revised versions were common throughout the extant transcripts.⁴ When it came to particular issues, such as the issue of the “daily” in Dan 8, Daniells noted that his reading of the Revised Version did not affect his views of those passages.⁵

¹RBC, July 3, 1919, 177.

²Cf. W. W. Prescott’s comments about the translation of Heb 1-2. RBC, July 13, 1919, 628-29.

³RBC, July 13, 1919, 666. Washburn commented as conferees discussed the rise of the little horn in Dan that the view of most attendees had changed in part because it was discovered the Hebrew did not say what some had previously thought it had said.

⁴RBC, July 3, 1919, 160-61; July 9, 1919, 470; July 13, 1919, 680.

⁵For an overview of the “daily” controversy, see 56-58; RBC, July 8, 1919, 412.

The topic of Bible translations also came up within the context of how to interpret the writings of Ellen G. White. William G. Wirth, a Bible teacher, asked A. G. Daniells during the discussion about the Spirit of Prophecy on July 30, 1919, whether a conflict between the Authorized and Revised versions could be solved by using the prophetic writings of Ellen G. White. “I do not think Sister White meant at all to establish the certainty of a translation,” replied Daniells; “I do not think she had that in mind, or had anything to do with putting her seal of approval on the Authorized version or on the Revised version when she quoted that. She uses whichever version helps to bring out the thought she has most clearly.”¹

Biblical languages were furthermore not a replacement for a personal relationship with God.² Those who knew Greek and Hebrew had a responsibility not to lord their knowledge of the original languages over those who did not have these tools available to them. Ultimately, for conferees in 1919, the study of the Scriptures was the supreme authority for settling doctrinal conflict, and access to biblical languages was an important avenue for getting at the meaning of the original text. Those who had learned these

¹RBC, July 30, 1919, 1205. Prescott also refers to a problematic passage: “Brother Daniells was speaking about this question of physical outward evidences. One of those evidences has been that the eyes were open, as you will remember, and this scripture in the 24th chapter of Numbers is always referred to, showing that it is in harmony with that. But you read the Revised Version, and you find it reads, ‘And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor saith, and the man whose eye was closed saith:’ In this text it puts it just the other way. Then I would not want to use that as an argument, that the prophet’s eyes were open.” Ibid., 1212.

²At the devotional meeting held to mark the end of the formal Bible Conference, H. A. Washburn noted that he needed to give himself to God in the study of his Word as never before and that he could not rely upon knowledge of languages. RBC, July 19, 1919, 1076.

languages were urged to utilize them, and those who did not know the biblical languages were cautioned to at least take into account the various Bible translations available to them.

The concept of the King James Version being the only reliable translation did not arise in print within the denomination until 1930 when B. G. Wilkinson published *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*. His premise was that the groups or families of manuscripts, upon which the newer Bible translations were based, were corrupt. Although Wilkinson was present at the 1919 Bible Conference, he did not at that time voice any recorded objection to the use of newer translations.¹

After the discussion of “laws” or principles of interpretation, including the importance of “context” and the different meanings of words based upon different translations and an understanding of biblical languages, the rest of the Conference delved into specific issues. Hermeneutics continued to play a role during these discussions. The assumptions at times can be difficult to trace, yet they were still the driving force behind why these issues were so vitally important to conferees in 1919.

Specific Issues

While all parties at the Conference agreed on the importance of biblical languages and principles of interpretation, a number of specific issues tested the adequacy of hermeneutics at the 1919 Bible Conference. These specific issues may be categorized as:

¹Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* (Washington, DC: College Press, 1930). For a historical survey of the “King James only” position see Peter Johannes Theusen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

(1) non-controversial issues, some of which had, however, controversial significance later; (2) issues on which there was near consensus despite minor disagreements; (3) clearly controversial issues involving hermeneutics, culminating in the most sensitive discussion of all, regarding the inspiration and authority of Ellen G. White.

Issues with Later Significance

Several issues that were brought up were not debated at length during the 1919 Bible Conference. Their significance would only be realized with the passing of time. While hermeneutical issues were clearly at stake, conferees did not at that time recognize that topics such as the Trinity, covenants, and creationism (versus evolution) would eventually become more controversial than the identity of the “daily” and the ten kingdoms.

The Trinity

N. J. Waldorf, a Bible teacher at South Lancaster Academy, in reflecting back upon the 1919 Bible Conference, recalled that the topic of the Trinity had generated a considerable amount of controversy. While many early Adventists had been anti-Trinitarian, by the 1890s the tide had begun to turn, in large part due to the unequivocal stand of Ellen G. White on the topic. Her statement that in Christ was life “original, unborrowed, underived” represented a clear Christological shift. Despite this, some theologians could not bring themselves to accept the Trinity and, especially, the idea that Christ had existed from all eternity.¹

¹Jerry Moon, “Trinity and Anti-Trinitarianism in Seventh-day Adventist History,” in *The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian*

At the 1919 Bible Conference the topic arose in W. W. Prescott's devotional talks on the "person of Christ." While the talks were intended to be Bible studies with a spiritual emphasis, Prescott was unable to resist broaching the still controversial subject of the Trinity. In fact, he brought it up the very first morning of his series of devotional talks. Commenting on Col 1:15-17, he noted that "We are 'in Him.'" He furthermore objected to those who interpreted this text as proof that Christ was a created being.¹

The discussion continued that afternoon when W. E. Howell asked Prescott to enlarge upon what he meant by "beginning." Prescott quoted John 1:3. "Not to teach that is Arianism," said Prescott. In addition Prescott noted that major church publications still stated "that the Son is not co-eternal with the Father," and asked, "Do we want to go on teaching that?"² The question was not answered, and the initial incursion into the subject appears from the transcripts to have been innocuous.

Four days later on Sunday, July 6, the issue of the Trinity came up for discussion in earnest. After a morning presentation on the king of the north by C. M. Sorenson and H. C. Lacey, the afternoon discussion (which was originally intended to be a discussion of Bollman's presentation on the ten kingdoms) degenerated into a debate about the Trinity. The discussion shifted when M. C. Wilcox redirected the dialogue when he asked Prescott about the Trinity. T. E. Bowen pressed the issue when he asked whether Christ

Relationships, by Woodrow W. Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 190-203.

¹W. W. Prescott, "The Person of Christ," RBC, July 2, 1919, 34.

²RBC, July 2, 1919, 76-77.

had a beginning. More specifically, Bowen expressed his skepticism about whether it was even possible to comprehend Christ's beginning and detach it from his "eternity."¹

Prescott then asked Bowen to explain "where in the Scriptures it is taught that Christ had a beginning." Bowen replied that the Scriptures "speak of His being the only begotten son." Prescott stated that this did not "fix any beginning." Lacey came to Prescott's defense, stating that there never was a time when Jesus was not. "His existence spans eternity," he stated. Caviness then stated that he had difficulty accepting the Trinitarian doctrine, and suggested instead that a semi-Arian view of Christ's sonship as having originated from the Father "somewhere away back in eternity" was more faithful to the Scriptures. Unfortunately, at Daniells's request, the rest of the discussion was not transcribed.²

The conversation up until Daniells stopped the conversation centered upon the exegesis of "begotten." Progressives like Prescott and Lacey defended their position on the Trinity by doing exegesis of Col 1:15-17 and John 1:3. Bowen appears to defend a semi-Arian stance, but his hermeneutical position is difficult to understand since the conversation ended, and the position of Bowen (or others who may have sympathized with him) is not clear. What is clear is that the progressives were driving home their point by trying to understand the meaning of the actual words.

Daniells stated that what changed his mind from a previous non-Trinitarian view was reading Ellen White's Trinitarian statements in *Desire of Ages*. He reassured the

¹RBC, July 6, 1919, 232.

²RBC, July 6, 1919, 232-37.

conferees that they were not going to be asked to vote on Arianism or Trinitarianism at the 1919 Bible Conference. Instead, he encouraged them to “think” about it more and to “go on with the study.”¹ After this initial heated session, Prescott’s devotionals touching on Christ’s “sonship” were the only other times when the topic came up again for discussion.²

The covenants

While the subject of the covenants was not as divisive as other issues, the discussion seems to indicate that in 1919 the topic was far from settled in Adventist circles. Early in the Conference (July 3), during a discussion on scriptural exposition, W. W. Prescott urged conferees to let the Bible define the term “covenant.” In this case *Webster’s Dictionary* would not help because it “does not deal with our question at all.” Unfortunately, Prescott did not give a definition for “covenant,” but some hermeneutical parameters were set up, specifically, that the Bible should be used to interpret the Bible.³

The topic of the covenants was on the original list of topics for the Conference, but received only one time period for a presentation by A. O. Tait on July 10, 1919.⁴ His presentation was straightforward: The “new covenant is a covenant of faith,” he argued.

¹RBC, July 6, 1919, 244.

²On July 13, 1919, Prescott noted that the “mediation of Christ grows out of his sonship; it is involved in his sonship, that in the very nature of his relationship to the Father he must be the mediator for the Father.” He later noted that the first name given to him is “Son.” RBC, July 13, 1919, 628.

³RBC, July 3, 1919, 139-40.

⁴RBC, July 10, 1919, 512-26.

The keeping of the law was vital to both the “old” and “new” covenants. Ultimately, in the new covenant Christ lives “through us the life that we cannot possibly live ourselves.”¹

The issue was significant enough to generate discussion over the next few days. The main discussion occurred on July 11, when Prescott challenged Tait’s interpretation of the Greek word “testament” or “covenant” in Heb 9:15. Using the *Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Prescott argued that the logic of the passage would make it more likely to be a “will” or “testament” than a “covenant.” H. C. Lacey supported Prescott’s challenge by stating that the word in question, *diatheke*, according to the latest edition of *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, meant “will” or “testament.” Prescott retorted: “I do not care technically about the word, one way or the other, but I like to keep the interpretation that will keep me in this line . . . that it all depends upon Christ and our union with him. We are joint heirs with him, not heirs that receive our inheritance because he died and handed it on to us.” Once again, in a pattern than hearkened to the debate over the Trinity, Prescott and Lacey supported each other based on their Greek exegesis.²

F. M. Wilcox was more concerned about how this interpretation of *diatheke* would affect the “old argument we used to use.” Historically, Adventist exegetes were very concerned about separating the “old covenant” from the Ten Commandments to

¹RBC, July 10, 1919, 520, 526.

²RBC, July 11, 1919, 584-88. James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources*, 8 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915).

avoid the argument that the seventh-day Sabbath was done away with at the cross.¹ Prescott admitted that this would “make a lot of trouble with it [the old argument], but that was one of the arguments I have always thought was better omitted.” R. A. Underwood, one of the traditionalists, defended the historical view and stated that the description of the word “covenant” in Heb 9 was not a question of two testaments or wills, but that of two “agreements.” This translation would make it more consistent with the description of the first covenant recorded in Exod 24:6-8. Together Wilcox and Underwood reveal some insight into the hermeneutic of the traditionalists. Wilcox was concerned about how Prescott and Lacey’s new perspective would undermine their traditional defense of the seventh-day Sabbath. Underwood on the other hand tried to come up with a compromise by using another dictionary definition that took the text in a different direction.²

Howell succinctly got to the heart of the issue when he asked how to harmonize the covenant with the idea of there being an inheritance. Prescott responded to this question the same way he had over a week earlier (July 3) when he stated that if one took the definition as found in a modern dictionary, the definition of a covenant is “an agreement between two parties,” but this would leave them under the “old covenant.”

¹The *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* lists three major historical expositions on the covenants (up through 1887). The first, by J. O. Corliss (1883) explained the old covenant as an *agreement* made with *respect to* the Ten Commandments but that the two were separate and distinct. A second exposition, by N. J. Bower, agreed with Corliss’s position. Finally, a third exposition, by Uriah Smith, described the old and new covenants as “two editions” of God’s everlasting covenant. “There is nothing in the nature of mutual agreement in the Ten Commandments; they were *commanded*.” *SDA Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “Covenant.”

²RBC, July 11, 1919, 588-90.

Prescott preferred the term “inheritance.” Howell stated that the real “difficulty” was that they were not taking the term “inheritance” far enough in “carrying out the full meaning.” There was a harmony between these two terms, and to emphasize “inheritance” over that of “testament” was to cause them to run into “some very serious difficulties with the reading in the original [Greek].”¹

Lacey objected that they were getting into “a question of a little hair-splitting”:

Whether it is a testament or will, it makes no difference to me, so far as that is concerned. But this strikes at the very root of the gospel to me. My thought is this. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ; every blessing comes to us through our Union with Him, and we are joint heirs with Him, and we are heirs, then, in the same sense that he is, and I cannot think that he gets his inheritance by will from his Father.²

Lacey expounded that the real point of the covenant was its ratification on the cross. The old covenant meant the death of the sacrificial animal, in the new covenant Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. But, Lacey argued,

on the cross Jesus did not fully ratify the covenant. He provided the blood; he died; and in the intent of God, of course, it was ratified. Then the terms have to be delivered to the people. And we are living in the time when the terms are being presented—between the first and the second advents of Christ . . . and as we accept Christ now, so we are sprinkled with his blood. By and by, at the end of the judgment, the books will be sprinkled, and then the covenant is completed.³

According to Lacey, the completion of the judgment would mark the ratification of the covenant. W. G. Wirth was careful to temper Lacey’s statement to make sure he did not mean that “it took any of us” to ratify the covenant. Lacey responded that this was not

¹RBC, July 10, 1919, 591-92.

²RBC, July 10, 1919, 593.

³RBC, July 11, 1919, 593-94.

what he intended. Instead, there was a parallel between the atonement of Christ on the cross and the final cleansing work of the atonement. In concluding, Daniells remarked, “I think there is something in there [in that idea], brethren, that ought to be developed from the old view of no atonement until we come to the judgment hour.”¹

The transcripts do not reveal any further discussions of the covenants, except for Prescott who repeatedly turned to the topic during his morning devotionals. On one occasion, Prescott emphasized the legal arrangement of the covenant.² During another devotional he stated that the covenant meant to keep the ten commandments. Adventists also needed to teach people the provision God made for them to keep the commandments—to do otherwise would leave them with the old covenant.³ Nonetheless, for Prescott the teaching of the covenants was important because it involved the sanctuary ministry of Christ in heaven.

The real issue behind these discussions appeared to have been a lack of emphasis within Adventism upon covenant theology. While there does not appear to have been any real sense of division over the topic (only one presenter was asked to present), it does seem that Adventists sensed a growing need to understand the meaning of the old and new covenants and how they fit into Adventist theology. The importance of the significance of Christ’s atonement on the cross, his continuing high-priestly ministry in

¹RBC, July 11, 1919, 596.

²RBC, July 14, 1919, 698; idem, July 15, 1919, 798.

³RBC, July 16, 1919, 851.

heaven, and how the two to each other remained largely unrecognized until Adventists tried to explain their beliefs to Evangelicals during the 1950s.¹

Creationism versus the theory of evolution

Another theme brought up by W. W. Prescott was that of creationism. During his devotional talk on Sunday, July 13, 1919, Prescott argued that a “wrong scientific theory about the origin of creation will always lead to a false gospel.”² This seemed to go along with their presupposition that ascertaining the correct laws of interpretation would bring them to a consensus of truth. In a similar way, Prescott noted that the problem with “human science” was that it left Christ out. Such a false beginning was sure to lead people down a slippery path away from truth.³

Prescott’s declaration that a wrong theory of creation leads to a false gospel was followed up by A. G. Daniells who asked for clarification about what Prescott meant by this.⁴ Prescott stated that the matter of evolution was becoming prominent not only in

¹The issue of the atonement would become a central issue during the 1954-1956 evangelical conferences between Adventist and evangelical leaders, and also played a prominent place in the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957). See Nam, “Reactions to the Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences and Questions on Doctrine 1955-1971.”

²RBC, July 13, 1919, 639. For an overview of the history of creationism see Numbers, *The Creationists: From Scientific Creationism to Intelligent Design*.

³RBC, July 16, 1919, 837. Earlier in his talk, Prescott stated that one of the problems of science is the assumption that things will continue as they are. “Now the scripture says they [the world] shall perish, science says they continue, they have continued from the beginning, and all things continue as they were from the creation and they will go on that way. That is the testimony of a false science as against the scripture.” In contrast, Christ, the true mediator, “continuest.” *Ibid.*, 836.

⁴“This morning Brother Prescott stated,” said Daniells, “that a false theory or philosophy of creation leads to a false philosophy of the gospel. I would like to have him

science, but also in history and religion. He pointed out that the rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (he used the approximate dates of 1844 to 1850) was about the time that the Scottish amateur geologist, Hugh Miller, wrote the book, *The Testimony of the Rocks* (1857). Prescott cited the appearance of Miller's book only two years before Darwin's *Origin of Species* to show that interest in geology was developing about the same time as the Advent movement. According to Prescott, the Adventist Church needed to harness this interest in geology for its own purposes. The theory of evolution culminated in shutting out a personal Creator for humankind. Daniells agreed with Prescott that there was a special work that Adventists should be doing in combating evolution. The problem, according to Daniells, was that this was where other conservative Christians, such as the emerging leader of Fundamentalism, W. B. Riley, were going wrong:

But when you come to read his [W. B. Riley's] writings, you will find him floundering around in the . . . evolution on the origin of things, and he goes wrong on the law and the Sabbath because he is lost there. The hope for that man and all that are associated with him is to vault clear back to the Bible ground of Jesus being the creator, the Father producing all this through his Son, and now the Father is leading the lost sheep back through this Son.¹

Adventists, Prescott believed, had a particularly important work in warning the world against the dangers of evolution. While Daniells evidently saw this as important, it

explain that a little more fully and make it a little plainer than was made in the bare statement." RBC, July 13, 1919, 673 ff.

¹RBC, July 13, 1919, 675.

appears mysterious that during the Conference no reference was made to the writings of George McCready Price, who by 1919 was reaching the pinnacle of his writing career.¹

Later, toward the end of the Bible Conference (July 18), A. G. Daniells again noted that the theory of evolution contributed to the religious confusion in the world:

The evolutionary theory that is intended to figure God out of doing things in the world, and to get men away from him, and our message says, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, this one [*sic*] that made heavens and earth, the sea and the fountains of waters.' There is something to combat and to meet this infidelity that was to come because of the wreckage of the world must be spiritual as well as commercial and moral.²

Clearly, Daniells saw the theory of evolution as another sign of the spiritual wreckage that would characterize the time of the end.

For Prescott and Daniells, there was a special connection between the rise of Adventism and the theory of evolution. Both movements arose about the same time. The theory of evolution was one more deception characterizing the time of the end. Seventh-day Adventists, on the other hand, had a special message affirming the creation of the world that was tied to the eschatological three angels' messages of Rev 14. In addition, these two men realized that they would never be completely united with other anti-evolutionists because their continued affirmation of creation involved the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath. This was something that their Fundamentalist counterparts, such as W. B. Riley, had missed. Thus, the brief discussions about creationism versus the theory of evolution, although somewhat peripheral to conferees at the time, would later become

¹Harold W. Clark, *Crusader for Creation: The Life and Writings of George McCready Price* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1966), 51; for a more scholarly account of Price see also Numbers, *The Creationists*, 88-119.

²RBC, July 18, 1919, 1049-50.

more significant and illustrate how Adventists perceived themselves in relationship to the emerging Fundamentalist movement.

Issues with Some Consensus

During the 1919 Bible Conference, three topics reached near consensus, though not complete agreement. The Ten Kingdoms, the 1260 day/years, and the Seven Trumpets each represent issues with near consensus as they were brought up during the 1919 Bible Conference.

The ten kingdoms

A topic of extended discussion at the 1919 Bible Conference was the identification of the “ten kingdoms” of Dan 2 and 7. Calvin P. Bollman, on the first full day of the Bible Conference (Wednesday, July 2), gave the key presentation on the ten kingdoms that set off discussions on the topic for the rest of the conference. The dominant issues were the identity of one of the ten kingdoms and the date for the rise of the papal horn.

Seventh-day Adventists identify the successive metals of the image of Dan 2 as typifying successive world monarchies: gold (the kingdom of Babylon), silver (Medo-Persia), brass (Greece), and iron (Rome). The feet of the image are comprised of iron and clay, and the toes are the kingdoms that will never again be united. In Daniel there is a beast with ten horns. Adventists believe that the identity of the toes of Dan 2 and the horns of Dan 7 are parallel symbols of one and the same reality. It is the identity of these “ten” toes and horns that was at stake for Adventist prophetic exegeses.

Bollman indicated that he was reluctant to give this talk because there were others present who were “just as familiar with the subject as I am.” He stated that although Dan

2 was the natural starting point for examining this topic, that the text did not explicitly mention the ten toes as kingdoms. “To me,” he said to the conferees, “it has for many years seemed unwise to say that in this prophecy the ten toes represent the ten kingdoms, for it is nowhere so stated in the Scriptures.” But it does state, he added, that the toes of the image would be divided and never again reunited. Bollman went on to state that Dan 7 mentions “ten horns out of this kingdom [which] are ten kingdoms that shall arise. . . . Here we are on solid ground as far as the number ten is concerned.”¹

Bollman brought five lists of the ten kingdoms from four key sources. The first list was by Adventist prophetic interpreter Uriah Smith, in his landmark work, *Daniel and Revelation*. The second list came from *Notes on the Book of Daniel* by Presbyterian amillennialist Dr. Albert Barnes (1798-1870). The third list was from an unnamed Roman Catholic source. The last two lists came from E. B. Elliott (1793-1875), whose *Horae Apocalypticae* was referred to more than any other non-Adventist book on prophecy at the 1919 Bible Conference. Elliott’s first list was for the fifty-seven years before A.D. 533, and the second for the kingdoms after A.D. 533. The only difference between these two lists was that the Heruli were replaced by the Lombards after 533.²

The core question for Bollman was the determination of the time when the “little horn” rose up. The fulfillment of this prophecy, for Bollman, validated their historicist approach to the prophecies. He noted that some interpreters pointed to Paul’s day as the beginnings of the Roman papacy, tracing its earliest origins to the “evil principle of self-

¹RBC, July 2, 1919, 60-61. Bollman credits Sir Isaac Newton and E. B. Elliott as authorities for the “great unanimity of opinion that exists here” on this topic. *Ibid.*, 61.

²RBC, July 2, 1919, 65-66.

exaltation to which he [Paul] referred in 1 Thess 2:3-8.” The ten kingdoms would be in existence by the time the little or papal horn arose. “This could not have been earlier than the first letter or decree of Justinian upon this subject, March 25, 533 [A.D.]” This last or eleventh horn had to “be a real, tangible, organic entity, not merely a principle.” It had to be more than an abstraction. The correct timing for this prophecy was crucial for establishing the rise of the papacy.¹

The “little horn” would “exercise real power.” Bollman argued that there had to be a historical fulfillment because the papacy did not die. “The papacy can not [*sic*] be assigned to an earlier date than 533, and indeed we have until recently assigned it a date five years later, namely 538.” Bollman suggested that the Papacy had nothing to do with the overthrow of the Heruli. It had previously been inferred that the Heruli had been overcome because they were Arians, but historical evidence, he suggested, showed that they remained heathen until after the overthrow of their kingdom. “In fact the more this matter is examined in the light of modern research, the more evident it becomes that the Heruli never had any standing in Italy in any other capacity than that of barbarian warriors acknowledging no allegiance to any local leader except as he might either give or promise rewards in the shape of lands, lute [*sic*, loot], and license.”² Premier, a teacher at South Lancaster Academy, found the name “Heruli” itself problematic in that the word “Heruli” was a term used to designate four tribes.³ A more accurate identification, according to

¹RBC, July 2, 1919, 66-67. Bollman notes that in the “Code of Justinian” Book 1, title 1, Justinian addresses the Pope as the “head of all churches.”

²RBC, July 2, 1919, 68-70.

³RBC, July 2, 1919, 107.

Bollman, was to place the Lombards instead of the Heruli as the tenth kingdom. He also suggested an alternative interpretation, the Heruli may have been replaced by the Bavarian kingdom.¹

In the discussion² that ensued, L. L. Caviness pointed out that the Heruli being replaced by the Lombards conflicted with that of the traditional Adventist view on two points: (1) the date of A.D. 533 instead of A.D. 538 for the rise of the little horn, and (2) the identification of the Lombards instead of the Heruli. The underlying question was no longer one about hermeneutics but whether they would adhere to traditional eschatological interpretations.³

Caviness noted that a similar example could be found in Ellen White's writings.⁴ E. R. Palmer responded: "It seems to me that to bring that [date, 533] too definitely within the 1260 year period, it involves us in serious difficulty at both ends [in both A.D. 538 and A.D. 1798], and I think we have a good deal of phrase-adjusting and word-adjusting in our literature relative to the Sabbath and the papacy to make the thing

¹RBC, July 2, 1919, 99.

²The discussion began later that afternoon (RBC, July 2, 1919, 99-108) and continued the following day during the late morning period and again during the afternoon. See RBC, July 3, 1919, 145-56, 186-92.

³A. O. Tait first noticed that the essential difference in the list of the ten kingdoms was the replacement for the Heruli. RBC, July 2, 1919, 100. Prescott first pushed Bollman on the issue of whether he agreed with Elliot. When Bollman replied "yes," L. L. Caviness then stated that this view conflicted with *Daniel and Revelation*. For the full discussion, see RBC, July 3, 1919, 146-47.

⁴Caviness noted that Ellen White stated that the pope changed the Sabbath. "Please tell me," he said, "the name of the pope that made the change." Daniells responded that the "use of the word pope was intended for the papacy." RBC, July 3, 1919, 150-51.

consistent with what actually took place before the 1260 years and afterwards.” Even the moderate Herbert Lacey appealed to tradition, stating that he tried “to adhere to our traditional view [A.D. 538].” H. A. Washburn stated: “I do not feel free to abandon the dates 538 and 1798. . . . That is the only thing that gives me anything to begin with.” Still others such as G. B. Thompson, W. W. Prescott, and W. T. Knox spoke to the effect that the Adventist pioneers were not infallible and the church needed to “advance in the light.” Tradition was not good enough for these progressives.¹

The issue of timing led to a broader interpretative issue of the “supremacy” of the papacy. C. M. Sorenson found the term “supremacy” to be an inaccurate word for describing this period because the papacy gradually ascended to power, finally reaching its real domination between A.D. 1100 and 1300, and then the papacy gradually disappeared. “And yet you read in our books and hear in our sermons that in 538 the pope became supreme.” An interpretative view like this one needed to be true to actual history.² A related area of discussion was how the papacy changed the Sabbath before 533. If the Papacy changed the Sabbath before it was supposed to have risen (regardless of whether the date is 533 or 538) then this negated the entire prophecy. H. A. Washburn responded by stating that the Bishop of Rome was a monarchical power when this occurred.³

¹RBC, July 3, 1919, 190-91.

²RBC, July 3, 1919, 152-55.

³RBC, July 2, 1919, 105.

Attempts to solve the identification of the Heruli spanned a variety of methods. Bollman began the conversation by noting what the text did not say: it did not specify the quantity of toes (or by extension kingdoms). A key to understanding Bollman's hermeneutical approach is revealed when he made the case for the Lombards based upon their geographical location.¹ The end consensus appears to have been simply that there were ten kingdoms at the time of the rise of papal Rome between A.D. 533 and A.D. 538.² This precipitated another hermeneutical discussion about what really occurred during this time period.

The 1260 day/year prophecy

The discussions about the ten kingdoms led to another discussion about a closely related topic—the dates for the beginning and termination of the papal supremacy. This papal supremacy was marked by the 1260 day/year prophecy that Adventist expositors had traditionally attached to A.D. 538 and 1798 for the beginning and end, respectively, of this time period.

These dates may seem to be of minor importance to the twentieth-first century reader, but the reason he conferees in 1919 considered this issue important enough to fight over was because their whole Adventist identity was linked to a historicist

¹RBC, July 2, 1919, 100-01.

²M. C. Wilcox pointed this out during the afternoon of the first day. C. M. Sorenson agreed with Wilcox. While the debate over timing and identity might continue, it seemed reassuring to delegates that despite difficulties in interpreting prophecy, that God's Word was reliable and true. RBC, July 2, 1919, 104.

interpretation of Bible prophecy. The accuracy of the prophecies validated Adventist theology.

H. S. Prehier made an attempt to present his views on Friday, July 11, 1919. While it appears that he read from his notes, only the first few remarks of the introduction and conclusion of his talk are extant in the Bible Conference transcripts. Fortunately his “South Lancaster Academy Bible Notes” were also included in the transcripts, and soon after the Conference he published a pamphlet based on his presentation.¹ Utilizing these extant sources, it appears that Prehier, who used notes he had taken from a presentation Prescott made prior to the Conference, argued that 533 was the “*primary date* for the *commencement* of the twelve hundred sixty years of papal supremacy.” The “five-year period” from 533 to 538 was a transition time, and thus Adventists could safely hold to the 538 date as reliable. At the conclusion of the discussion Prescott was upset that Prehier had used his notes, from material Prescott had presented in 1913, as a way to contradict what Prescott was trying to say at the 1919 Conference.²

The discussion on the 1260 day/year prophecy continued during the next available time slot during the Conference, late in the morning on Sunday, July 13, 1919. Prescott

¹Prehier’s presentation appears in RBC, July 11, 1919, 600-627. The introduction (600-02) is followed by a Bible Chart (603) and three short pamphlets. Pamphlet one, “Daniel and the Revelation Time Prophecies by W. W. Prescott, rearranged and abridged reprint by H. S. Prehier” (604-08); pamphlet two, “The Continual (The Daily) of Daniel Eight by W. W. Prescott, rearranged abridged reprint by H. S. Prehier” (609-15); and, pamphlet three, “Subversion of the Papal Government by Richard Duppa, an Eye-witness, London, England, Second edition, 1798. Explaining [the] Date 1798 Mentioned in Bible Charts No. 6, 7, 11, 12, 13. Reprint by H. S. Prehier” (616-17). The back side of the circulars states that they were available for 10 cents each.

²Prehier, “Daniel and the Revelation Time Prophecies by Prescott,” 1, in RBC, July 11, 1919, 604.

was concerned that “great care” be taken over this matter of the date. They should be careful to bring forward only the “facts” that “actually happened” in 533 or 538. Prescott wanted firm historical evidence for his position. Many assertions were being made, he claimed. When Prescott was questioned by F. M. Wilcox during the discussion period, he admitted that there was something that contributed to the “supremacy of the papacy in 538 . . . [and] something in 1798 that contributed to the papal downfall.” Nevertheless, Prescott preferred to emphasize 533 and 1793 as the dates for this prophecy.¹

Prescott was careful to also affirm that he believed 1798, when the papacy was humiliated, was the ultimate conclusion of this prophecy. The legal basis for the beginning of the Papacy which was given in 533 was not implemented until 538. The important point to remember, he urged, was that the five-year time at both the beginning and end of this prophecy was a “gradual unfolding, and therefore it is difficult to fix upon one date when the whole thing was accomplished.”²

H. A. Washburn, a history teacher, dominated the rest of that late Sunday morning discussion (July 13). He stated that two interpretations were possible. The question was a matter of timing. The overthrow of the three kingdoms (the Heruli, Lombards, and Ostrogoths) occurred either *before* or *after* the papacy was established. He stated that the latter position was the one he was most comfortable with based on his own research. Additionally, Washburn noted that it was impossible to prove the overthrow of the Ostrogoths, one of the three kingdoms prophetically uprooted, at the beginning of the

¹RBC, July 13, 1919, 661-62.

²RBC, July 13, 1919, 664-65.

1260 years. He dismissed this problem by stating that they “were overthrown in God’s sight in 538.”¹

In concluding the discussion time, the investigation of the topic was apparently thorough enough to settle the issue for A. G. Daniells. He stated that discussions like this one about the 1260-year prophecy showed that the Conference was “plowing deeper” into questions about which very little study had been done. The main issue was whether Adventist interpreters in 1919 would allow for some flexibility in their scheme of prophetic interpretation. The traditionalists appealed to tradition and even geographic location; the progressives wanted the latest historical research to confirm their position. This did not necessarily overthrow positions previously held, but instead, gave “more evidence” confirming them.²

The seven trumpets

One of the last debates to come up before the close of the formal Bible Conference on Sabbath, July 19, 1919, was a debate on how to interpret the fifth and sixth trumpets in Rev 9.³ The traditional Adventist view interpreted the fifth trumpet as

¹RBC, July 13, 1919, 667. Washburn dominated the remainder of the discussion (see 665-70).

²RBC, July 13, 1919, 670-71. Daniells appeared to have been quite pleased with the result of the discussion on the beginning and end of the 1260 years. “We are getting far more light on these questions. We didn’t, many of us, possess the history. . . . We are landed right back to our position that the 1260 years actually date from 538 and end in 1798, and that the overthrow of paganism or this matter of the daily brought out in the eighth chapter was fixed in 538 and runs through to 1798. . . . This establishment of papal domination and the ending of those things didn’t crop up in a night, it took years and years to come to that.” *Ibid.*, 671.

³The fourth trumpet, Rev 9:1-12; and fifth trumpet, Rev 9:13-21.

the invasion of the Eastern Roman Empire by the Saracens, and the sixth trumpet as referring to the invasion of the Ottoman Turks.¹

The debate began with a presentation by traditionalist J. N. Anderson on Thursday, July 17, 1919, who based his presentation on the research of an unknown student at Union College. The crux of his argument was a defense of the date 1299 as the ending point of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth trumpet. Anderson's view was premised on a traditional interpretative stance based upon Uriah Smith's interpretation of Revelation. Smith's explanation of the prophecy pointed to the Saracens, an Arabic nomadic tribe living on the Sinai Peninsula, and that there was no centralized king of the Saracens until 1299. Anderson clearly bought the geographical approach upon which Smith based his interpretation.²

Anderson's presentation struck a resonant chord in other prophetic expositors at the 1919 Bible Conference. Prescott, however, critiqued Anderson, saying that he had

¹The traditional interpretation was based on the views of Josiah Litch. He would, like other expositors of his time, argue that the fifth and sixth trumpets of Rev 9 referred to the spread of Islam, particularly the Ottoman Empire. Using the day/year method of prophetic interpretation, Litch interpreted the "five months" of harassment described in Rev 9:5 to equal 150 years (5 x 30 days). Later, during vs. 15 the Ottomans would be able to conquer and dominate Eastern Europe for an "hour and day and month and year" which he believed, using this same day/year method of interpretation, equaled a total of 391 years and 15 days. During this time the Ottomans would be able to conquer and dominate Eastern Europe. Litch based his historical observations on the best authority he had available to him, Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which referred to two Latin sources the date July 27, 1299, for the beginning of the time period marked by the Ottoman invasion of the Byzantine Empire (Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury, 7 vols. [New York: Macmillan, 1900], 7:24). It was on this basis that Litch predicted that the Ottoman Empire would lose its power in August 1840 (Josiah Litch, "Fall of the Ottoman Power in Constantinople," *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 1, 1840, 70).

²RBC, July 17, 1919, 964-78.

made a “false exegesis” on two particular points: (1) the symbol itself was a misapplication of a reference to the Ottoman empire applied centuries after the Saracens ceased to be an “aggressive power”; and (2) he did not “see how anyone can maintain there was no king of the Mohammadans [*sic*] until the end of the thirteenth century.” Prescott correctly attributed the source of Anderson’s view to Uriah Smith who had borrowed it from William Miller and his contemporaries. This was an example of Adventist tradition gone wrong. Prescott found it especially problematic because in his view the prophetic symbol was being misapplied in terms of both time periods. The meaning of what had occurred was more significant than the actual date. He claimed that the date 1299 had been “discredited.” Perhaps realizing his precarious position, Prescott tried to mitigate the concerns of those who felt threatened by his rejection of 1299 by suggesting a specific date was unnecessary.¹

Prescott did not have with him his files on this particular topic and was reticent to present on it at the Conference without having prepared. He referred to a committee² that the Review and Herald Board had appointed several years earlier, which had extensively looked into the matter and concluded that “we could not apply this 150 years beginning

¹RBC, July 17, 1919, 988-89. Prescott noted that he had been to the Congressional Library to read the original Greek history on the subject. His conclusion after going “over the whole matter” was that “the day July 27, 1299 is absolutely discredited.” Some historians cited 1302, 1301, and 1300 as dates. “Now all I ask for is that we shall be consistent with ourselves so that when we stand up before an audience or appear in print we don’t expose ourselves any longer to that shocking inconsistency of applying the symbols to two powers.” RBC, July 17, 1919, 991.

²The committee “was composed of F. M. Wilcox, Chairman, W. A. Spicer, M. E. Kern, C. S. Longacre, C. L. Benson, S. M. Butler, and myself [W. W. Prescott].” RBC, July 17, 1919, 992. Later on in the discussion, Prescott stated that, besides himself, this was “not a radical committee.” RBC, July 17, 1919, 1009.

July 27, 1299.” While the date 1299 was not as central to Adventist eschatology as 538/1798, his willingness to do away with the date reveals some underlying hermeneutical presuppositions. Prescott was more concerned about the interpretation of what had occurred than he was about finding a historical event to validate a previously held position. He was also concerned that any hermeneutic be historically accurate.¹

The battle lines were drawn between the progressives and the traditionalists when traditionalist B. G. Wilkinson requested that the Bible Conference withdraw its vote² and give him the opportunity to present his views for the defensibility of the 1299 date. His request was an attempt to refute Prescott’s assertions. While neither the vote alluded to by Wilkinson, nor a response to his request is recorded, he was given time to present his views the following day. Unfortunately, Wilkinson’s presentation was not included in the Conference transcripts so it is not possible to contrast his hermeneutical defense of a date he clearly saw as vital to Adventist eschatology. A note in the transcripts states that his talk was “not in shape to be copied yet.”³ What is recorded is Daniells’s request for “one minute speeches” on the topic on Thursday, July 17. William G. Wirth, H. C. Lacey, and W. H. Wakeham gave statements sympathetic to Prescott. C. M. Sorenson indicated that this was a “most perplexing question” and that it was more difficult to “invent events to

¹According to Prescott, this committee consisted of (in addition to himself): F. M. Wilcox, chairman, W. A. Spicer, M. E. Kern, C. S. Longacre, C. L. Benson, and S. M. Butler. RBC, July 17, 1919, 992. The Review and Herald Board referred to the managing board of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, the oldest Adventist publishing house.

²There is no record of such a vote so it is unclear what this vote was and what they were withdrawing except that Wilkinson obviously took umbrage after it occurred.

³RBC, July 17, 1919, 994; July 18, 1919, 1057.

fit the occasion.” The conferees asked Prescott to present a “brief outline” of the topic, but Prescott declined again because the documents that he had “filed for years over this question” had been misplaced after returning home from his most recent trip. He concluded his remarks by saying that the time specified in the fifth trumpet was an unspecific time and that an hour (the 24th part of a literal day) here was not to be interpreted by the year-day prophetic typology as the twenty-fourth part of a literal year. Prescott used his Greek concordance to cite evidence from a significant number of biblical passages. What was more important to Prescott, in this brief sketch, was that the church present a “consistent” interpretation in their publications on prophecy. After he was done, the Conference adjourned for the day. Although the topic came up the following day, Wilkinson’s second presentation on it was not recorded and there are no other records to indicate how controversial this topic may have been during the Conference.¹

The debate focused more on the accuracy of the date and the methodology of how Adventists derived their understanding, than upon the actual interpretation itself. It appears that B. G. Wilkinson, a stalwart traditionalist, felt threatened by the questioning of what he considered to be an established viewpoint. This added just one more strand of color in the ongoing hermeneutical drama at the 1919 Bible Conference.

As noted above, these dates were considered of great importance because they linked history to biblical prophecy, thus confirming the accuracy of the prophecies and validating Adventist theology.

¹RBC, July 17, 1919, 995-96, 1002-09.

Controversial Issues

The two most controversial issues during the 1919 Bible Conference were the interpretation of the “daily” in Dan 8, 11, and 12 and the identity of the “king of the north” in Dan 11. Each of these played a prominent role, dwarfing all other issues in comparison. Although the discussion of these issues conjured up strong emotions, the discussions are sometimes incomplete. The following report reconstructs what occurred based upon extant transcripts.

The “daily”

Although the topic of the “daily” or “continual” sacrifice (particularly in Dan 8, 11, and 12) was not formally addressed by a paper, the debate over the “daily” appears to have colored the other discussions that took place. References to the “daily” were made during the Conference by three individuals who were widely known as proponents of the “new view.” A. G. Daniells, W. W. Prescott, and H. C. Lacey brought up the topic on a number of occasions. It appears that Ellen White’s counsels to stop arguing about the topic after the 1909 General Conference session had, until 1919, precluded any serious

discussion of the topic.¹ The topic was still a hot enough point of contention that Daniells instructed that it was not to be discussed unless he were present.²

On July 7 Herbert C. Lacey referenced the importance of the “daily” in relation to the doctrine of the sanctuary.³ He reinforced the point that the ultimate destruction that the taking away of the “daily” tries to accomplish is the destruction of the heavenly sanctuary. A portion of his arguments defending the “new view” of the “daily” is unfortunately missing.⁴ The topic came up again in W. W. Prescott’s devotional talks. He repeatedly brought up the subject of the “daily” (sometimes using the more precise synonym “continual”) during his devotional talks. On July 17 he gave a talk comparing Matt 24 with Dan 8. The next day (July 18) he expanded his comparison of these two chapters. In these two talks Prescott highlighted Christ’s reference (Matt 24:15) to the “abomination of desolation” referred to by Daniel the prophet. Prescott suggested that this “abomination” destroyed the “daily” or “continual” sacrifice when Jerusalem was

¹The topic of “the daily” arose as a significant issue between 1897 and 1910. The question was how to interpret a statement made by Ellen White in *Early Writings*, page 75: “The Lord gave the correct view of [the “daily”] to those who gave the judgment hour cry.” The strongest critic of the “new view” was S. N. Haskell who believed that A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott were undermining the prophetic gift of Ellen White, and in particular, this statement she had made. Instead Ellen White stated that the topic was a minor issue and she was not shown which view was the correct view. For an overview of Ellen White’s response to the controversy, see Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: A Biography*, 6:246-61; Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White*, 415-27.

²RBC, July 16, 1919, 842, 904.

³RBC, July 9, 1919, 279-81.

⁴RBC, July 7, 1919, 286-88. At the conclusion Lacey states, “You see with this we have a new view of the daily. I believe that the new view of the daily is the correct view of the daily.” *Ibid.*, 288.

conquered. This was an attempt by Prescott to allow Scripture to interpret itself. In addition, he argued, the “daily” carried with it a “double application” that applied both historically and had a second or dual meaning for those who lived immediately before the second coming of Christ (the “end-of-time”). He believed that the emphasis of the “daily” on the sanctuary ministry of Christ would help to reinforce the Adventist theology of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. By going beyond traditional positions Adventists, he felt, had an opportunity to strengthen previously held positions.¹

The most extensive discussions of the “daily” controversy occurred in the context of what Prescott along with others had learned about the issue during the previous two decades. Daniells gave credit to Prescott for sharing the “new view” with him during the late 1890s. He prefaced his remarks by stating that he did not accept the “old view” simply based on Uriah Smith’s interpretation (in fact, he stated that God would overlook Smith’s mistakes just as he had those of William Miller). It was the overall context of Dan 8 that had finally won Daniells over to this viewpoint.² The Conference voted for

¹RBC, July 17, 1919, 952-63; July 18, 1919, 1010-51. Seventh-day Adventists believe in the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ. While Adventists believe in the complete atonement of Christ on the cross, they also believe that after his ascension he took on a Mediatorial role in the Sanctuary in heaven. This role changed from the Holy Place (which lasted from his ascension up until 1844) to the Most Holy Place (1844 to the present). The work of Christ in the Most Holy Place is where Christ will continue to work until the book of life is closed immediately prior to the Second Coming. For a more thorough treatment of the Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary, see Raoul Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 375-417; Frank Holbrook, ed., *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: A Historical Survey* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989); Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner, eds., *The Sanctuary and the Atonement* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1981).

²RBC, July 8, 1919, 412-13. “I accepted it, and I took my stand openly and freely, and I stand with all my weight on that new view of the daily,” stated Daniells. “I read it

Daniells to present some of the historical background that had convicted him even more on the topic, but if he did present the subject, there is no record of it.¹ On another occasion, Daniells pointed out that Ellen White did not appear to be chiefly concerned with the interpretation of the “daily” itself, but instead, the validity of the 2300 days with its culmination in 1844.² This discussion would become particularly important with regard to discussions about the nature and authority of Ellen White’s writings.³

As noted earlier, by about 1910 Ellen White’s counsels to stop fighting over the “daily” had quieted the controversy, but the cessation of hostilities did not mean that the antagonists had relinquished their convictions.⁴ The topic did not receive comprehensive presentation and discussion at the Convention, but it is apparent that progressives such as Daniells, Prescott, and Lacey held strong convictions on the subject. The transcripts only reveal their position. They strengthened their hermeneutic by looking at how the Bible interprets itself, and furthermore, by understanding the historical context of Ellen White’s controversial statement on how she understood it herself. The underlying question of how to approach and interpret Scripture would appear again with regard to the interpretation of Dan 11.

right through the chapter too, the Revised version. . . . The thing that swung me was the chapter itself.” Ibid.

¹“I shall not speak on it any further unless it might be thought best for me to give my understanding of the fulfillment of the last verses from 404-05 from the standpoint of history.” RBC, July 8, 1919, 413. The minutes record that Prescott moved that Daniells present his views.

²Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, 74-75; see also Moon, *W. C. White*, 421-23.

³RBC, July 30, 1919, 1206-07.

⁴See fn. 1, p. 106.

The king of the north

The topic that drew the most heated discussion at the 1919 Bible Conference was the identification of the “king of the north” and the “king of the south” in Dan 11. However, it is underreported in the transcripts because A. G. Daniells again decreed that the topic was not to be discussed unless he was present and when he was there he would stop the transcription of the discussions. As with the “daily,” the topic harked back to the underlying hermeneutical issues dividing them. The progressives affirmed that it was more important to understand the meaning of an event over the actual date, that Adventists should use the latest historical research, and furthermore, that proof-texting should give way to an hermeneutical approach that allowed Scripture to interpret Scripture (or, as in the case of Ellen White, to let the prophetess interpret her own statements). The “daily” controversy (1897-1910) had brought all of these hermeneutical issues to the foreground.¹

Belief in the imminence of Christ’s return along with their confidence in how Adventists interpreted other prophetic passages in Daniel and Revelation created room for some Adventist exegetes to come up with varying interpretations for Dan 11. William Miller in the 1840s interpreted the “king of the north” as Rome.² Uriah Smith modified

¹Haloviak, “In the Shadow of the ‘Daily,’” 18-26.

²Commenting on Dan 11 Miller writes: “Rome is now the king of the north, because they had conquered the Macedonian kingdom and had become masters of the countries north and east before they attacked Egypt.” William Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ* (Troy, NY: E. Gates, 1838), 86 (see 83-96 for a larger discussion by Miller of the kings of the north and south); idem, *Miller’s Works*, vol. 2 (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1841), 87-88.

Miller's view when he wrote *Daniel and Revelation* by adding that the battle between the kings of the north and south would become a "triangular war" with France.¹ By 1900 there was growing dissatisfaction with this "old" view. According to those at the 1919 Bible Conference, the widespread acceptance of the "old" view was a direct result of the wide dissemination of Smith's writings on prophecy and their perceived authoritative status.²

The topic was first addressed in two presentations by C. M. Sorenson, chair of the religion department at Washington Missionary College, and H. C. Lacey, who had just joined the faculty there. Sorenson began with a presentation, "The Pointing Out of Some Values in the Favor of Turkey Constituting the King of the North." At the outset, he indicated his reluctance to speak on such a controversial topic and said he proceeded only because he was assigned to give this presentation. The title of Lacey's talk that afternoon is not extant, but Lacey argued the "new view" perspective. He suggested that instead of applying these verses to France or Turkey, it would be better to apply them to the papacy.³

It does not appear that either Sorenson or Lacey's talk appears to have settled the discussion. At the conclusion of Sorenson's first presentation, Daniells expressed hope

¹Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944), 280-81. Smith states that "France fulfills the prophecy" but the prophecy he talks about is "the king" of Dan 11:36, which is *not* the king of the north.

²J. Grant Lamson, *The Eleventh of Daniel Narrated* (Minneapolis, MN: J. Grant Lamson, 1909).

³RBC, July 6, 1919, 208-28, 246-58.

that Dan 11 could become as clear to Adventist exegetes of prophecy as Dan 2 and 7.¹ It is not clear why Wilcox, Tait, and Wilkinson did not pursue Dan 11 further. It seems likely that by the end of the Bible Conference Daniells felt this topic was too controversial to be discussed further. Another possibility is that it may have been discussed and the transcripts are no longer extant. Either way, the same hermeneutical discussions would take place in the context of the prophetic writings of Ellen G. White.

Ellen G. White and Hermeneutics

Closely related to the issues surrounding biblical hermeneutics were issues dealing with the hermeneutics for the prophetic writings of Ellen G. White. Her life and ministry, which had closed only four years earlier, was a strong background influence at the 1919 Bible Conference. Some significant issues that had to be dealt with were the level of authority for Ellen White's writings, whether they should be revised, and the nature of their inspiration. These topics, although alluded to throughout the Conference, were considered in depth at four significant points during the meetings. The first occurred on July 10, 1919, in the context of how to evaluate and revise Adventist stances on prophetic interpretation. After this initial discussion came a lengthy talk by A. G. Daniells (July 16), which is only partially recorded. Two later and more extensive conversations occurred on July 30 and August 1.

¹RBC, July 6, 1919, 229.

The First Dialogue

The question of revising Ellen White's writings arose on July 10, 1919, when W. W. Prescott noted certain problematic statements in her book, *Great Controversy*. Prescott compared earlier and later versions of *Great Controversy* (1888 and 1911, respectively) and noted the correction of facts made by the author along with the help of literary assistants and consultants. Prescott highlighted seven statements she made that were especially problematic and, therefore, revised or removed in the 1911 edition: (1) Whether there was any papacy since 1798; (2) an article incorrectly attributed to Henry Dana Ward; (3) a historical statement about *when* Josiah Litch predicted the fall of the Ottoman Empire; (3) Josiah Litch's prediction of the fall of the Ottoman Empire on Aug. 11, 1840;¹ (4) the use of "alone" in delineating the inclusion of other religious movements that were once pure and had now joined apostate Roman Catholicism; (5) an entirely new paragraph substituted to describe the work of the papacy; (6) the anachronistic use of the "Lord God the Pope" which Prescott claimed was not in canon law and had been discarded after 1532; and (7) her description of the law of changing bishops.² Prescott argued that all of these statements needed to be put in harmony with the facts. While the author was living, he added, "the author and editors recognized the propriety of making changes necessary when newly discovered facts were brought forward." Prescott probed those present whether these historical discrepancies in her writings destroyed their confidence in its divine inspiration. No one from the audience, from extant records, appeared to directly answer his question.

¹See fn. 2, p. 118, for the background of this date.

²RBC, July 10, 1919, 551-58.

While no one directly responded to Prescott, an indirect response did come from F. M. Wilcox who had with him an original letter written to him by Ellen White. The content of the letter mostly concerned the then recent revision of *Great Controversy* in 1911. The most pertinent section stated:

When I learned that “Great Controversy” must be reset, I determined that we would have everything closely examined, to see if the truths it contained were stated in the very best manner, to convince those not of our faith that the Lord had guided and sustained me in the writing of its pages.

As a result of the thorough examination by our most experienced workers, some changing in the wording has been proposed. These changes I have carefully examined, and approved. I am thankful that my life has been spared, and that I have strength and clearness of mind for this and other literary work.¹

Wilcox also pointed to a statement that Ellen White made in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, published in 1858 (the earliest version of the book that would later become *Great Controversy*). Wilcox believed this passage was the clearest statement Ellen White gave about the nature of her inspiration. He added that in the back of volume 2 (1860) she included a number of testimonials that confirmed her care for accuracy and use of the best sources she had available to her.² Thus any human shortcomings in the preparation of her writings could not be used to discredit her divine inspiration. The knowledge that Ellen White had “back there used the same care and the same means in making her work regarding the historical data correct” only confirmed his confidence in her as “an honest

¹Ellen G. White to F. M. Wilcox, Letter 56, 1911 (EGWE-GC). The letter is alluded to, with the date, in the transcripts with the note “Wilcox to Furnish Copy.” RBC, July 10, 1919, 558.

²In referring to these testimonials, Wilcox became confused between *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1 (1858) and vol. 2 (1860) by referring to volume 1 when he should have referred to volume 2, an autobiographical volume that contains these supportive testimonials.

woman.”¹ Wilcox added that although there are some things that are “perplexing” in Ellen White’s “Testimonies,” that her “life work, the general spirit attending her life is evidence of her divine call from God as the messenger of this denomination.” The stenographers recorded that there were “Amens” to this comment.²

The conferees appeared to be leaning away from making Ellen White’s writings independently authoritative with regard to historical facts. G. B. Thompson read a statement from W. C. White that described the revision process for *Great Controversy*. This process entailed Ellen White’s instruction to find the best historical sources, to verify quotations, and when inaccuracies were found to submit proposed changes to her for her approval. When a quotation could not be found, her assistants were instructed to use another source.³ Unfortunately, W. C. White was not in attendance to explain this process himself,⁴ but a close friend and colleague, D. E. Robinson, who was also one of Ellen White’s literary assistants, was present during this afternoon discussion. He added that during his thirteen years of working for Ellen White, he had become intimately

¹RBC, July 10, 1919, 559. She wrote: “In preparing the following pages, I have labored under great disadvantages, as I have had to depend in many instances, on memory, having kept no journal till within a few years. In several instances I have sent the manuscripts to friends who were present when the circumstances related occurred, for their examination before they were put in print. I have taken great care, and have spent much time, in endeavoring to state the simple facts as correctly as possible.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2 (Battle Creek, MI: James White, 1858), iii.

²RBC, July 10, 1919, 560.

³RBC, July 10, 1919, 561 ff.

⁴W. C. White was a member of the General Conference Committee. He was invited to attend by both W. E. Howell and A. G. Daniells, but had to decline because of the double wedding of his two sons. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, June 6, 1919, incoming correspondence, EGWE-GC.

familiar with this revision process. He and C. C. Crisler had “spent nearly six months in the study of *Great Controversy*,” he said. They had done research in major libraries at Stanford University and the University of California, Berkeley.

A. O. Tait shifted the topic away from that of the revision process to the accuracy of Ellen White’s writings. He noted that some of the “younger men have taught” that Ellen White’s writings were equal to those of the Bible writers. This was contrary to what he remembered pioneers such as G. I. Butler preaching in their time.

And Elder [James] White himself never spoke of the infallibility of Sister White’s writings. But I do believe they are inspired; and if you allow Sister White herself to carry things along, and not a few men with extreme and fanatical ideas, we won’t get into any trouble. But I have observed that the men who carried these extreme views have many of them left the faith. Sister White’s teaching is always directing us to the infallibility of the Bible, and never to herself or her writings as a standard. She is so much different from these others who have come forward.¹

William G. Wirth affirmed that he supported the views expressed that afternoon, but complained that he had gotten “into trouble” because he would not teach that Ellen White’s views of history were absolutely authoritative. This information needed to get out to the teachers, he believed. Howell noted that the teaching of history was slated for further study later in the Conference.

The real issue, according to veteran minister and administrator R. A. Underwood, went beyond the revision process or the accuracy of her writings to the placement of Ellen White’s writings in relationship to the authority of the Bible. Underwood stated that there were two extremes in the Adventist church. On one hand, there were those who would place “the Testimonies just the same as the Bible.” This was a position, he noted, that S.

¹RBC, July 10, 1919, 564.

M. I. Henry, the famous convert from Women's Christian Temperance Union in the 1890s, had struggled with. A second extreme view placed Ellen White's writings as "a telescope which magnified the word of God." This would have the effect, from Underwood's perspective, of exalting Ellen White's writings above the Bible.¹

Underwood illustrated his point by arguing that truth was progressive over time. He cited the difficulties the church had had in the development of a system for collecting church funds. An earlier system, described as "systematic benevolence," was used for a time. As G. I. Butler and J. H. Morrison studied the matter and became convinced on the basis of Scripture that the practice of tithing ten percent was more biblical, there were others who opposed such a switch on the basis that Ellen White had endorsed the previous system. In denouncing such a position, Underwood said, Ellen White "used the strongest language" he had ever heard her use. For Underwood, this was a classic example of how the "spirit of prophecy" brought unity to the church as a deeper study of the Bible led leaders such as Butler and Morrison to push the church toward tithing.²

¹RBC, July 10, 1919, 566. S. M. I. Henry, "My Telescope," *Gospel of Health*, Jan. 1898, 25-28. When Henry originally used this metaphor she made the point that Ellen White's writings do not add anything to the Bible or change it, just as a telescope does not add to or change anything in the starry heavens, but only allows it to be seen more clearly. Underwood took "magnify" differently as a lens through which to interpret Scripture and therefore saw it as putting Ellen White's writings as a controlling norm over Scripture.

²RBC, July 10, 1919, 566-67.

It appears from this initial discussion that (at least for those who spoke up) Ellen White was an individual who sought to make her writings as accurate as possible, during the course of her lifetime continually revising her writings. She was not a final authority on historical details, and her writings were not to be held on an equal plane with Scripture, but used to shed light on the Scriptures. The greatest proof of her inspiration was the overall course of her life and ministry which brought unity to the church, even as the church grew and changed positions. Even more significant was the statement by A. O. Tait contrasting the authority of Ellen White's writings to that of the Bible. By stating that her writings were not inerrant, he implied that the Bible might be inerrant. This dichotomy would be developed more fully in later discussions.

Formal Presentation by A. G. Daniells

The initial discussion by Daniells on July 10 was followed up with a formal presentation by A. G. Daniells on July 16. Unfortunately, only the first part and what appears to be a few additional pages from later on in the talk were actually transcribed (at Daniells's request). At the outset of the meeting Daniells stated that he had intended to gather statements to use for his talk that evening, but had been unable to do that because of a commitment to speak at the funeral of a friend earlier that day. He was also defensive about those who accused him of being "shaky" about his confidence in the writings of Ellen G. White.¹

Daniells's remarks, although brief, were based chiefly on his personal experience with Ellen White. He had first met James and Ellen White in Texas in 1879, and came to

¹RBC, July 16, 1919, 942-43, 949.

know her even better from 1892 to 1900 in Australia and New Zealand. Yet it was his personal experience with Ellen White during the conflict with Dr. J. H. Kellogg (resulting in Kellogg's departure from the church in 1907) that "stood out above all the rest" and bound him in "everlasting loyalty to that gift that God placed in the church."¹

It seems presumable² that the rest of the talk that evening centered upon his personal experience with Ellen White as the foundation for his own confidence in her. Daniells served as chairman of the Board of Trustees that managed the Ellen G. White Estate and in his retirement wrote a book defending her prophetic life and ministry. Whatever it was that Daniells spoke about, it would be the catalyst for the question-and-answer session he had with the teachers on July 30 and August 1. Both of these meetings appeared to be a direct response to issues he raised on July 16, two weeks earlier.

The "Round-Table Talk"

The most extensive discussion about the use of Ellen White's writings is recorded in the penultimate transcript of the extant records documenting the continued Bible and history teachers' meetings. Of the original sixty-five individuals present for the overall meeting, only eighteen are known to have been present during this particular meeting.³

¹RBC, July 16, 1919, 944.

²Unfortunately the rest of the talk is not extant, but several references to the talk and his sharing from his heart lend support to the probability that the talk largely centered upon his own personal interactions with Ellen G. White.

³W. E. Howell, chairman; E. F. Albertsworth, J. N. Anderson, C. L. Benson, C. P. Bollman, L. L. Caviness, A. G. Daniells, T. M. French, H. C. Lacey, W. W. Prescott, C. A. Shull, C. M. Sorenson, C. L. Taylor, W. H. Wakeham, N. J. Waldorf, F. M. Wilcox, Mrs. [F. H.] Williams, and W. G. Wirth.

The meeting was chaired by W. E. Howell, who invited General Conference president A. G. Daniells to speak about “The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Teaching of Bible and History.” At the outset of the meeting Daniells stated that he would “prefer a round-table talk” to accommodate questions and would then respond to the teachers’ questions. But before he took the first question, he commented on two general areas.¹

Daniells prefaced his first area of concern to the teachers by stating that he did “not want to create doubts” in the minds of those who were present. While some things are hard to understand, he had personally received testimonies from Ellen White. At times these were difficult for even him to accept. The overall tone for the first few minutes of his talk appears to have been somewhat defensive² as he responded to criticisms that he had undermined the writings of Ellen G. White in some way. He attributed these criticisms to his taking a different position than others in the denomination, particularly when he had to confront A. T. Jones and Dr. J. H. Kellogg at the beginning of his

¹RBC, July 30, 1919, 1187.

²Daniells: “What I want to know is this, brethren: Does my position appear to be of such a character that you would be led to think I am shaky? [Voices: No!] If you think it, just say it right out! I do not want to do that, but I have to be honest,-I can not camouflage in a thing like this. I have stood through it about forty years unshaken, and I think it is a safe position; but if I were driven to take the position that some do on the Testimonies, I would be shaken. [Voice: That’s right!] I would not know where to stand, for I can not say that white is black and black is white” (RBC, July 30, 1919, 1211). In the follow-up session Daniells appears to have continued to be self-conscious about his critics: “I know it is reported around that some of us men here at Washington, in charge of the general administrative work, are very shaky and unbelieving, but I want to tell you that I know better. I know that my associates have confidence right down on the solid platform of this whole question; and I know that if many of you had gone at this thing and experienced what we have, you would have passed through an experience that would have given you solid ground.” RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1255.

presidency. Jones and Kellogg had fought Daniells for control of the church in a power struggle that began in the 1890s and culminated in 1907 when Jones, Kellogg, and their allies became alienated from the denomination. Daniells noted that during this struggle “a man” [A. T. Jones]¹ on the nominating committee wanted Daniells kept out of the presidency because Daniells “did not believe the Testimonies were verbally inspired.”² Later in this talk, Daniells came back to the problematic aspects of A. T. Jones’s view of the nature of inspiration and Ellen White’s writings. Daniells believed that it was his own understanding of inspiration that was the basis for allegations by critics that he undermined the Spirit of Prophecy. Daniells noted that Jones, who held to a verbalist view, would “hang a man on a word” from Ellen White’s writings. He continued:

I have seen him take just a word in the Testimonies and hang to it, and that would settle everything,—just a word. I was with him when he made a discovery,—or, if he didn’t make it, he appeared to make it,—and that was that there were words in the Testimonies and writings of Sister White that God did not order her to put in there, that there were words which she did not put in by divine inspiration, the Lord picking the words, but that somebody had helped to fix that up. And so he took two testimonies and compared them, and he got into great trouble. He [then] went on with Dr. Kellogg, where he could just pick things to pieces.³

¹Daniells later stated: “I must refer again to the attitude of A. T. Jones.” The context makes it clear that Daniells was referring to Jones (RBC, July 30, 1919, 1208).

²RBC, July 30, 1919, 1188-89, 1223. Daniells came back to this point that teachers had two responsibilities. The first was that they had a responsibility not to discount the testimonies by casting doubt on them. “I would never do that, brethren, in the school room. No matter how much I was perplexed, I would never cast a doubt in the mind of a student. I would take hours to explain matters to ground the student in it. Casting doubts and reflections is one way to hurt a student. Another way is to take an extreme and unwarranted position. You can do that and pass it over; but when that student gets out and gets in contact with things, he may be shaken, and perhaps shaken clear out and away. I think we should be candid and honest and never put a claim forth that is not well founded simply to appear to believe.” RBC, July 30, 1919, 1208.

³RBC, July 30, 1919, 1208-09.

A second area of Daniells's concern centered upon the need of the church to focus its attention differently in how it presented the gift of prophecy. He was particularly concerned about some in the past who emphasized "physical and outward demonstrations." He was especially concerned about the story where Ellen White carried a heavy Bible on an outstretched hand. "I do not know whether that was ever done or not. I am not sure. I did not see it. . . . I do not count that sort of thing as a very great proof." He wondered how much of the story was genuine versus what had "crawled into the story."¹ While he believed that supernatural phenomena had accompanied her visions, especially in the early days of the movement, this was not the best proof. The greatest proof of the genuineness of Ellen White's ministry, he opined, was her overall life contribution to the church. This was especially evident in the area of world evangelism, education, medical missions, and her overall spirit of service.²

¹There are as many as five reported instances when Ellen White was said to have held a Bible on her outstretched arm while she was in vision. The first three are: (1) the winter of 1844-1845 at the Harmon home in Portland, Maine, see Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches*, 1880 ed., 195-96; (2) winter of 1845-1846, Otis Nichols's manuscript, n.d., EGWE-GC, Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, 75-79, J. N. Loughborough, *Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1905), 240-44; (3) August 1848, Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches*, 1880 ed., 233-34. In addition, James White writes to Leonard and Elvira Hastings of Ellen White taking "the large Bible" which she "held . . . up before the Lord" (James White to Leonard and Elvira Hastings, Aug. 26, 1848, EGWE-GC). There are two additional possible occurrences referred to by J. N. Loughborough: (4) April 3, 1847, Loughborough, *Great Second Advent Movement*, 244-45; (5) winter of 1844-1845, see Loughborough, *Great Second Advent Movement*, 237-39. For an overview of these five incidents see Roger W. Coon, "Ellen G. White and SDA Doctrine—Part I: God's FIRST Priority in the First 20 Years," April 18, 1995, CAR.

²RBC, July 30, 1919, 1190-93. Clifton Taylor would later come back to this point about "outward manifestations." Daniells reiterated that he did not "disbelieve them" but that they were "not the kind of evidence I would use with students or with unbelievers." Taylor responded: "I agree with that." RBC, July 30, 1919, 1210.

The first group of questions raised by the teachers centered upon the exegetical use of Ellen White's writings. Clifton Taylor, a Bible teacher from Canadian Junior College, posed the first two questions. He wanted to know whether Ellen White's explanations of Scriptural passages were authoritative, and when two students of the Bible differed on a passage whether to bring Ellen White's writings into the matter or leave them out entirely. Daniells responded that he had used Ellen White's writings to elucidate Scripture. Almost as an afterthought, he stated, "The Bible explains itself and must be understood through itself without resorting to the 'Testimonies' [Adventist jargon for Ellen White's writings] to prove it." Daniells alluded to someone who had presented at a General Conference session the idea that the "only way we could understand the Bible was through the writings of the Spirit of prophecy." J. N. Anderson interjected, "He also said 'infallible interpreter.'" It appears that Daniells and Anderson were again alluding to A. T. Jones as the culprit for the problems they were now facing in the denomination with regard to the authority and inspiration of Ellen White's writings. Both C. M. Sorenson and Daniells replied that the inerrancy of her writings was an erroneous position and not the position of the church.¹

A closely related group of questions, similar to those discussed above, centered upon the relationship of Ellen White's writings to the Bible. The earliest pioneers of Adventism claimed that the unique doctrinal beliefs of Adventism did not come from

¹RBC, July 30, 1919, 1194-95. Daniells emphasized: "It [Ellen White's writings as an infallible interpreter] is not our position, and it is not right that the spirit of prophecy is the only safe interpreter of the Bible. That is a false doctrine, a false view." Ibid., 1195.

Ellen White's writings, but instead, came through intense study of the Scriptures.¹ It was crucial, according to Daniells, that Adventists derive their beliefs from the Bible itself, and the Spirit of Prophecy be used to "enlarge our view." Adventists needed to avoid being lazy about studying the Scriptures. "The earnest study of the Bible is the security, the safety of a man."²

The third major area and the general focus of the rest of the meeting was whether Ellen White's writings should be used "to settle historical questions." Daniells's initial response was that Ellen White "never claimed to be an authority on history" or "a dogmatic teacher on theology." She did weave history into her writings. "I have always understood that, as far as she was concerned, she was ready to correct in revision such statements as she thought should be corrected." This part of the discussion diverged into two major areas: Daniells related the "difficulty" the church got into by publishing Ellen White's book *Sketches from the Life of Paul*,³ and Prescott referred to the controversy over the "daily" in Dan 8 in which Ellen White asked that her writings not be used to settle the controversy. Both of these experiences were instructive, they argued, in understanding the nature of inspiration in Ellen White's writings.

¹For an overview of the development of Adventist doctrines and their relationship to the prophetic ministry of Ellen G. White, see Timm, "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages 1844-1863."

²RBC, July 30, 1919, 1196-97.

³F. D. Nichol does not mention any significant difficulty over the publication of *Sketches from the Life of Paul* (see F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1951], 422-25). Daniells sheds some light on a situation that may have been more difficult than what Adventist apologists since 1919 have traditionally asserted.

C. A. Shull pushed Daniells further about Ellen White and historical questions. He brought up two specific examples. First, he cited the *tradition* that the apostle John was thrown into a pot of boiling oil. When he brought this up in the classroom, a student brought out a quote from Ellen White to prove it. Shull asked, “Was she given a divine revelation that John was thrown into a vat of boiling oil?” Second, when the ancient city of Babylon was taken, it was done, according to Ellen White, by “the turning aside of waters.” “Modern scholarship says it was not taken that way.¹ What should be our attitude in regard to such things?”² Other teachers, including F. H. Williams and E. F. Albertsworth, resonated with the point Shull had brought up. Albertsworth in particular noted the problematic aspect of students coming in with Ellen White quotations to settle a particular point.³ Daniells observed that his experience with the “daily” controversy shed further light on this process:

With reference to the historical matter, I cannot say anything more than I have said, that I never have understood that Sister White undertook to settle historical questions. I visited her once over this matter of the “daily,” and I took along with me that old chart [S. N. Haskell’s chart⁴] . . . laid it on her lap, took EW [*Early Writings*], and told her of the controversy. I spent a long time with her. It was one of her days when

¹It appears that Shull must have been referring to some unknown writer(s) (influenced by Wellhausen and the school of the historical critical method) who questioned the veracity of Herodotus and Xenophon’s account of Cyrus diverting the Euphrates River during the capture of Babylon. See: Herodotus *Histories* 1.189-191, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, vii, 5. Some archeologists and historians in the late 20th and early 21st centuries continue to cite Herodotus and Xenophon as the earliest and most reliable sources for describing this historical event even though both accounts occurred several hundred years after the event. Paul Ray, phone interview with the author, July 2006.

²RBC, July 30, 1919, 1204.

³RBC, July 30, 1919, 1205.

⁴Jerry Moon documents the visit. The chart in question was a printing by S. N. Haskell of the 1843 prophetic chart. See Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White*, 423-25.

she was feeling cheery and rested, and so I explained it to her quite fully. I said, “Now here you say that you were shown that the view of the ‘daily’ that the brethren held was correct.” “Now,” I said, “there are two parts here in this ‘daily’ that you quote. One is this period of time, the 2300 years, and the other is what the ‘daily’ itself was.”

I went over with her, and every time, as quick as I would come to that time, she would say, “Why, I know what was shown me, that that period of 2300 days was fixed, and that there would be no definite time after that. The brethren were right when they reached that 1844 date.”

Then I would leave that, and I would go on about this “daily.” “Why,” she said, “Brother Daniells, I do not know what that ‘daily’ is, whether it is paganism or Christ’s ministry. That was not the thing that was shown me.” And she would go into that twilight zone right away. Then when I would come back to the 2300 years, she would straighten right up and say, “That is the thing we never can move away from. I tell you, you never can move away from that 2300 year period. It was shown to me that that was fixed.”

And I believe it was, brethren. You might just as well try to move me out of the world as to try to move me on that question,—not because she says it, but I believe it was clearly shown to her by the Lord. But on this other, when she says she was not shown what the “daily” was, I believe that, and I take “Early Writings” 100% on that question of the “daily,” fixing that period. That is the thing she talks about, and I take the Bible with it, and I take the Bible as to what the “daily” itself is.¹

Historians contradict each other, he observed. Just because we find a problematic statement in the Spirit of Prophecy, this should not “lead us away from the spirit of prophecy.” She never intended her writings to be used in that way. He added:

I do not believe that if Sister White were here to speak to you today, she would authorize you to take a historical fact, supposed to be a fact, that she had incorporated in the book, and put it up against an actual thing in history. We talked with her about that when “Great Controversy” was being revised, and I have letters in my file in the vault there where we were warned against using Sister White as a historian. She never claimed to be that. We were warned against setting up statements found in her writings against the various history that there is on a fact. That is where I stand. I do not have to meet it with students, and I do not have to explain myself in a congregation. I suppose I have it easier than you teachers do.²

¹RBC, July 30, 1919, 1206-07. Daniells’s reference to the “twilight zone” was an obvious recognition of her advanced age and accompanying mental decline.

²RBC, July 30, 1919, 1207.

If two historians of equal value contradict each other, he noted, the proper thing to do is to “bring up the authority that is in harmony with what we have.”¹ When recently discovered facts do arise, the thing that is important is that “she never put infallibility into the historical quotations.”²

On Thursday, July 24, Lacey gave a presentation on “The Aim, Scope, and Content of our College Bible Studies.” In this presentation he called for the college Bible department to become much stronger intellectually. He also recommended that Bible teachers cover a number of specific areas. Most significant to this discussion on Ellen White, he recommended that they cover the “inspiration of the Bible.” He clarified his view of the relationship of Ellen White’s writings to those of the Bible: “The word of God is different from anything else. It is different from the Testimonies. It is verbally inspired, and the Testimonies are not, and do not claim to be, but the Bible does.”³

William G. Wirth agreed with Lacey that the problem was that there were some who did understand her writings to be infallible with regard to historical quotations. Although the “progressives” were united on the non-inerrancy of Ellen White’s writings, Lacey’s position indicates that there was diversity about how they viewed the inspiration of the Bible.

Lacey furthermore affirmed Daniells’s earlier comments that “its [Ellen White’s writings] value” is “more in the spiritual light it throws into our hearts and lives than in

¹RBC, July 30, 1919, 1208.

²RBC, July 30, 1919, 1212.

³RBC, July 24, 1919, 1175.

the intellectual accuracy in historical and theological matters. . . . Isn't the final proof of the spirit of prophecy its spiritual value rather than its historical accuracy?" Daniells responded to his own question: "Yes, I think so." Lacey suggested that the church should produce a pamphlet that addressed this issue in a "simple" and "straight-forward style." Others objected that their enemies "would publish it everywhere." Wirth opined, "I wish you general men would get something for us, because we [the teachers] are the ones that suffer." Daniells, always the consummate administrator, suggested that the General Conference Committee look into the matter, and that it seemed that it was important to have agreement among history and Bible teachers on the nature of inspiration in relationship to Ellen White's writings. Several more requests were made for such a statement on inspiration. Nothing appears to have happened because of this request. Perhaps it was simply too controversial for church administrators to probe.¹

The last major area of discussion in this session related to questions about health reform. This appears to have been an area with which Daniells was comfortable. He related the story of a colporteur who was living in northern Scandinavia and who was trying to take Ellen White's counsels about health as a "blanket regulation" for what he should do. He did this partially by trying to maintain a vegetarian diet where fresh fruits and vegetables were scarce, if available at all. When Daniells met him at a workers meeting, he was white as a ghost. "I went at him with all the terror I could inspire for

¹RBC, July 30, 1919, 1213-14. William G. Wirth affirmed a second time that such a statement was needed or he would be discredited when he returned home and presented such a view of inspiration. W. E. Howell, chairman of this session, recommended that the teachers really needed something that the teachers could have in their hands that was a "true representation of the matter." *Ibid.*, 1215.

such foolishness,” Daniells said. “When I got back to this country [the United States] I talked with Sister White about it, and she said, ‘Why don’t the people use common sense?’” Daniells emphasized that the circumstances of both the writer and the original application of the “testimony” were needed in order to understand and apply health reform properly. “Sister White was never a fanatic, she was never an extremist. She was a level-headed woman. She was well-balanced.” Ellen White wrote testimonies that applied to individuals in various states of health. This did not, for Daniells, destroy the force of the message except for the “extremists”¹ who either distorted her meaning or did not recognize its historical context.²

At the conclusion of this session Howell summarized that Daniells and Prescott had spoken “very frankly” with the teachers about the use of Ellen White’s writings. Of course, there had not been time to cover everything. “They have not withheld from you anything that you have asked for that they could give you in reference to this matter.” Howell encouraged those present to help in “setting people straight on these things” and counteracting those who said that Daniells and Prescott did not believe in the Spirit of Prophecy. Several more calls, this time by educators C. L. Benson and T. M. French, again reiterated the need for a general statement on the authority of Ellen White’s writings so as to not put teachers in an awkward position with what was being taught in the field.³

¹“Extremists” is a term used by Adventists to describe those who have taken extreme positions with regard to the Bible or the writings of Ellen G. White.

²RBC, July 30, 1919, 1216-22.

³RBC, July 30, 1919, 1224-25.

Additional Questions About Inspiration

The answers to questions conferees had asked on Wednesday, July 30, 1919, apparently did not satisfy the teachers who were present that day. On August 1, Daniells continued the discussion in the same format as before: “a kind of round-table . . . to study things together.” This time there were seventeen individuals known to have been present.¹ Daniells noted that he had “protested” against taking such a heavy topic the other day and that what he really wanted to discuss was some thoughts he had about pastoral training. But, he had returned and was willing to hear further questions if it was the wish of the conference.²

Daniells began his remarks by noting that there were two views in Christendom regarding the verbal inspiration of the Bible. One view held that Bible writers were allowed to state the truth as best they could; the other was a word-for-word inspiration or revelation. Daniells observed that men on both sides were honest and sincere, and had their followers with them right there at the educational portion of the Conference. Howell asked Daniells to direct his remarks to the relationship of Ellen White’s writings to the Bible, thus diverting Daniells from the topic of ministerial training.³

The central question of this discussion was posed by C. L. Benson, at that time assistant secretary (director) of the General Conference Education Department. He argued

¹W. E. Howell, chairman; J. N. Anderson, C. L. Benson, C. P. Bollman, A. G. Daniells, B. L. House, M. E. Kern, D. A. Parsons, W. W. Prescott, C. A. Shull, C. M. Sorenson, C. L. Taylor, G. B. Thompson, W. H. Wakeham, N. J. Waldorf, F. M. Wilcox, and F. H. Williams.

²RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1227-28.

³RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1228-29.

that if there were historical uncertainties with regard to a traditional Adventist interpretative position, and if the “testimonies” were not to be relied on to throw light on historical positions (and if by extension the same were true for theological interpretations), then how could they “place implicit confidence in the direction” that she gave with regard to the church’s educational system, especially its medical school, and on the structure of the church? “Do we consistently lay aside or partially lay them aside when it comes to [the] prophetic and historic side of things?”¹

At first, Daniells attempted to dodge the question. “Shall we consider some points settled, and pass on?” But the conferees would not let him off the hook that easily. “I think we could argue about the inspiration of the Bible—I was going to say till doomsday—till the end, and not come to the same view, . . . and all get to the same place at last.” With the writings of Ellen G. White: “I think more mischief can be done with the Testimonies by claiming their verbal inspiration than can [be done] with the Bible.” By making this statement Daniells did not necessarily endorse the verbal inspiration of the Bible. “It is no kind of use for anybody to stand up and talk about the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, because everybody who has ever seen the work done knows better, and we might as well dismiss it.”²

M. E. Kern probed Daniells. He was not so sure “that we are all agreed on this question.” Kern wished that they could “get down to bedrock” on this issue. A certain Thompson suggested that they were encountering this problem because of “wrong

¹RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1230-31.

²RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1233-34.

education.” “If we had always taught the truth on this question, we would not have any trouble or shock in the denomination now. But the shock is because we have not taught the truth, and have put the Testimonies on a plane where she says they do not stand. We have claimed more for them than she did.”¹

At this point in the “round-table” discussion, Daniells stated that he did not “know where to begin or what to say.” The primary difficulty in the church, he believed, was tied to two areas: infallibility and verbal inspiration (inerrancy). He noted that even James White, who died in 1881, had foreseen this problem and tried to correct it because he himself had corrected her writings. “If that explanation had been accepted and passed on down, we would have been free from a great many perplexities that we have now.” Thus, the issues they were facing about inspiration were primarily an issue about how to communicate an accurate understanding of the process of inspiration to church members. There were some, both young and old, who believed she was “word-inspired” and “infallible.”

I suppose some people would feel that if they did not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, they could not have confidence in it. . . . I am sure there has been advocated an idea of infallibility in Sister White and verbal inspiration in the Testimonies that has led people to expect too much and to make too great claims, and so we have gotten into difficulty.²

Daniells speculated that even the charge that she plagiarized could have been avoided, if from the very beginning “we had understood this thing as it should have been.” Ellen White never claimed verbal inspiration. “I will say no more along that line.”³

¹RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1238-39.

²RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1241.

³RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1242-43.

The discussion then switched to the infallibility of Ellen White. Daniells asked that as a messenger of the Lord, was there not a chance for the manifestation of the human? “Then aren’t we prepared to see mistakes?” he asked. Continuing, he took the book *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, with the claims of plagiarism that had been made against it. He had read the book with E. R. Palmer and compared it with the work of Conybeare and Howson as well as with Wylie’s *History of the Reformation*, two reference works that within Adventist circles were well known as having been recommended by Ellen White. Both volumes were in Ellen White’s library and referenced by her in her writings. “The poor sister [Ellen White] said, ‘Why, I didn’t know about quotations and credits. My secretary should have looked after that, and the publishing house should have looked after it.’ There I saw the manifestation of the human in these writings.” Daniells did not know who the secretary was, but the book was set aside and he never did find out who had a hand in fixing that mess up.¹

There were additional illustrations of changes in Ellen White’s books. In *Sketches from the Life of Paul* she had written about the ceremonial law, but in the new edition [*Acts of the Apostles*] this was left out. D. A. Parsons, a conference president who had worked in the publishing house, responded. He stated that this change was intended to prevent a renewal of controversy on the topic.² Daniells added that he did not think that educator Benson’s question on historical and theological matters had been dealt with yet. Daniells excused himself on the grounds that he was not responsible for these historical

¹RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1243-44.

²RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1246.

and theological difficulties because the “General Conference men did not create it.” He had not called for the revision or taken any part in it. “It was all done under her supervision.” Furthermore, she never claimed that she was a historian. “She was not a correcter [*sic*] of history. She had people gather the very best historical statements and she approved them.”¹

It was Ellen White’s philosophy of history, according to C. M. Sorenson, and not the details that were important. Minor details, he added, might come into question, but it was Ellen White’s overall philosophy of history that showcased God’s hand in human affairs that was important. The real danger in using this explanation, Prescott observed, was when people began to divine for themselves what was authoritative and what was not. This was a problem he had had to confront with A. R. Henry, who was the Review and Herald publishing house manager from 1886 to 1897.

He [Henry] brought up this question about the authority of the spirit of prophecy and wanted me to draw the line between what was authoritative and what was not. I said, “Brother Henry, I will not attempt to do it, and I advise you not to do it. There is an authority in that gift here, and we must recognize it.”²

Prescott furthermore felt that great mistakes had been made for years in handling Ellen White’s writings for commercial purposes. He felt that mistakes were made in compiling her books from things she had written previously. Statements made by Ellen White could then be taken out of context.

¹RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1247-48.

²RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1252.

C. A. Shull asked Prescott, if his judgment conflicted with the Spirit of Prophecy, would he pursue his own judgment? Prescott replied, “No.” Daniells came to Prescott’s defense asking that no one was to say a word that would “misrepresent Brother Prescott.”

In concluding, Daniells remarked to Prescott that “we have made a wonderful change in nineteen years.” “Fifteen years ago we could not have talked [about] what we are talking here today. It would not have been safe.” Issues related to inspiration and Ellen White had come up gradually in the church. The evidence was that the confidence of church members in the inspiration of Ellen White’s writings was not diminishing.¹ He encouraged the teachers who were present to use care and common sense as they taught in the classroom.²

Summary

By July 16, 1919 (approximately halfway through the conference), A. G. Daniells realized the necessity of speaking about the inspiration and authority of Ellen G. White’s writings. This need had arisen partially because of historical difficulties that conferees had encountered in Ellen White’s writings and discussed at length on July 10, 1919. Daniells was defensive because he had been portrayed or perceived (presumably prior to and not during the Conference) as undermining the gift of prophecy. He felt that if those present knew his experience, they would see that this could not be true.

¹Daniells noted that 5,000 sets of *Testimonies* had been sold the year before the conference. He saw this as an indication of Adventists’ “confidence” in and “friendly attitude” toward Ellen White.

²RBC, Aug. 1, 1919, 1257.

Daniells's testimony was obviously not enough to settle questions that arose as a result of these first two discussions about Ellen White. W. E. Howell, chair of the teachers' meetings, invited him to come back twice to directly address questions that these educators had about the nature and authority of Ellen White's writings. These questions, addressed to Daniells, covered a wide range of issues that centered upon the nature and authority of her writings. Daniells averred that Ellen White was not a historian and that the greatest proof of the genuineness of her prophetic calling was in her overall life and ministry.

The discussions about inspiration show that there were two contrasting positions held at the time of the Conference. The first position was that of the self-styled "progressives" who knew from personal experience that Ellen White's writings were not infallible (as indicated by the repeated discussions about the historical accuracy of her writings). They did, however, hold varying views among themselves about what "verbal inspiration" meant to the Bible. While not all were agreed that "verbal inspiration" meant "inerrancy," Lacey seemed to differentiate between the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy regarding the nature of inspiration. Thus in comparing the "progressives" versus the "traditionalists," their main disparity concerned the verbal inspiration of Ellen White's writings. A second group of conferees, who were much younger and had not worked closely with Ellen White, were teaching that Ellen White's writings were verbally inspired. Such individuals agreed with "traditionalists" such as J. S. Washburn and Claude Holmes who, although not present at the Conference, regarded the writings of Ellen White as infallible and equal to the Scriptures. Lacey, even though he was a "progressive," appears to have been a minority because he took a "verbal inspiration"

stance toward the Bible, thereby indicating that the primary issue between the two camps was the two different approaches to the writings of Ellen G. White.

In recognizing two approaches to the inspiration of Ellen White's writings, several teachers called upon Daniells and church leaders to publish a pamphlet that would clarify issues. They were especially aware, according to W. E. Howell, that they would have to go back to the field and confront these issues. Daniells, as an administrator, was sensitive to this need and suggested that a committee be appointed to look into the issue. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the General Conference Committee ever considered the issue.

The most basic hermeneutical issue raised during the 1919 Bible Conference was the relationship between the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. The dynamics of this relationship lay at the heart of many of the hermeneutical issues. The majority of conferees seemed to sense that there was a difference between the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White. H. C. Lacey stated that the "word of God" is "different from the Testimonies. It is verbally inspired, and the Testimonies are not, and do not claim to be, but the Bible does."¹

Conclusions

The discussions at the 1919 Bible Conference revealed that there were two hermeneutical schools of interpretation represented in 1919. Both schools of thought utilized the tools of biblical languages, dictionaries, and commentaries. In addition, they recognized the importance of scholarly preparation (research) and the need of principles

¹RBC, July 24, 1919, 1175.

for interpreting the Bible. It seemed that there was general agreement that a deeper study of God's Word would unite them. Yet in spite of cordial dialogue and heated debate, two schools of thought became evident.

The "progressives" emphasized the historical context of both the Bible and Ellen White's statements. The meaning of an event was more important than the validation of a historical date. Inspired writings should interpret themselves, and proof-texting should be avoided. They were willing to revise traditional Adventist interpretations to reflect the best historical research and still be in harmony with the Bible. The "progressives" believed that the word of God was "verbally inspired" but they were not tied to inerrancy. This gave them more flexibility in the formation of their hermeneutics. It gave them, for example, more flexibility in understanding whether the 1260-day prophecy began in 533 or 538. It was not the date so much as what happened after the date that was truly important for them. Their hermeneutical approach focused on the latest historical research (which questioned the established date), and more importantly, the meaning of the words that identified what it was that had occurred.

A second hermeneutical school of thought tended to see the Bible and Ellen White's writings as of equal authority, and both "verbally inspired." Although not as obvious, there were signs that not everyone agreed with the majority view (thought inspiration) and that there were at least some who equated "verbal inspiration" with inerrancy. This school of thought tended to appeal more to Adventist tradition, and was skeptical about whether the new views that the "progressives" espoused were truly biblical. They saw themselves as continuing a rich heritage of prophetic interpretation dating back to Uriah Smith, William Miller, and others who had laid a solid foundation with their view of the "daily." This group appeared to take a more literalist approach to

Scripture, and anyone who questioned well-established prophetic dates risked undermining the validity of Adventist eschatology. In supporting their cause they frequently appealed to the geographic location as a way to settle problematic issues.

What divided the “progressives” and “traditionalists” were the presuppositions through which they approached Scripture. Actually, the two groups agreed on most of their presuppositions. Both groups believed in genuine predictive prophecy, the historicity of biblical miracles, the virgin birth, bodily resurrection and ascension of Christ, His literal second coming, etc. In polemic against modernists, both groups held that the Scripture was “verbally inspired.” The progressives, however, while they believed in the infallibility of Scripture, when taken as a self-interpreting whole, would not hold that Scripture was inerrant in every chronological, numerical, historical, or linguistic detail. This made them less dogmatic about those details, and more willing to question established dates in Adventist prophetic interpretation. To the “traditionalists,” this flexibility was a cause for serious concern. The “traditionalists” presupposed that Scripture was inerrant in every detail. Therefore they believed in a very literal reading of Scripture—that it should be taken at face value and not questioned. As a result the “traditionalists” vigorously defended these dates. The extant discussions show the hermeneutic of the “progressives” much more than that of the “traditionalists,” but based upon what does exist it is clear that traditionalists appealed to geographic location and the existence of other historical evidence that validated their already established positions.

Overall, both views were represented at the 1919 Bible Conference, although figures such as Daniells, Prescott, and Lacey certainly dominated the discussions. There appears to have been a common conviction that Adventist theology would not lose anything by a careful investigation of the reasons why Adventists held the beliefs that

they did. After all, Adventists were a people of *the book*, the Bible, and a careful investigation would lead them only into a deeper understanding of truth.

The testimonies of conferees at the end of the main Bible Conference indicated that they had generally cordial attitudes. Despite this, disagreements did occur. Strong personalities such as Prescott could be a formidable force to contend with. In the end, it was clear that “a large number of difficult questions” involving differences of opinion had been discussed. The number of disputed points could at times seem rather overwhelming. More than once during the Conference Daniells remarked that he wished he could “send the King of the North and the two-horned beast together up in a balloon.” These topics made his head “whirl” until he was tired of the interpretative disagreements.¹

¹RBC, July 17, 1919, 996-98.

CHAPTER 5

PARTING SHOTS: FROM SCHOLARLY DEBATE TO PEDAGOGICAL APPLICATION

Introduction

. Although the Conference was primarily a “Bible Conference,” it was also an “Educational Council” designed with pedagogical implications. Educators at the Conference brought an educational focus to the discussions, and even presenters such as church administrator and former college president W. W. Prescott reinforced their points by illustrating how they would teach (or not teach) students in the classroom. As theological or pedagogical topics were raised, participant educators considered their impact once they returned to their respective classrooms.

In 1919 Adventist education was going through a critical formative period. Founded in 1874, after several previous attempts had been made to start small church schools, Battle Creek College at first modeled the classical curriculum of other schools. Adventist education developed a more distinctively *Adventist* focus during the 1890s (following the General Conference session of 1888). A crucial event was the Harbor Springs Convention (1891) during which a conscious attempt was made to shift the curricular emphasis from the Greek and Latin “classics” to Christ and the Bible. During the 1890s Adventist elementary education grew exponentially. Growth continued until by

1919 there were approximately 3,000 students enrolled in colleges with an additional 12,000 students in elementary and secondary schools.¹

From 1900 to 1920, Adventists held four educational councils: in 1906, 1910, 1915, and 1919.² Other significant educational gatherings included the educational consultations that were held in conjunction with the 1909, 1913, and 1918 General Conference sessions.³ These meetings served two purposes: to provide continuing education for Adventist educators and to develop distinctly Adventist curriculum materials. Such educational meetings have continued to be sponsored by the denomination up to the present.⁴ At the 1919 Bible Conference, Howell proposed that the General Conference education department sponsor an educational council every summer—a tradition that educators affirmed as an opportunity for them to discuss problems they faced.⁵

¹RBC, July 1, 1919, 24. For an overview of the development of Adventist education, see Floyd Greenleaf, *In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2005); *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Harbor Springs Convention.”

²*Council Proceedings of the Joint Council of the Educational and Missionary Volunteer Departments of the North American Division Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Held at Pacific Union College, St. Helena, Calif., June 4 to 14, 1915* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915); *Convention of the Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Held at Berrien Springs, Mich., June 10 to 20, 1910* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1910).

³W. E. Howell, “The Department of Education Report,” *RH*, Dec. 23, 1920, 21-23.

⁴The most recent educational “council” was the North American Division Teachers’ Convention held in Nashville, Tennessee, August 5-8, 2006.

⁵RBC, July 1, 1919, 25.

In 1909 the General Conference Department of Education began a journal to help facilitate communication.¹ Early secretaries (directors) of the department included H. R. Salisbury (1910-1913), J. L. Shaw (1913-1915), Frederick Griggs (1915-1918), and W. E. Howell (1918-1930). Howell had previously served as principal of the Fireside Correspondence School (1909-1914, today known as Griggs University) and then as assistant secretary of the Education Department. Although Howell had participated in the 1910 and 1915 educational councils, the 1919 meeting represented his first opportunity to be in charge of an educational meeting.²

Almost half (44%) of the conferees at the 1919 Bible Conference were Bible and history teachers. Even though the educational council was held during the first part of the Conference, and continued for approximately three weeks afterward, it is the lesser known of the two sections, largely because the bulk of the extant transcripts documents the Bible Conference.

The teachers' portion of the Conference consisted of evening meetings during the Bible Conference (July 1-19) and extended meetings afterward (July 20-August 9). Only fourteen talks are documented from the evening meetings. During the extended meetings the afternoons were reserved for research, so there were not as many meetings to record. Despite this, twelve talks are extant from the extended meetings: five are by W. E.

¹The journal was originally titled *The Christian Educator* (1909-1922). The name has changed several times through the years; since 1964 it has been published by the General Conference Education Department as *The Journal of Adventist Education*.

²*The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. s.v. "Warren Eugene Howell." For a comprehensive treatment see John Francis Waters, "Warren Eugene Howell: Seventh-day Adventist Educational Administrator" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1988).

Howell on teaching, two are discussions with A. G. Daniells about the Spirit of Prophecy, an additional talk by Daniells was on pastoral training, two were on historical methods and research (E. F. Albertsworth and C. L. Benson), and two were by W. W. Prescott about teaching Bible and history. Although the transcripts are not extensive, there were three significant areas that were discussed: philosophy of education, ministerial education, and teaching history.

Philosophy of Education

A distinctly *Adventist* philosophy of education was being refined during the 1910s. This is particularly evident in the talks by Howell, educational secretary for the General Conference, and Prescott, church leader and former college president. Together they provide insight into the development of their educational philosophy.

Howell on Adventist Education

The series of five talks by Howell focused primarily on teaching as a spiritual gift. Unfortunately, the transcript of Howell's first talk was borrowed by A. G. Daniells and apparently never returned. The remaining four talks reveal insights about Howell's philosophy of education. Teaching was so important in the spreading of the gospel that it was "indispensable to make effective such other gifts as that of preaching." Clearly, for Howell, Adventist education was intended to advance the mission of the church.

On Monday, July 21, 1919, he showcased the teaching ministry of Jesus as a model for Adventist teachers. His second model teacher was Ellen G. White, who had died only four years earlier. "What a wonderful teacher was she," remarked Howell. Unfortunately he did not get into specifics about what made her a great teacher. It is interesting that Howell did not discuss her philosophy or writings about education in great

detail. This was perhaps because her life and ministry so dominated the thinking of Howell that her ministry warranted comparison next to Christ as the model teacher.

Howell maintained that teaching is a spiritual gift and that there are certain qualifications that show a “fitness to teach.” Prominent among the qualifications he identified were self-restraint and being motivated by the love of Christ. Teaching needed to move beyond mere instruction into actual modeling on the part of the teacher to the students. Thus, for Howell, the best way to develop students into the right kind of teachers was for teachers to *be* the right kind of teachers themselves.¹ Howell was not prescriptive about how this was to be accomplished. Instead, he left it to other educators to examine what this would mean for ministerial education and for the teaching of history.

During his third and fourth devotionals on teaching Howell continued to explore the question: What does it mean to have the spiritual gift of teaching? He highlighted the qualities of compassion and humility and called teachers to be filled with the Holy Spirit and the peace that comes through the indwelling of Jesus.² During Howell’s fifth devotional period, he returned to the theme of Christ, the master teacher, and that “we are [the] underteachers.” “We teach Christ effectively only as we live Christ.” According to Howell, this gift required spiritual discernment that culminated in three “burdens”: the Word, the works, and the ways of God. Having a “pure gospel” led to a “pure purpose” in teaching. Adventist educators needed to be true to their divine calling.³ Therefore,

¹W. E. Howell, “The Divine Call to Teach,” RBC, July 21, 1919, 1109-16.

²RBC, July 22, 1919, 1133-58.

³RBC, July 24, 1919, 1159-63.

Adventist educators were to be a unique group who modeled their ministry after the teaching ministry of Jesus. The gift of teaching was a spiritual gift that was manifested in spiritual fruits, which in turn were modeled to students in the classroom. Howell recognized the limitations of Adventist education at that time but left it to others, most notably Prescott, to apply this philosophy to specific areas.¹

Howell's talks were essentially an appeal for Adventist educators to commit themselves more fully to the spiritual gift of teaching. In essence, Howell was an evangelist for Adventist education. Like an evangelist making an appeal, he called for those present to recognize the spiritual dimension of the work they were called to perform.

Prescott and Lacey on Teaching the Bible and Ellen White

The devotionals by Prescott covered a wide range of issues. It does not appear that Prescott was present every day for the teachers' council after the close of the formal Bible Conference. A recurring theme throughout his presentations during the entire Bible Conference, and especially the presentations he gave during the educational council, was the denomination's need for a Christ-centered theology. This Christ-centered focus needed to be the center of Adventist curriculum. Adventist schools, he argued, should be essentially *Bible* schools. His comparisons to the work of other Fundamentalists suggests that Prescott would like to have seen Adventists schools become more like the Fundamentalist schools that were burgeoning during this period. Religion, if taught

¹RBC, July 25, 1919, 1181b-86.

properly, should have a converting influence in the classroom.¹ “It is not enough to talk about Christ,” spoke Prescott. “We must be in that personal relationship with him that will enable us to bring him [Christ] to them [our students].” This theory was not to be merely an abstraction:

I am speaking now especially with reference to teaching Bible in the school. I think the great thing in the Bible teaching in our schools is that the whole field of necessary truth shall be covered in preaching Christ in person—a personal Christ. As I said yesterday morning, I am hoping that if there is anything at all to this ideal we are dealing with now, it shall have influence upon our method of Bible teaching in our schools.²

The most extensive talk about teaching Bible was by H. C. Lacey on July 24, 1919.³ He made an appeal that the Bible department should be the strongest intellectual department in the college. While it was true that Bible classes should be spiritual, he advised that teachers needed more than “a passive, devotional attitude.” He shared from his own teaching experience how a group of critical students often challenged him about his beliefs. He “faced them all and answered them, not trying to hide anything. There was no bluffing.” Lacey shared how this approach built up the faith of one of his students. He summarized his point:

I do think we ought to be careful not to displace the spirit of active, penetrating study and inquiry, not to try to cover it up and crowd it out by that of a passive spirituality or devotion. I do not think the College Bible class ought to be placed where we hide our head in the sand and refuse to look at things. There might be cases where the class

¹RBC, July 3, 1919, 127-28. For an overview of the Fundamentalist Bible School movement see Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God’s Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990).

²RBC, July 3, 1919, 124.

³RBC, July 24, 1919, 1164-81.

could profitably be turned into a testimony meeting or a prayer meeting. I would not suggest anything against that; but the college Bible class is for study.¹

A closely related appeal that Lacey made in conjunction with the need for making the Bible department the strongest department in the college was to have the Bible teacher be the “most thoroughly qualified” and “most highly educated man on the faculty.” Such a person needed to have the attitude of a constant learner. It also helped if he or she knew “the word of God in the original tongues.”² The person needed to be a well-rounded individual familiar with both science and history, and furthermore be “open-minded,” getting “all the light he can” from these subjects and realizing that he cannot “confine himself to the written word [Scripture].” And last but not least, such a teacher should also “be a skillful master in the use of the English tongue.”³ Lacey clearly had high standards for the college Bible department, which necessitated having quality teachers.

Although the topic of inspiration and authority emerged out of the main Bible Conference, it is clear that the teachers present were concerned about the importance of teaching a section on the life and ministry of Ellen G. White as part of the religion curriculum. During the meetings it was noted that both Bible and history teachers taught on the life and writings of Ellen White. The minutes recorded that at some point during

¹RBC, July 24, 1919, 1170.

²A number of those present, as pointed out in chapter 3, were familiar with biblical languages. In defending his position, Lacey noted that he expected “a good many” to “oppose” him in this position. “I did not say a master of the original tongues,” he added, “but a student of them. If the Spirit of God has seen fit to give us the Scriptures in those sacred tongues, then we are going contrary to His providences when we absolutely ignore them, and refuse to take the time and expend the effort necessary to get down to the embodiment of the thought of God as He originally gave it.” RBC, July 24, 1919, 1171.

³Ibid., 1172.

the 1919 Bible Conference it was decided to devote one semester of Bible (out of eight) to educating students about White's life and ministry. This appears to have been the first time that the study of Ellen White was formally recommended for Adventist college curricula.¹

Lacey and Prescott applied Howell's objectives of creating an Adventist curriculum by looking at the place of Bible in an Adventist curriculum. An Adventist curriculum needed qualified Bible teachers and an adequate amount of time that included at least one Bible course per semester that a student was in school. The curriculum should be Christ-centered and build confidence in the life and ministry of Ellen G. White. A second area of discussion was the topic of history and its inclusion in an Adventist curriculum.

The Denomination's First Academic Historians Articulate a Philosophy for Teaching History

Church historian George R. Knight, in his recent collection of essays entitled *If I Were the Devil*, applies sociologist David Moberg's five stages of the organizational life cycle to Adventism. He labels the stages as: (1) incipient organization; (2) formal organization; (3) maximum efficiency; (4) institutionalization; and (5) disintegration. Knight suggests that the Seventh-day Adventist Church entered stage three at the 1901 General Conference Session. It was at this famous meeting that the church was reorganized into its present organizational structure. Knight points to the arrival of "apologists" and "historians" as an example of the church's arrival at stage three

¹For a fuller discussion about teaching the life and ministry of Ellen G. White, see chapter 4, pp. 136-61.

(“maximum efficiency”). He goes on to list examples of these “apologists” and “historians” with such names as J. N. Loughborough, M. E. Olsen, A. W. Spalding, L. E. Froom, and F. D. Nichol. While many of these writers are well recognized for their apologetic literature, conventional historiography points to the rise of a professional contingent of Adventist historians in the 1970s. Historian Gary Land traces an earlier awakening of Adventist scholarship during the 1950s, and even earlier to the work of Everett Dick who completed his dissertation on William Miller in 1930.¹

The Forgotten Generation

The application by Knight of Moberg’s five principles suggests that there might have been an earlier generation of Adventist historians who existed in the early twentieth century. As described by Knight, this generation might include more than writers such as J. N. Loughborough (1832-1924) and L. E. Froom (1890-1974), who are best known for their apologetic works (*Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists* [1892], *The Great Second Advent Movement* [1905], and *Movement of Destiny* [1971]).²

¹George R. Knight, *If I Were the Devil: Seeing Through the Enemy’s Smokescreen: Contemporary Challenges Facing Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2007), 28-29. For an extended application of Moberg’s theories to Adventism, see: idem, *The Fat Lady and the Kingdom: Confronting the Challenge of Change and Secularization* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1995); Gary Land, “From Apologetics to History: The Professionalization of Adventist Historians,” *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 10 (March 1980): 89-100.

²J. N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists With Tokens of God’s Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Advent Cause from 1831 to 1844* (Battle Creek, MI: General Conference Association of the Seventh-day Adventists, 1892); idem, *The Great Second Advent Movement*; Leroy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny*.

The 1919 Bible Conference provides an excellent window into the development of Adventist historical consciousness. Positioned after the death of Ellen G. White (1915) and World War I (1914-1918) yet before Adventism became pervasively Fundamentalist during the 1920s,¹ this event reveals a small body of Adventist historians who had begun to move beyond apologetics, who sensed a real need for Adventism to become more historically conscious, and who were trained in the critical methods of historical research.

The Teaching of History and Historical Method

The first presentation about teaching history was by W. W. Prescott. At the meeting, July 21, 1919, the Monday after the close of the formal Bible Conference, Prescott used what appeared to be his devotional hour to talk about the relationship between teaching Bible and teaching history. Prescott emphasized that both subjects were part of one great whole—although he stated that “the Bible throws more light on history than history throws on the Bible.” He may have overstated his case somewhat, but his point was that both Bible and history reveal God’s purpose in history. Thus “the Bible and history will complement each other and make a complete whole.”²

¹Seventh-day Adventists during the 1920s viewed themselves as Fundamentalists, and a survey of literature during this period reveals that they only saw two options available to them: Fundamentalism versus modernism. See, Carlyle B. Haynes, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1924); William G. Wirth, *The Battle of the Churches: Modernism or Fundamentalism, Which?* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1924). For an overview, see Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 128-59.

²RBC, July 21, 1919, 1117-32. Prescott added that it was for this reason that both Bible and history teachers needed to be “in the closest contact in their work” with each other (*ibid.*, 1120).

As Prescott developed his ideas, he contrasted his view of providential history from what he felt was a false view of teaching history. History needed to reveal how God was controlling history. It was not “history as an evolution that leads to God, but God in the forefront.” History, properly understood and taught, showed the idea that there was an overall “unity of history under the control of one Will [*sic*].” Prescott’s comments provided a broad rationale for the importance of history in an Adventist curriculum.¹

It would not be until after two undated presentations, presumably later during the teachers’ conference, that a detailed picture was presented for the need of teaching historical method in Adventist schools. The first of these undated presentations was by E. F. Albertsworth, a history teacher at Washington Missionary College. The second one by C. L. Benson, assistant director of the General Conference Education Department, must have occurred some time later because it makes reference to Albertsworth’s talk.

Both Albertsworth and Benson mentioned the training each had obtained in “historical method.” Albertsworth was studying at George Washington University and had recently taken a seminar on historical method at Johns Hopkins University, and now gave the teachers a historiographical overview.

One of the chief problems raised by conferees during Albertsworth’s talk was the inability of teachers to obtain primary sources. Many of the teachers lived at schools far away from large libraries. Albertsworth believed that lack of access to good libraries was the “greatest handicap” teachers faced in using “historical method.” Teachers also needed a knowledge of languages. For example, teachers needed to learn Latin in order to access

¹RBC, July 21, 1919, 1121.

early Christian church primary sources. Albertsworth opined that the church needed specialists who could be sent to Europe to become acquainted with the “great archives.” W. E. Howell pointed to the example of J. N. Andrews who learned languages, did research, and was therefore able to better defend the Adventist view of the Sabbath. “He set a worthy example to our history teachers,” he said. The need for sources was so apparent that C. M. Sorenson proposed a motion that Bible and history teachers take a tour of Rome, Greece, Palestine, and other historical places in two years’ time (i.e., in 1921). It is not clear how traveling to these distant places would have helped them find sources. The motion was “instantly seconded” and “carried unanimously and enthusiastically”—but there is no evidence that such a tour ever took place.

Albertsworth’s overview led to historiography. Beginning with Herodotus, he noted that “men wrote under certain influences.” He noted the contribution of Thucydides whose criterion for truth was contemporary accounts. The list of historians continued through Polybius and Xenophon, then on to Eusebius, the Middle Ages, and up through the Renaissance. Albertsworth realized that historical consciousness had developed over time.

The second division of Albertsworth’s remarks concerned how students could find sources. First, monographs and reference works were a good place for students to begin. Students should be familiar with journals including the *Historical Review*, *English Historical Review*, *American Historical Review*, *Revue Historique*, *Revue des Questions Historiques*, *Yale Review*, and about a dozen additional titles. Students should also be given bibliographies of original sources. These sources could then be located in archives, libraries, and museums.

The third division of Albertsworth's talk concerned the evaluation of sources once the source had been located. Students were to be taught how to evaluate the reliability of a document, by asking such questions as: Does it contradict itself? Was the author an actual witness to the event? How trustworthy was he or she? He suggested several tests for determining reliability. As a general example of bias, Albertsworth referred to the writings of J. H. Merle d'Aubigné whose writings on the Reformation had been used by Adventist writers (most notably by Ellen White) for decades. "I do not suppose any writer was under a greater bias than d'Aubigné," he stated. "We do not see him quoted so much any more." The implication was clear that Adventists could and should use more reliable sources in their construction of history.¹

Benson's talk on "the application of the principles of historic method to our own teaching work" appears to have occurred the following day. "I have thought for a long time" that "research work" is "the weakest place in our denomination." If we are attacked it will not be on the biblical side but on the historical side. In a reference to the recent war in Europe he stated: "We would look worse than some of those buildings over in France."² Students who were trained for ministerial leadership in the denomination should be provided with a scholarly example that would help them find reliable and credible sources for sermon illustrations and avoid making a "hodgepodge of history."³

¹RBC, undated, 1297-98.

²RBC, 1274. The presentations by Benson and Albertsworth are inverted in the transcripts. Internal evidence suggests that Benson's talk occurred after Albertsworth's presentation, possibly a day or two later.

³RBC, undated, 1274-75.

Benson also expressed concern that charges made about alleged historical inaccuracies in *Great Controversy* were taken at face value instead of being investigated. “What right have Seventh-day Adventists to go and change a work like ‘Great Controversy’ merely because some one newspaper makes certain assertions, when we have never exhausted the field?”¹

Benson suggested that the teachers present should make use of the Library of Congress while they were near Washington, D.C. In addition, Adventist teachers needed to work together. They should gather anthologies of primary source documents that emphasized the “critical periods of denomination history.” In that way, he said, teachers could have the “source material,” and any “money spent in accumulating those documents would be money well spent.” In addition, Benson emphasized the hard work that went into historical research. He expressed his longing for Adventist teachers to have the opportunity to do more research, and for a time, eventually, when “some sort of society” of historians could be formed that would “stimulate” cooperative research.² Here Benson was fifty years ahead of his time; a society of Adventist historians would not be formed until the 1970s.³

¹Ibid., 1276.

²RBC, undated, 1278-79.

³The Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians (ASDAH) was formed in 1973. Several Seventh-day Adventist historians who met regularly on an informal basis at the American Historical Association or the Organization of American Historians formed the nucleus for this group. Membership dwindled during the late 1980s. The organization was resurrected in 1994 by Benjamin McArthur who organized the first of a series of triennial meetings that continues to meet up to the present. Gary Land, e-mail to the author, May 10, 2007.

Benson was particularly concerned about the future leadership of the denomination in light of sermons that he listened to in church. We “do not set a good scholarly example [for the future leaders].” He frequently heard sermons where pastors made things up. Parishioners assumed that what the preacher said was always accurate and true. Referring to personal experience, Benson said that when he queried the preacher he frequently received the response that the source was some anonymous work. He challenged his colleagues at the Conference to do original research. Rhetorically he asked how many of the conferees had taken advantage of the opportunity to study at the Library of Congress and “get at original sources?”¹

Benson was careful to temper his comments in light of concerns about “higher criticism.” Because concerns about “higher criticism” had been raised in the 1903-1907 conflict with Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, Benson surmised that Adventists were reluctant to embrace “historical method” for fear that it “belong[ed] to higher criticism.” He assured his colleagues that they could embrace historical method without danger of losing their faith.

Benson encouraged his hearers to study original sources, especially the early Adventist documents. Such research would help to resolve the question of the “shut door” brought against Adventists by their critics. Another example was the famous “Dark Day” (May 19, 1780). Prescott suggested that Ellen White had made a mistake when she wrote that there were no clouds in the sky on the “Dark Day.”² A newspaper was sent in,

¹RBC, 1274.

²What she actually wrote was that the darkness “was not caused by clouds, or the thickness of the atmosphere, for *in some localities* where the darkness extended, the sky was so clear that the stars could be seen” (E. G. White, *Great Controversy Between*

asserted Benson, that disagreed with Ellen White and “we flopped over and took another position.” This was a clear example of the failure of Adventists to do their own original research. “Until we, as a people, have investigated those different sources [primary sources such as newspapers, pamphlets, and memoirs], we are not in a position to say very much about the dark day [*sic*].”¹

The real challenge, as noted previously during Albertsworth’s talk, was the remoteness of Adventist colleges from “big libraries.” Benson was particularly disappointed that Union College’s library acquisitions budget was seven dollars. It is “impossible for our school men to do very much work of this kind until we come in contact with the sources.” These sources were desperately needed for students in the classroom. In addition, a textbook of denominational history was needed. “If we school men don’t do it, can we expect our men in the field to do it?” Ultimately by setting the example, history teachers could help to build confidence in the truths of Adventism and

Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation [Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1888], 306, emphasis supplied). In the 1911 edition she approved of a revision that said:

“An eyewitness living in Massachusetts describes the event as follows: ‘In the morning the sun rose clear, but was soon overcast. The clouds became lowery, and from them, black and ominous, as they soon appeared, lightning flashed, thunder rolled, and a little rain fell. Toward nine o’clock, the clouds became thinner, and assumed a brassy or coppery appearance, and earth, rocks, trees, buildings, water, and persons were changed by this strange, unearthly light. A few minutes later, a heavy black cloud spread over the entire sky except a narrow rim at the horizon, and it was as dark as it usually is at nine o’clock on a summer evening’” (E. G. White, *Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation* [Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911], 306).

¹RBC, 1276-78.

cultivate professionalism that would show itself through improved sermons and representative publications throughout the church.¹

Two Adventist Historians Leave Church Employment

Unfortunately the dreams of Albertsworth and Benson were not fully realized. Seventh-day Adventist history teachers and the use of the “historical method” became especially suspect as Adventism became more Fundamentalist during the 1920s. While all of the reasons for this shift are not fully clear, those who were history teachers appear to have been on the front line of those who were pushed out of the church.

One reason that history teachers might have been targets was that the degrees they earned were from outside institutions. In the escalated tensions due to issues related to accreditation, it is clear that some Adventists, like their Fundamentalist counterparts, were fiercely opposed to advanced degrees from any degree-granting institution that represented infidelity.² It is especially important to emphasize that this shift did not occur in isolation. Fundamentalists had established thirteen Bible colleges that thrived during this period and continue to thrive to the present.³ Adventists reprinted articles in the

¹RBC, 1279.

²Degrees came to symbolize apostasy that was a vestige of allegiance to liberal academics in higher institutions who were dedicated, Fundamentalists surmised, to undermining the authority of the Bible. Within Adventism there was a similar sort of skepticism toward those who received degrees from secular universities. In 1915 E. A. Sutherland wrote that even Adventist institutions that granted degrees were becoming apostate. E. A. Sutherland, *Studies in Christian Education*, reprint ed. (Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, [n.d.]), 137-38.

³Many of them are now universities, such as BIOLA University, formerly the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA).

Review and Herald and other church publications pointing out the dangers of “higher education” and the influence of modernism in worldly schools. The forcefulness of rhetoric by church president A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott at the 1919 Bible Conference is a case in point. At the outset of the meeting they had upheld the Fundamentalist prophetic conferences as a model for the 1919 Bible Conference and declared that Adventists should be doing the work that Fundamentalists were already doing. This attitude of admiration carried over into the educational realm. Daniells was well-known during this time for discouraging promising Adventist young people from pursuing advanced degrees. A notable case is that of William G. Wirth, who would begin graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley, in the fall of 1919. According to Wirth’s grandson-in-law, Daniells that summer labored at length with Wirth, trying to persuade him out of the dangerous notion of higher education.

As part of this Fundamentalist shift within Adventism came a certain militancy characteristic of the wider historical Fundamentalist movement. This militancy is particularly noticeable in such personalities as J. S. Washburn and Claude Holmes who viewed the 1919 Bible Conference as a sellout by church leadership of traditional Adventist positions, most noticeably about the inerrancy of Ellen White’s writings. But both Washburn and Holmes marginalized themselves by their vitriolic attacks. More influential were individuals like B. G. Wilkinson and A. G. Daniells who expressed concerns that some teachers were using books by “infidel authors”—a classic method for attacking individuals deemed to be heterodox.

B. G. Wilkinson, as president of Washington Missionary College, became very concerned about a group of teachers at his school. Wilkinson convened a special meeting that included C. M. Sorenson, H. C. Lacey, E. F. Albertsworth, S. N. Butler¹, Stewart Kime, and F. L. Chaney, who were all called before the Washington Missionary College board in 1920. Part of the problem originated when a group of students testified against Albertsworth, saying that he had used modernist textbooks. He was afterward given an invitation by the General Conference to go as a missionary to China. Albertsworth turned the invitation down, which was effectively the end of his employment in the denomination.

Albertsworth's colleague at the 1919 Bible Conference, C. L. Benson, does not appear to have immediately suffered the same difficulties that Albertsworth had. In addition, other history teachers, especially H. C. Lacey who was prominent at the 1919 Bible Conference and who had also been one of Ellen White's literary assistants, would fall under suspicion.² Lacey was also given an invitation to go as a missionary to China (which he accepted). In the end, Benson's plea that Adventists not associate the virtues of "historical method" with the vices of "higher criticism" does not appear to have succeeded. Both Benson and Albertsworth left denominational employment at some

¹S. N. Butler was an educator at Washington Missionary College and not known to be in attendance at the 1919 Bible Conference.

²Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Columbia Hall, February 20, 1919, 1-2; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Washington Missionary College, February 10-15, 1920, 3-4. I am indebted to Doug Morgan for assistance in locating these records.

unknown point, and there is some indication that both may have left the church completely.¹

Summary

The Seventh-day Adventist Church began to have a sense of historical consciousness during the 1910s that was more than apologetic. This historical consciousness is personified in the lives of C. L. Benson and E. F. Albertsworth who attempted during the 1919 Bible Conference to show the denomination the benefits that the historical method could have in the classroom, which would then benefit future church workers. If Adventists could overcome their tendency to associate the “historical method” with Modernism, they believed, the Adventist message would become more credible and attractive to a society that was becoming all the more discerning.

In examining Adventist historiography it is important not to overlook a generation of Adventist historians who advocated a historical consciousness that predated the career of Everett Dick. C. L. Benson and E. F. Albertsworth should be recognized as two men who were at a critical juncture in denominational history by advocating that the church become more historically conscious. This academic study of history was short lived in 1919. At the 1919 Bible Conference these two historians became particularly noticeable. In these presentations several observations can be noted:

¹No obituary for E. F. Albertsworth appears in any denominational publications. He also does not have any sustentation record or appear in any future editions of the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. In contrast, at least two family members had their obituaries published in major church papers. See, Madeline Albertsworth, Obit., *Pacific Union Recorder*, May 25, 1953; Olga M. Albertsworth, Obit., *RH*, March 29, 1973.

1. Benson and Albertsworth argued that historical research and the evaluation and use of original sources could enable the Adventist message to be presented more credibly. They urged that Adventist schools had an obligation not merely to teach historical facts, but to equip students with the tools of historical research.

2. They further advocated the need for primary source materials. Teachers and students needed access to materials on which to base original research. Adventist libraries needed more funds for acquisitions, and they could help one another by circulating primary source documents. This was especially needed for researching Adventist history.

3. Teachers needed more training. When necessary, they needed to learn the languages in which original documents were written. Adventist teachers could benefit greatly by spending time in major research libraries, and some of the conferees even suggested a study tour through Europe and the Holy Land.

4. Adventist historians should fellowship and encourage one another by circulating primary source materials and papers, and by specializing in certain areas of history. Benson appears to have been an individual ahead of his time by suggesting the formation of a society of Adventist historians. The beginnings of such a society would not be realized until the 1970s.

Adventist historiography and historical consciousness can be accurately dated to within two decades of the 1901 General Conference session, which George Knight designates as the starting point for the third phase (maximum efficiency) of Moberg's institutional life cycle. What is clear is that Adventism's "forgotten generation" of Adventist historians from this early period illustrates a strong push within the church toward higher standards in historical research.

In addition to improved teaching in the areas of Bible and history, a third area that educators at the 1919 Bible Conference focused upon was ministerial education.

Ministerial Education

The topic of pastoral training came up several times during the teachers' conference. It is apparent that W. W. Prescott and A. G. Daniells, two of the most visible personalities at the 1919 Bible Conference, had a real burden for improving ministerial training within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The first clear statement about the need for improving ministerial education was made by W. W. Prescott during his devotional talk on July 21. He referred to a suggestion then circulating that a beginning minister be required to have fourteen years of education (i.e., at least two years beyond high school) as a requirement for ordination.¹ Obviously there were others who were sensing the need to raise the bar for Adventist clergy.

The most explicit statement about the need to raise the standards for ministerial education came when A. G. Daniells made a clarion call for higher standards in pastoral training on August 1, 1919. In his talk he set forth clear goals for pastoral education. After finishing a grueling interrogation about the nature of inspiration and the authority of Ellen White, Daniells attempted to share his burden for ministerial education, including his dream for what ministerial training should entail. His vision of ministerial education would eventually lead to a full-fledged system of Adventist ministerial education. The graduate training of ministers would not begin for another fifteen years (1934) when the Advanced Bible Training School (now the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary)

¹RBC, July 21, 1919, 1132.

was formed. In 1919 Daniells sensed this need and set forth a vision for fulfilling it. Daniells estimated that nearly half of those present at the 1919 Bible Conference were involved in pastoral education. He believed that the teachers had a key role in the development of better training for ministers.

“I think, brethren,” spoke A. G. Daniells to the Bible and history teachers, “that among all the vocations in the world, that of the minister is the highest and most sacred, and calls for the greatest care on the part of those who enter it.”¹ Daniells, as a church administrator, was particularly perturbed at the quality of ministerial graduates he saw starting out in the ministry. He was especially concerned that ministerial graduates, despite having studied intensely, were poorly prepared for the grueling task of ministry. Teachers had a responsibility not only to provide theoretical training for future preachers, but also to prepare them for the actual life of ministry.

What Daniells saw as even more important was that those who taught ministers should model the life of a minister. Teachers should exemplify core values that included honesty, sincerity, integrity, and good judgment. This was both a responsibility and an opportunity for the teacher to go beyond theoretical knowledge and to impress upon the student the importance of a godly life.

Prospective ministers should be studious and learn to work hard. It went without saying that the teachers should recommend good books. In order to balance all of this, “regularity in their habits of study, working, and living” (or as he later put it, the “value of

¹Report of Bible Conference, August 1, 1919, 1261.

time”) was essential. “A great deal of time is lost and effort wasted by [the] lack of [such] a program.”

Daniells believed that the Bible should be “supreme” in ministerial education. It “contains great power” and students need to have this “revolutionizing and regenerating influence” impact their minds and hearts, he declared. Church leaders in 1919, according to Daniells’s observation, were not doing “all that they can do along this line.” Perhaps this was because they already had a “stiff line of study,” he speculated. He wondered if the students were really learning the lessons that they were being taught. He was sure that students were in need of a deeper study of God’s Word.

Daniells also thought that the church’s concept of preaching needed to change. Once Christ was at the center of Adventist doctrines, he argued, it would transform the way the denomination’s ministers preached. Haynes interrupted Daniells by stating that Adventist preaching was turning away from the doctrines that made Adventists a distinct people. He observed that young Adventist ministers were attracted to the evangelistic methods of Billy Sunday and the Salvation Army that he feared de-emphasized the distinctive beliefs of Adventism.¹

As an example of Christ-centered preaching, A. G. Daniells recalled a sermon illustration that W. B. Riley had shared when he visited his church in Minnesota. Riley told the story of an unlearned preacher who simply spoke of the parallel between the sun/son of God. The simple parallel between the “sun” in the sky and the “son” of God seemed overly simplistic, but he upheld the simple illustration as both an effective and

¹RBC, July 3, 1919, 174.

simple way to share the simple truths directly from Scripture. This humble preacher “had expounded the Word,” Daniells said.¹

At the last recorded meeting of the teachers’ conference, Daniells told the teachers that they had more influence than anyone else for improving “the class of preachers among us.”² In addition to making the Bible the center of ministerial education, ministers needed to preach expository sermons. Expository sermons would transform Adventist preaching.

In his devotionals W. W. Prescott focused particularly on making Adventist theology more Christ-centered. The preacher revealed Christ in the “converting word.” This was the real power of Adventist preaching, he averred, and by so doing Adventist preachers would have a unique approach to sharing God’s Word.³

The goals articulated by Daniells provided new direction for Adventist ministerial education. His goals were not immediately realized, but he devoted the rest of his career to helping achieve them. In 1922 Daniells was not re-elected as General Conference president, but in 1926 he formed the General Conference ministerial department. One of the core purposes for this organization was to provide resources for Adventist ministers and thus help them make their ministry more effective. The vision set forth by Daniells and Prescott for higher standards would gradually take tangible shape when it culminated

¹RBC, July 3, 1919, 130-31, emphasis original.

²RBC, August 1, 1919, 1258.

³RBC, July 3, 1919, 128.

into the formation of the Advanced Bible School at Pacific Union College that opened during the summer of 1934.

Summary

A significant component of the 1919 Bible Conference was its makeup as an educational council in line with several educational conferences held both before and after this meeting. In comparison, however, to other portions of the 1919 Bible Conference, not much is known about the educational portion of this Conference. Despite the lack of recordkeeping, educators had an impact upon the development of Adventist education. This impact occurred in three distinct areas.

First, the Bible was affirmed by Prescott as the central feature of an Adventist curriculum. A distinct emphasis was placed on the Bible in the developing Adventist curriculum. This included a special emphasis on a Christ-centered curriculum. It was stated that teaching is a spiritual gift, and Prescott asserted that teachers had an obligation not only to teach but to model the Christian life.

Second, a rising generation of historians was beginning to emphasize the importance of history and historical research in the Adventist curriculum. Adventist history teachers needed to support one another in finding primary sources. As they did more research they would gain credibility for the teachings of Adventism. Furthermore, these historians called the church to be accountable in its historical claims and set a vision whereby they could exchange material and build upon the limited resources available in their institutional libraries. Unfortunately these historians were marginalized and do not appear to have made any significant impact upon the denomination.

A third dimension was the importance Daniells and Prescott placed upon higher standards for Adventist ministers. Daniells's dream would eventually be partially realized

fifteen years later when the Advanced Training School (forerunner of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary) was begun. Ministers needed to learn how to study the Bible, exalt the Word in their ministry, and learn how to preach effective and Christ-centered sermons.

Together these three areas were the unique contributions by educators at the 1919 Bible Conference. There may have been other contributions, but they remain unknown because of the lack of available records for this portion of the Conference.

CHAPTER 6

THE IMPACT ON ADVENTIST HISTORIOGRAPHY

Introduction

The 1974 discovery of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts and the subsequent publication of excerpts in *Spectrum* in 1979 changed the contours of Adventist historiography. The initial request to have F. Donald Yost look for transcripts in the newly formed General Conference Archives came from Donald Mansell, an employee of the Ellen G. White Estate, who was looking for material on the development of Adventist prophetic interpretation. Several months later, in early 1975, Mansell discovered their significance as he and his wife took turns reading the transcripts to each other at their home. After reading the dialogues about Ellen White at the end of the Conference he shared this part of the transcripts with Arthur L. White, at that time director of the White Estate. White decided that these conversations were important enough to make copies and send them to White Estate research centers.¹ The transcripts, now available for research, had still not been disseminated for wider circulation. Although they were available in limited form, widespread knowledge about the transcripts occurred after excerpts were published by *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums*, an independent

¹Donald Mansell, telephone interview by author, September 27, 2006.

Adventist journal founded in 1970.¹ The publication of these excerpts was an unsettling revelation among Adventist intellectuals.

The decade of the 1970s was a tumultuous one for Ellen White studies. Initially church leaders including Neal C. Wilson supported the Association of Adventist Forums, which published *Spectrum*. As critical works were written on Adventist history and theology (and some times scathing critiques of Ellen G. White's life and ministry), the organization continued with the objective "to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject." These articles were supplemented by an increasing repertoire of critical works, such as Ronald L. Numbers's *Prophetess of Health*, an examination of Ellen G. White's teachings on health reform. In this book Numbers asserted that Ellen White's writings about health were uninspired and, at best, borrowed from other health reformers of her day. Because tensions were mounting between church leaders and the Association of Adventist Forums, in 1982 Wilson ostracized the organization he initially supported.²

Within this milieu the publication of excerpts from the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts was seen as justification by Adventist scholars who were continuing to critically examine Ellen G. White. A number of Adventist historians, including Numbers, left the denomination. The revelation of such candid discussions about the nature of inspiration and her prophetic authority so soon after her death (1915) was so startling that

¹The Association of Adventist Forums, founded in 1968, was largely the brainchild of Roy Branson, then an ethicist at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

²For an overview of the formation of the Association of Adventist Forums and the debate over Ellen White, see Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 322-27.

it would take more than two decades before Adventist writers incorporated the event into the annals of Adventist history.

The Publication of the Transcripts

Molleurus Couperus, a recently retired Loma Linda University faculty member who had prior to his retirement chaired the department of dermatology in the School of Medicine, somehow learned of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts after their discovery by Mansell. On a research trip to the General Conference Archives he obtained permission to study the transcripts and even made copies of some of them. Upon his return he edited them, and, as the founding editor of *Spectrum* (1970-1976), contacted the then current editor, Roy Branson, about their potential publication. Branson consulted with *Spectrum's* editorial board, which recommended their publication. Don Yost, the director of the General Conference Archives at that time, was reportedly quite upset that no permission was obtained prior to publishing the transcripts. Couperus contended that he had not signed any document limiting his use of the copies made. In retrospect, Branson believed that “this was the single most important issue” *Spectrum* had published. “People were stunned,” he said, “that there were leaders of our church who tracked views similar to Adventist academics.”¹

In his introduction to the published excerpts, Couperus articulated several points that he felt were significant about the discovery of these transcripts: (1) Nearly all Protestant religious traditions have had a significant leader or founder who became venerated after their death. (2) No leader in Adventist history “has had a greater influence

¹Roy Branson, telephone interview by author, June 14, 2007.

on this church than Ellen G. White.” (3) From her first vision until her death there were questions “concerning the nature of these visions,” an issue that has remained a “subject for discussion and even controversy in the church ever since.” (4) As the years passed some “claimed verbal inspiration for the writings of Ellen White,” a position she, her husband James White, and the church rejected. (5) The Adventist “struggle” to make “an acceptable and honest decision” about the continuing place of White’s writings in the church was “illustrated” by the discussions at the 1919 Bible Conference.¹

The complete transcripts of the July 30 and August 1, 1919, discussions about Ellen White, took up thirty-one pages in *Spectrum*. Five letters to the editor in three subsequent issues of *Spectrum* indicate that their publication struck a resonant chord among Adventists.

The first letter to be published was an extensive treatise by Malcolm B. Russell, a young Adventist professor at Andrews University, thanking *Spectrum* for printing these transcripts. “Certainly, the members of the Adventist Church have suffered for 60 years because they lacked the opportunity to study these transcripts.” He furthermore indicated that the “understanding of the prophetic mission of Ellen G. White” as expressed in 1919 by A. G. Daniells is “far different from the beliefs of most Adventists today.” Russell commented that despite the church’s official position “that Mrs. White did not write word-for-word as inspired directly by God, *in practice* Adventists have generally subscribed to the idea that her comments were infallible.” It was the acceptance of infallibility that set the church up for “an extremely difficult pass” when such individuals

¹Molleurus Couperus, “The Bible Conference of 1919,” *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 8 (March 1979): 23-26.

as Ronald Numbers, William S. Peterson, and Don McAdams “showed rather convincingly” that large portions of her writings consisted of little more than paraphrases of the works of nineteenth-century authors. “This evidence nullified F. D. Nichol’s defense of the quoted materials, as well as the explanation that Ellen White turned to other historians largely ‘to fill in the gaps.’”¹

In a second and shorter letter, Henry F. Brown, a minister from St. Helena, Calif., remarked about his “great surprise” that “became a great pleasure” to read these unedited minutes. Brown added that a great deal of “mental suffering would have been saved to me personally” had he had this information as a young minister. While reading Ellen White’s writings and the writings of her defenders (especially F. D. Nichol) he had become “deeply troubled.” He added:

I found discrepancies and difficulties galore. There was no minister to whom I could go in confidence to ask regarding them. All gave me the impression that she was free of all contradictions and inconsistencies. I approached one, and he gave me to understand that my license to preach was jeopardized by my doubting the Spirit of Prophecy. My mental agony was intense; the torment was sufficient to endanger my sanity.

Here I find that the leaders of the work in my time had the same conclusions I had. But why did I have to wait 50 years to discover this? Why was this not discussed with young ministers and assistance given them?

The solution, Brown suggested, was that there were “degrees of inspiration.” He believed that many of her writings, such as *Steps to Christ*, *Desire of Ages*, and *Christ’s Object Lessons*, were helpful. “Had we as a denomination limited her publications to these

¹Malcolm B. Russell, Letter to the editor, *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 8 (Aug. 1979): 62-64.

books, we would have been wise.” As the church produced other books and placed them “into the Spirit-inspired category . . . we expose[d] ourselves to difficulty.”¹

The third letter by Warren L. Johns, chief counsel for the General Conference Office of General Counsel, upheld A. G. Daniells as a “champion of theological integrity and spiritual insight with a clear understanding of the ministry of Ellen White.” Johns wondered how many “thousands of young people who have become discouraged and abandoned the church in the years since 1919 would have remained loyal members if Daniells’s view had prevailed.”²

The fourth letter, by Sam Pestes, a pastor from British Columbia, hailed the publication of these transcripts as “long overdue.” The foundations of Adventism, he claimed, had never been satisfactorily defined to the laity. He asked how the church could “claim that we hold the Bible above the writings of Ellen G. White when our Sabbath School quarterlies never present Ellen White’s writings in the light of the Bible.” Pestes went on to state: “I believe that openness, honesty, and, above all, confidence in the basic loyalty of the membership would cause the General Conference leaders to bring all their skeletons out of the closet, expose them to the light of day, and if necessary reevaluate our historical and doctrinal positions.”³

¹Henry F. Brown, Letter to the editor, *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 8 (Aug. 1979): 64.

²Warren L. Johns, Letter to the editor, *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 8 (Nov. 1979): 61.

³Sam Pestes, Letter to the editor, *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 8 (Nov. 1979): 61-62.

In the fifth and final letter, Marcius C. Siqueira, a pastor from Kansas, expressed his appreciation for the publication of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts. He was “fascinated with the issues they discussed,” and the “parallels with our own difficulties today. It almost seems that times have hardly changed.” Siqueira expressed his concern with classifying Ellen White in exact parallel with other founders of Protestant traditions, contending that while Martin Luther’s ministry has been called “prophetic,” he did not have direct visions like John the Revelator.¹

These five letters suggest that the publication of these transcripts brought a certain level of surprise to Seventh-day Adventist church members. All five letters resonated with the wish that the church had been more open and honest in confronting these issues sooner, and with surprise that six decades earlier church leaders had grappled with issues that they were again facing in the 1970s. In addition, Russell and Brown indicated disagreement with traditional apologetic approaches (particularly that of F. D. Nichol)² to Ellen White’s life and ministry. Johns and Russell pointed to the example of A. G.

¹Marcius C. Siqueira, Letter to the editor, *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 8 (Nov. 1979): 62.

²Francis D. Nichol (1897-1966) was the denomination’s foremost apologist of Ellen White during the 1940s and 1950s. He became an associate editor of the *Review and Herald* in 1927, became editor in 1945, and held that post until his death. Nichol was a prolific author and wrote several apologetic works including *Answers to Objections: An Examination of the Major Objections Raised Against the Teachings of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), *The Midnight Cry: A Defense of the Character and Conduct of William Miller and the Millerites, Who Mistakenly Believed that the Second Coming of Christ Would Take Place in the Year 1844* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944), and *Ellen G. White and Her Critics: An Answer to the Major Charges that Critics Have Brought Against Mrs. Ellen G. White and Why I Believe in Mrs. E. G. White*. He also served as the chair of the Ellen G. White Estate board of trustees (1963-1966).

Daniells as a man who had tried to steer the church in the right direction. All agreed that the church could have been saved a great deal of grief had these issues been dealt with sooner.

These letters reveal that although the excerpts were significant, they directed attention only to the discussions about Ellen White at the end of the 1919 Bible Conference. The portions published did not give adequate context for understanding the impact that Fundamentalism had within Adventism. The publication of the excerpts, apart from their larger context, portrayed A. G. Daniells as a hero while minimizing his very significant role in pushing the church toward Fundamentalism. The larger historical background shows that there was a great deal more complexity in how the church understood the inspiration of the Bible, and the relationship of Ellen White's writings to the Bible than was expressed in the short excerpts that were published. Thus Couperus made the publication of a portion of these transcripts even more dramatic. The effect at the time was to reinforce the idea that some church leaders, both in the past and the present, were not promulgating an open and honest view of Ellen White's writings.

Major Perspectives on the 1919 Bible Conference, 1980-2007

With the exception of a paper Bert Haloviak presented in 1979 to the Andrews Society for Religious Studies,¹ seven years would elapse after the publication of the transcripts in *Spectrum* before the 1919 Bible Conference would be incorporated as a

¹The Andrews Society for Religious Studies is now the Adventist Society for Religious Studies. Haloviak's research was later published in *Spectrum* in 1982. See Bert B. Haloviak and Gary Land, "Ellen White and Doctrinal Conflict: Context of the 1919 Bible Conference," *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 12 (June 1982): 19-34.

major theological event in the history of Seventh-day Adventism. During the 1990s the 1919 Bible Conference began to be seen as a dominant event in the development of Seventh-day Adventist theology. It appears that the “shell shock” of the 1979 publication contributed to the time it took for this event to become accepted and incorporated into mainstream Adventist historiography.

The first major work to incorporate the 1919 Bible Conference into the broad flow of denominational history was *Adventism in America*, a collection of essays edited by Gary Land that went through two major editions (1986, 1998).¹ Another historian, George R. Knight, gave the Conference significant treatment in his text on the development of Adventist theology (2000). Knight described Adventism as “caught in the divisive struggle over authority in the 1920s” with the church “definitely polarized toward the fundamentalists by the end of the decade.” However, most of those who sympathized with Daniells, Prescott, and those closest to Ellen White “denied inerrancy and verbalism for both the Bible and her writings.”²

The book that most extensively incorporated the 1919 Bible Conference was the revised edition of *Light Bearers* (1998), a denominational college textbook on Adventist history. The original edition by Richard Schwarz (1979) did not mention the 1919 Bible Conference. The revised edition included a new chapter, “The Twentieth-Century Debate over Fundamentals,” which covered the major twentieth-century Bible Conferences (1919, 1952, 1974, and 1977 [in Europe]), aligning them with two major currents: the

¹Gary Land, ed., *Adventism in America: A History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986); *ibid.*, rev. ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 129-30.

²Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 133, 137.

need for ministerial professionalization after World War II, and the need to review official statements of beliefs. Regarding the 1919 Conference, Greenleaf, who revised Schwarz's *Light Bearers*, noted that the "debate about Ellen White" that climaxed "after 1975 reached far back into the twentieth century, but new circumstances and new information put different twists on the arguments." Greenleaf highlighted that the "two pivotal issues were infallibility and verbal inspiration." The bulk of his treatment of the 1919 Conference concerned the two discussions published in *Spectrum*.

Perhaps as a response to Internet critics¹ who were using the 1919 Bible Conference, in particular, in polemic against Ellen White, Adventist theologian Herbert E. Douglass included an entire chapter on the Conference in his apologetic work, *Messenger of the Lord* (1998). The first edition had several historical errors, which have since been corrected.² Similar to Greenleaf's treatment in *Light Bearers*, Douglass focused on the discussions about Ellen White at the end of the Conference, explained at length why the transcripts were not circulated, and correctly pointed out that the decision not to circulate the transcripts was made two weeks before the pivotal discussions about Ellen White. Douglass concluded that the issue of how to interpret Ellen White underlay virtually all the other controversies at the Conference. He saw the Conference as charged with tension the moment it opened. "At stake, each side believed, was the authority of

¹See, e.g., Sidney Cleveland, below.

²The first printing had the Conference concluding on Aug. 1, 1919, which should be Aug. 9, and the establishment of the General Conference Archives in 1983, which should be 1973 (Douglass, 434). These errors and others have been remedied in more recent printings (Herbert E. Douglass to the author, Nov. 2006).

Ellen White. Each side further believed that on this issue would hang the future of the church.”¹

The most severe assessment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with reference to the 1919 Bible Conference was given by Sydney Cleveland in his book, *White Washed: Uncovering the Myths of Ellen G. White* (1999). This book, written to convince Adventists to leave their church, contained an entire chapter, “1919 Bible Conference Minutes Concerning Ellen G. White – Introduction,” asserting that at the 1919 Bible Conference the church’s leadership tried to “arrive at a mutually acceptable decision about the validity of Ellen White’s ministry.” Cleveland believed that the leaders in 1919 viewed Ellen White’s influence as too great in the church, and failed to limit her influence.²

These assessments in the late 1990s were followed a few years later by Graeme Bradford, then professor at Avondale College. In a series of three books (2004-2006) he structured a revisionist platform for interpreting Ellen White. Synthesizing several different perspectives, especially those of Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart in their sociological assessment, *Seeking a Sanctuary* (1989, 2007), and George R. Knight, Bradford placed the 1919 Bible Conference and a much later 1982 Prophetic Guidance Workshop by the Ellen G. White Estate as two of the dominant events in twentieth-century Adventist history. The first printing of *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and*

¹Douglass, 434-43.

²Sydney Cleveland, *White-washed: Uncovering the Myths of Ellen G. White* (Greenwood, IN: [The Author], 1999). The entire text of the chapter on the 1919 Bible Conference can be found online at: www.christiancommunitychurch.us/dovenet/sda1919a.htm (accessed Aug. 13, 2006).

Found Again the Real Ellen White had numerous historical errors, the majority of which have been corrected in the revised edition.¹ In his chapter on the 1919 Bible Conference he observes that there were many forces at work in society that pushed the denomination toward Fundamentalism. “To the reader of these minutes,” wrote Bradford, “it is obvious that the leaders of the church, along with the Bible teachers present, did not feel comfortable in presenting . . . to the laity of the church” what the leaders “knew to be the truth regarding the subject of inspiration of Ellen White’s writings.”² He added, “Those who had spoken so freely of their convictions at the 1919 Bible Conference, particularly Daniells, were targeted.” The moment of truth came at the 1922 General Conference Session when Daniells was ousted, at least partly because of the agitation of fundamentalist Adventists such as Claude E. Holmes and J. S. Washburn. Thus the real truth about Ellen White was suppressed as Seventh-day Adventism aligned with Fundamentalism.

Colin Standish³ and Russell Standish⁴ responded negatively to Bradford’s assessment in their apologetic, *The Greatest of All the Prophets*.¹ They agreed with

¹See Michael W. Campbell, reviews of *More Than a Prophet* in *BRI* [Biblical Research Institute] *Newsletter #18* (April 2007), 9-10; *Ministry*, February 2007, 29.

²Graeme Bradford, *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again the Real Ellen White*, “2d printing” [*sic*, rev. ed.] (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2007), 154.

³Colin Standish is the founder and president of Hartland College. He obtained his Ph.D. degree in psychology from the University of Sydney. Standish has served in a variety of academic and administrative posts at Avondale College, West Indies College, and as president of Columbia Union College.

⁴Russell Standish is a physician in Australia. He has served as a missionary and hospital administrator in Southeast Asia as well as in Australia. Standish received his

Bradford that the 1919 Bible Conference had high theological significance for Adventists, but, contrary to Bradford, they evaluated it as a “disgraceful denial of faith.”² Ultimately Standish and Standish would like to see the church align with the Fundamentalist stance that Ellen White’s writings were inerrant.

Summary

The 1919 Bible Conference did not become a “historic” event until after the discovery of the transcripts. Their publication in *Spectrum* caused many Adventist intellectuals to justify their critical examination of Ellen G. White. Initial assessments by Haloviak and Land confirmed just how dramatically this publication event impacted the psyche of concerned Adventists, especially those caught up in the controversy over Ellen White’s continued role and authority in the church, which took on new significance during the late 1970s.

During the 1980s and 1990s the 1919 Bible Conference was increasingly incorporated into major works on Adventist history. The most prominent of these were by Land, Knight, and Greenleaf. Since that time, others have continued to assess it from different perspectives. Some of the most prominent include an apologetic perspective (Douglass), a hostile assessment that cites the Conference as a reason to discredit the

medical training from the University of Sydney. He is the founder of Remnant Ministries and has authored numerous books with his brother.

¹The book is a direct critique of Graeme Bradford. Colin Standish and Russell Standish, *The Greatest of All the Prophets* (Victoria, Australia: Highwood Books, 2004), 162-172.

²*Ibid.*, 4.

Seventh-day Adventist Church (Cleveland), a revisionist platform for appealing that the real truth about inspiration be revealed (Bradford), and finally as a disgraceful betrayal (Standish and Standish). While others have also referred to the 1919 Bible Conference, these individuals represent four interpretational perspectives on the Conference that persist to the present day (2007).

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The 1919 Bible Conference did not become a “historic” event until the transcripts of the meeting were discovered in 1974. Five years later some excerpts of the controversial discussions about Ellen White were published in *Spectrum*.¹ Their publication in this form challenged traditional assumptions about Ellen White. Adventists discovered just how ambiguous church leaders had felt about her life and ministry, as well as the authority of her writings for the church, so soon after her death. There is no evidence to suggest that conferees who *attended* the actual Bible Conference viewed this meeting as an event with “historic” significance. Evidently, conferees in 1919 were largely unaware of just how significant their discussions about Ellen White would later become. Presumably for many of them, this meeting was just one of hundreds they attended in a lifetime of service to the denomination.

Since the 1979 publication of the transcripts in *Spectrum*, however, Adventist history has been revised to include the 1919 Bible Conference as one of the most important events in the development of Adventist theology. The reason for this is the ongoing theological need to define Ellen White’s continuing relevance for the church.

¹ Molleurus Couperus, “The Bible Conference of 1919,” *Spectrum: Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums* 8 (March 1979): 23-26.

Thus, since 1979, the 1919 Bible Conference has been deemed significant largely because of the discussions about Ellen White.

Primary Conclusion

The primary conclusion of this dissertation is that the 1919 Bible Conference, taken as a whole, was less significant for Ellen White studies than has been generally thought since 1979. First, the conference as a whole was not about Ellen White, but about eschatology. In its historical context, the 1919 Bible Conference is clearly seen to have been largely driven by Adventist eschatology. Repeated appeals for unity were directed specifically toward the united front the denomination needed with regard to end-time events. In the just-concluded World War I, Adventists had been disappointed when Turkey did not fulfill an apocalyptic role as the “King of the North” and usher in the final chain of events, as most Adventist expositors had predicted. Almost every other topic discussed at the Conference, including the significance of Ellen White’s writings, was considered in the context of Adventist eschatology.

Second, the portions of the transcripts published in *Spectrum* represent only the last two of four Conference discussions on the life and ministry of Ellen White. Third, the controversial discussions about Ellen White did not take place during the main part of the conference with all the conferees present, but were an after-thought, during extended meetings attended by less than a third of the conferees.

The importance of the Conference discussions about the role and authority of Ellen White is that, in view of the failure of Adventist expectations regarding the eschatological role of modern Turkey, progressives were open to reexamining their previous interpretations of primary sources of authority, particularly Scripture and the writings of Ellen White. Conservatives were much more cautious, lest too much be

conceded regarding prophecies which might yet be fulfilled. In short, the discussions provide a snapshot of changing Adventist thought during a time of crisis.

By analyzing the historical context, the personal dynamics among the conferees, and the theological content of the 1919 Bible Conference, this dissertation illuminates other major aspects of this Conference, leading to seven secondary conclusions. These conclusions show that although the discussions about Ellen White certainly deserve the attention they have received, the reasons for their significance are more complex than previously realized.

Secondary Conclusions

First, the Conference brought together the most academically educated group of Adventist leaders to meet, up to this point, including the first academically trained Adventist historians. Several conferees had doctorates, other graduate-level training, and/or a working knowledge of biblical languages. Furthermore, an attempt was made to have controversial topics addressed by more than one presenter, from different perspectives.

Second, the 1919 Bible Conference was a meeting designed as an educational conference. The largest single group at the Conference was that of educators interested in the pedagogical application of what they learned during the meetings. Unfortunately, the extended educational meetings were also the area about which the least is now known, because extant transcripts are lacking. During this portion of the Conference, W. E. Howell and W. W. Prescott set a lofty vision for an Adventist philosophy of education. In addition, E. F. Albertsworth and C. L. Benson shared their vision for the potential benefits of the understanding and use of historical method in Adventist education. A. G.

Daniells, as leader of the 1919 Conference, shared his passion for ministerial education in the denomination.

Third, the 1919 Bible Conference reveals the extensive influence of Fundamentalism upon Seventh-day Adventism. From 1910 to 1922 Adventists largely ignored the publication of *The Fundamentals*, but were enthusiastic supporters of the prophetic conferences. As they attended various prophetic conferences, Adventists discovered that they had more in common with Fundamentalists than previously realized. Adventists admired Fundamentalists for their evangelical emphases, especially their premillennial proclamation of the Second Advent, their antipathy toward evolution and Modernism, and their belief in the authority of the Bible. But while Adventist leaders recognized some theological differences regarding the Sabbath, human nature, and eschatology, few seemed to recognize that the Fundamentalists' position, especially their stance on inspiration, was not the only alternative to Modernism.

As Adventists attended the major prophetic conferences they were nothing short of enthusiastic about what Fundamentalists were doing. In published accounts church leaders described the Fundamentalist prophetic conferences as among the most significant events in the history of Christianity. The delay of the eschaton forced Adventists to confront new issues they had never faced before. The Adventists' concern over the problem of delay was exacerbated by the Fundamentalists' considerable success in drawing the attention of the American public to the Second Advent—success that Adventists wished they had been able to achieve. According to the vision set forth by Daniells on the opening night of the 1919 Bible Conference, Adventists were the true Fundamentalists who needed to harness this interest in the Second Coming for their own mission. The Fundamentalists were their friends who simply had not yet taken their views

of the authority of Scripture far enough—that is, to Adventist conclusions. The clear implication is that the 1919 Bible Conference was intended to become an Adventist version of the Fundamentalist prophetic conferences. Although the 1919 Bible Conference was by invitation only, there is the distinct impression that as they achieved harmony, this first Conference might lead to more public meetings.

Fourth, the 1919 Bible Conference was primarily a meeting about Adventist hermeneutics. All of the issues at the Conference revolved in some way around the interpretation of inspired writings. There were areas of consensus, some areas of disagreement, and a few of wide disagreement. The largest portion of the presentations at the 1919 Bible Conference centered upon the Bible and hermeneutics. All conferees agreed that there were principles involved in how to interpret inspired writings. The significance of hermeneutics became obvious when it led delegates to develop two divergent hermeneutical approaches.

Fifth, the 1919 Bible Conference was a continuation of the theological polarization between so-called “progressives” and “traditionalists.” This debate was a continuation of the same dynamics that had begun in the famous 1888 General Conference Session. It was at this meeting that the young A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner challenged the established positions on prophetic interpretation of the venerable Uriah Smith and G. I. Butler. By the time of the 1919 Bible Conference “progressives” saw a course of development in Adventist eschatology and sought to reconcile beliefs to new research they had done. “Traditionalists” placed greater stock in generally accepted positions and questioned why change was necessary. The difference between them had implications for how they approached inspired writings. The “progressives” emphasized the historical and literary context for each statement; the “traditionalists” appealed to

Adventist tradition and took a more literal approach to Scripture. Although the “progressives” appear to have dominated the Conference, their leaders suffered major reverses at the 1922 General Conference session and diminished influence in the decade afterward. In a way, both the “progressives” and “traditionalists” recognized that the world in which they lived had changed. By consistently praising the work of Fundamentalists, it seems quite possible that “progressive” church leaders such as A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott, whether or not they realized it, actually helped push the denomination toward Fundamentalism.

Sixth, the discussions about Ellen White reveal a more nuanced picture of the denomination’s understanding of inspiration after Ellen White’s death than is available from any other contemporary source. At four pivotal points during the Conference, the discussions culminated in sensitive conversations about the inspiration and authority of Ellen G. White in the church. These discussions about Ellen G. White began in the context of whether it would be appropriate to posthumously revise her writings. “Progressives” and “traditionalists” also differed as to whether Ellen G. White’s writings were verbally inspired. The “progressives” said they knew from seeing her revise her own writings, that they could not be regarded as verbally inspired. The “traditionalists” argued against any distinction between the two groups of inspired writings—either they were both verbally inspired or they were not. The lack of clarity about inspiration and the leaning toward Fundamentalism created an Adventist version of Fundamentalism that still remains one of the major competing theological strands of Adventism.

Seventh, the discovery and subsequent publication of excerpts about Ellen White from the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts caught many Adventist intellectuals by surprise and injected explosive new primary source material into the debate over Ellen

White's continuing legacy. By the 1990s, historians, apologists, dissidents, and revisionists began to incorporate the 1919 Bible Conference as a major historical event, although from very different perspectives.

Future Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts are incomplete. This was partly overcome by identifying published versions of the talks and tracking down unpublished materials preserved in other locations. It is remotely possible that additional sources could be discovered in the future that would shed further light on this pivotal denominational event.

The relationship between Seventh-day Adventism and Fundamentalism (in their various forms) needs greater attention. Two dissertations written by Adventist scholars have focused mostly on the 1950s, discussing the relationship of Adventism to the definition of cults, and the publication and aftermath of the book *Questions on Doctrine*. A fruitful area for further research would be Adventist theological development during the 1920s (when Adventism was drawing closer to Fundamentalism), and the 1930s (when Adventism began to shy away from inerrancy). Fundamentalist Bible institutes and other schools flourished during these two decades, but how they influenced Adventist thinking, especially in the areas of inspiration and inerrancy, remains to be studied in depth.

APPENDIX A

CONFEREES PRESENT AT THE 1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE

Name	Age in 1919	Institution, Position, Teaching Field
Albertsworth, E. F.	27	Washington Missionary College - History
Anderson, J. N.	52	Union College – Biblical Languages & Missions
Baker, A. L.	25	<i>Signs of the Times</i> , Assistant Editor
Benson, C. L.	37	Central Union Conference – Sec. Ed. & Youth
Bird, W. L.	53	Oakwood Junior College - Minister
Bollman, C. P.	66	<i>Liberty Magazine</i> , Managing Editor
Bowen, T. E.	54	<i>Church Officers Gazette</i> , Editor
Branson, W. H.	32	Southeastern Union Conference, President
Butler, S. M.	58	Washington Missionary College – Bible/Business Manager
Caviness, L. L.	35	<i>Review and Herald</i> , Associate Editor
Chase, F. D.	55	<i>Youth's Instructor</i> , Editor
Comer, J. M.	44	Missionary to India on Furlough
Daniells, A. G.	61	General Conference President
Detwiler, H. J.	30	Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Evangelist
Field, F. W.	56	Southern Junior College, Bible & Pastoral Training
French, T. M.	36	Emmanuel Missionary College, Homiletics & Missions
French, W. R.	38	Oshawa Seminary, Bible and Pastoral Training
Haynes, C. B.	37	G. C. War Service Commission, Secretary
Heald, G. H.	58	<i>Life and Health</i> , Editor
House, B. L.	38	Southwestern Junior College, Bible
Howell, W. E.	50	General Conference Education Department, Secretary
Isaac, John	46	Clinton Theological Seminary, Bible
Jacobsen, E. C.	26	Oakwood Jr. College, History
John, O. M.	36	General Conference Education Department, Asst. Sec.
Johnston, H. A.	26	Southern Junior College, Preceptor, History
Kennedy, J. M.	35	Teacher (location unknown)
Kern, M. E.	44	General Conference Youth Department, Secretary
Knox, W.T.	61	General Conference Treasurer
Kress, D.H.	57	Physician and church administrator affiliated with the General Conference health and temperance department
Lacey, H.C.	48	Washington Missionary College, Sacred Languages & Lit.
Lewis, C.C.	62	Washington Missionary College, History, Head of Fireside Correspondence School
Longacre, C.S.	48	General Conference Religious Liberty Association Sec.
Neilsen, N. P.	48	Danish-Norwegian Seminary, President
Olson, A. J.	31	Oshawa Seminary, President & History
Olson, H. O.	34	Broadview Swedish Seminary, President & History

Palmer, E. R.	50	Review and Herald, General Manager
Parsons, D. A.	40	Eastern Pennsylvania Conference President
Plummer, L. F.	57	General Conference Sabbath School Department, Sec.
Prenier, H. S.	38	Lancaster Junior College, Bible & Pastoral Training
Prescott, W. W.	64	General Conference Field Secretary
Quinn, R.D.	50	Atlantic Union Conference President
Robbins, F. H.	48	Columbia Union Conference President
Robinson, D. E.	40	Southern Publishing Association, Editorial Staff
Shaw, J. L.	49	General Conference Associate Secretary
Shull, C. A.	29	Lancaster Junior College, History, Preceptor
Sorenson, C. M.	45	Washington Missionary College, Dean of Theology
Spalding, A. W.	42	<i>Watchman Magazine</i> , Editor
Swedberg, A.	62	Broadview Swedish Seminary, Bible
Tait, A. O.	61	<i>Signs of the Times</i> , Editor
Taylor, C. L.	37	Canadian Junior College, Bible
Teesdale, W. H.	30	Southwestern Junior College, History
Tetzlaff, A. B.	33	Clinton Theological Seminary, History, Preceptor
Thompson, C.	51	Northern Union conference President
Thompson, G. B.	57	Field Secretary, General Conference
Town, N. Z.	56	General Conference Publishing Department Secretary
Underwood, R. A.	69	Central Union Conference President
Wakeham, W. H.	61	Emmanuel Missionary College, Dean, School of Theology
Waldorf, N. J.	46	Loma Linda, Bible
Washburn, H. A.	47	Pacific Union College, History
Wilcox, F. M.	54	<i>Review and Herald</i> , Editor
Wilcox, M. C.	66	Pacific Press, Book Editor
Wilkinson, B. G.	47	Church administrator
Williams, F. H.	54	Educational Superintendent of Eastern MI Conference
Wirth, W. G.	35	Pacific Union College, Bible

APPENDIX B

LIST OF SPEAKERS AND TOPICS WITH
COORDINATED PAGINATION TO TRANSCRIPTS

Speaker	Topic/Title	Pagination	Date/Time	Notes
A. G. Daniells & W. W. Prescott	“Opening Session”	1-27	July 1, 7:30 p.m.	
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 1	28-44	July 2, 9:00 a.m.	
M. C. Wilcox	Principles of Prophetic Interpretation	45-59	July 2, 10:00 a.m.	
C. P. Bollman	The Ten Kingdoms	60-75	July 2, 10:45 a.m.	
	Discussion	76-108	July 2, 3:00 p.m.	Page 109 is duplicate of page 108.
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 2	110-131	July 3, a.m.	
	Discussion	132-156	July 3, a.m.	
	Discussion	157-192	July 3, p.m.	
	“Special Meeting”		July 5, 4:00 p.m.	No longer extant.
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 3	193-207	July 6, a.m.	
C. M. Sorenson & H. C. Lacey	The Eastern Question	208-228	July 6, a.m.	
	Discussion	229-258	July 6, p.m.	
H. C. Lacey	Outline of Daniel 11 with paraphrase	259-262	n/a	Appended document to go with presentation. Incorrectly dated July 7.
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 4	263-279	July 7, a.m.	
H. C. Lacey	The Eastern Question, continued	279-296	July 7, a.m.	Page missing between 287-288.
	Discussion	297-316	July 7, a.m.	
H. C. Lacey	Paraphrase of Daniel 11	317-318	n/a	Appended document.
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 5	319-334	July 8, 9:00 a.m.	
H. C. Lacey	[The Eastern Question, continued]	335-361	July 8, a.m.	Voted to let Prescott present for 45 minutes on Eastern Question that afternoon.
W. W. Prescott	[The Eastern Question]	362-377	July 8,	

			3:00 p.m.	
	Discussion	377-415	July 8, p.m.	Voted at end to give 2 nd period the next day to Wilcox to present his views on Daniel 11.
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 6	416-426	July 9, 9:00 a.m.	
M. C. Wilcox	View on Daniel 11	427-451a	July 9, a.m.	Time for study expired. "It was decided for Elder Wilcox to continue his study for the next period." Pp. 17-35 (beginning after p. 451) are "out in hands of B. G. Wilkinson."
M. C. Wilcox	View of Daniel 11, continued	451b-488	July 9, p.m.	Paraphrase of Daniel 11 included (p. 462 ff.). Daniells asks A. O. Tait to use the last 30 minutes to present his view of Daniel 11 (p. 488)
A. O. Tait	View of Daniel 11 with discussion	488-498	July 9, p.m.	
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 7	499-511	July 10, 9:00 a.m.	
A. O. Tait	The Two Covenants	512-526	July 10, 10:00 a.m.	
H. S. Prenier	The 1260 Years of Daniel 7	527-529	July 10, a.m.	"Brother Prenier presented the chart and read the outline that follows" (p. 526).
	Discussion	530-567a	July 10, 3:00 p.m.	
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 8	567b-583	July 11, 9:00 a.m.	
	Discussion on the Covenants and 1260 Days	584-599	July 11	
H. S. Prenier	[1260 Days]	600-602	July 11	This transcript is incomplete. It could be that Prenier read from his notes which are appended.
	South Lancaster Academy Bible Chart and Notes (H. S. Prenier)	603-617		Appended documents
H. S. Prenier	Comments on Notes (?)	618-627	July 11	p. 626 ff. has parenthetical note "after completion of paper"

W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 9	628-641	July 13, 9:00 a.m.	
M. C. Wilcox	The Beast Power of the Revelation [12-21]	642-660	July 13, a.m.	Note on page 642 it reads that Wilcox read extracts from Ellen White and then read his paper. Paper appended (643-654) followed by comments that begin with "point 41."
	Discussion on 1260 Days	661-672	July 13, a.m.	
	Afternoon Discussion	673-693	July 13, p.m.	Voted to close Bible Conference on Sabbath, July 19 (690).
W. W. Prescott	The Person of Christ, part 10	694-712	July 14, 9:00 a.m.	
M. C. Wilcox	The Beast Power of the Revelation [12-21], continued	713-714	July 14, a.m.	"Following the intermission, M. C. Wilcox continued his presentation" (713). Two introductory pages. P. 714 carries note that he continued reading his paper. P. 715 picks after he reads his paper.
H. C. Lacey	[Study of Revelation 17]	715-733	July 14, a.m.	"It was agreed that H. C. Lacey should continue his presentation in the discussion hour in the afternoon." 733.
	Discussion	734-782	July 14, p.m.	
W. W. Prescott	The Mediation of Christ, part 1	783-798	July 15, 9:00 a.m.	
C. S. Longacre	Presentation of the Old View [of the Eastern Question]	799-823	July 15	
H. C. Lacey	Study of Revelation 17 (continued)	824-834	July 15	Continuation of July 14 presentation.
B. G. Wilkinson	[Daniel 11]	[separate copy is extant]	[July 15]	This presentation is referred to on p. 902 in the context of issues raised by Prescott on July 16. It seems most likely that Wilkinson, gave his paper some time on July 15 after Longacre's presentation.
W. W. Prescott	The Mediation of Christ, part 2	835-868	July 16,	Evolves into a discussion

			9:00 a.m.	on prophetic interpretation.
C. M. Sorenson	[Daniel 11]	869-892	July 16, 10:45 a.m.	Prayer by Daniells at opening of this session.
	“Disposition of the Manuscript”	893-901	July 16	Time off for stenographers to catch up (morning meeting appears to have finished early). Committee to meet to look at what to do with the manuscripts.
	Discussion	902-925	July 16, p.m.	
	Introduction to Session	926-927	July 16 p.m.	W. T. Knox is chair of session (926).
W. H. Wakeham	“The United States in Prophecy	928-941	July 16 p.m.	
A. G. Daniells	“The Spirit of Prophecy”	942-951	July 16, “evening”	Special evening session about the Spirit of Prophecy. Most of the session was not transcribed (946).
W. W. Prescott	“The Daily—Matthew 24”	952-963	July 17, 9:00 a.m.	Photograph of delegates taken during intermission (964).
J. N. Anderson	Seven Trumpets	964-978	July 17, a.m.	Presentation is based upon study by an “advanced student” at Union College in collaboration with the heads of three departments that form the library committee (964).
	Discussion on <i>Bible Readings</i> and Seven Trumpets	979-996	July 17	Prescott invited to continue his presentation but he declines. After p. 988 discussion focuses on Seven Trumpets followed by a short intermission.
	Discussion	997-1009	July 17	Prescott gives his time to Lacey, and then it was voted to let H. C. Lacey give his presentation during teachers’ conference (997).
W. W. Prescott	Matthew 24	1010-1051	July 18	Not sure where pagination of this talk ends. I chose p. 1052 because Palmer breaks in and it looks like

				Prescott has finished.
	Discussion	1052-1057	July 18	
B. G. Wilkinson	Seven Trumpets	1057	July 18	“It is not in shape to be copied yet.”
	Devotional Service (on Sabbath afternoon)	1058-1080	July 19, 4:00 p.m.	First 7 pages of Daniells’ opening remarks no longer extant.
BIBLE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES; TEACHERS’ CONFERENCE ONLY				
C. M. Sorenson	“Sunday in the Roman Empire, and its Introduction into the Christian Church”	1081-1108		Appears to be a lecture outline, unclear when and if it was presented.
[W. E. Howell?]	[Teaching [Is] a Spiritual Gift]		July 20	“Lacks First Study. 7-20-19. Given to A.G.D. with other materials.”
W. E. Howell	The Divine Call to Teach	1109-1116	July 21, 8:15 a.m.	
W. W. Prescott	[Teaching Bible and History]	1117-1132	July 21, 9:00 a.m.?	
	The Master Teacher	1133-1138	July 22	
W. W. Prescott	Devotional (continued) followed by questions	1139-1153	July 22, 8:15 [a.m.?)	Previous devotional by Prescott is missing.
W. E. Howell	“Professor Howell’s Study”	1154-1158	July 23, 8:15 [a.m.?)	
W. E. Howell	“Christ the Master Teacher— We the Under Teachers”	1159- 1181a	July 24	
H. C. Lacey	“The Aim, Scope, and Content of our College Bible Studies”	1164- 1181a	July 24, 10:15 a.m.	
W. E. Howell	The Divine Call to Teach	1181b- 1186	July 25	
	“The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in our Teaching Bible and History”	1187-1226	July 30, 9:00 a.m.	Held to fulfill a promise by Daniells “to talk to the teachers along this line.” Evolves into lengthy discussion. Daniells talks (1187-1193) and then solicits questions. Ten minute intermission before next session.
	“How to Teach the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Schools.”		July 30	No longer extant (1226).
	“Inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy as Related to the Inspiration of the Bible”	1227-1257	August 1	
A. G. Daniells	Pastoral Training	1258-1273	August 1,	

			11:15 a.m.	
E. F. Albertsworth	“Historical Method”	1281-1303	Undated, a.m. (p. 1293 “this morning”)	Pp. 1301 ff. has discussion at end of talk. Teachers vote that they be taken on a tour of Rome, Greece, and Palestine.
C. L. Benson	“The Application of the Principles of Historic Method to Our Own Teaching Work”	1274-1280	Undated	“I have enjoyed very much the talk that Brother Albertsworth has just given us...” (1274, 1275). Inverted order in transcripts.
TEACHERS’ CONVENTION CONCLUDES, Sunday, August 9				

APPENDIX C

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Albertsworth, Edwin Franklin (1892-1980). History teacher at Washington Missionary College. He received an M.A. (1916) and a Ph.D. (1918) from George Washington University. At the 1919 Bible Conference he gave a presentation on teaching history. Soon afterward, he was attacked by Claude Holmes and B. G. Wilkinson for being too liberal. His employment was terminated and he spent the rest of his career teaching law at the University of Santa Clara in California.¹

Anderson, Jacob Nelson (1867-1958). Minister and Bible teacher. In 1901 he obtained a Bachelor of Divinity degree from the University of Chicago. In 1902 he became the first Adventist missionary to China. Returning in 1908, he taught at the Foreign Missionary Seminary from 1910 to 1915. In 1919 Nelson was teaching at Union College and gave a presentation on the seven trumpets at the 1919 Bible Conference.²

¹E. F. Albertsworth, "The Political Aspects of the Protestant Revolution in France to the Edict of Nantes," M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 1916; idem, "The Genesis of the Edict of Nantes," Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1918; idem, *The Law of Labor Relations: Trade Disputes at the Common Law and Under Modern Industrial Statutes* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1925); idem, *The Law of Industrial Injuries at the Common Law, Under Employers' Liability Acts, and Workmen's Compensation Statutes: A Syllabus of Cases* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1925).

²Obit. RH, April 24, 1958, 26.

Baker, Alonzo Lafayette (1894-1985). Editor and educator. A graduate of Pacific Union College (1916) he joined the editorial staff of Pacific Press. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference (in addition to being the youngest conferee) he was the assistant editor of *Signs of the Times* and served in that capacity until 1939. He worked for J. H. Kellogg as secretary of the Race Betterment Association (1939-1942). Then from 1942 to 1948 Baker worked as Religious Liberty and Temperance secretary of the Pacific Union Conference, while he completed a Ph.D. degree at the University of Southern California. After 1948 Baker served on the faculty of the College of the Pacific and later as a faculty member at the La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University.³

Benson, Clement L. (1882-1934). History teacher. A graduate of Union College (1905), Benson took up the “young people’s work” in the Central Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and then in the Northern Union Conference, before returning to Union College as the chair of the history department. By 1917 he was serving as missionary secretary of the young people’s work west of the Mississippi. He stepped in as president of Emmanuel Missionary College for one school year (1917-1918), while also serving as assistant director of education for the General Conference. At the 1919 Bible Conference, Benson gave a presentation on the “Application of the Principles of Historic Method to Our Own Teaching Work.” He spent the remainder of his career teaching at Union College. In 1921 he received an M.A. from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.⁴

³“Dr. Baker Retiring,” *The Criterion*, June 4, 1976, 3.

⁴Department of Commerce and Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920—Population. Nebraska, Lancaster County, District 43, p. 7857; Meredith Jones Gray, *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College & Emmanuel Missionary College* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2002), 191; Clement

Bird, Walter L. (1866-1963). Bible teacher and minister. A graduate of Battle Creek College, Bird taught at the first Adventist church school in Florida (1892). In 1897 he ministered in Tennessee where he was ordained, and then raised up churches in the southern United States. After advanced training in Washington, D.C., he went in 1916 to teach Bible at Oakwood Junior College, which is where he came from to attend the 1919 Bible Conference. He later taught at several Adventist academies.⁵

Bollman, Calvin P. (1853-1943). Editor. From 1884 to 1896 he worked at Pacific Press. He served briefly as associate editor of the *American Sentinel* and a variety of administrative posts in the southern United States. In 1914 he joined the staff of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and became associate editor of *Liberty*. In 1920 he also became an associate editor of the *Review and Herald* where he spent the remainder of his career. Bollman gave a presentation on the “ten kingdoms” at the 1919 Bible Conference.⁶

Bowen, Tyler Edwin (1865-1955). Minister and editor. Bowen served in several pastoral posts until 1906 when he became secretary of the mission board. He also became editor of the *Church Officers' Gazette*, which he was editing at the time of the 1919 Bible Conference.⁷

Branson, William Henry (1887-1961). Minister and administrator. Branson began colporteur work in 1906 and became an evangelist in 1908. He served as president of

L. Benson, “The French Revolution and the Church Property: The First Phase,” M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1921.

⁵Obit. *Pacific Union Recorder*, Feb. 17, 1964, 7. Ernest Lloyd, “Full of Years—Walter L. Bird,” RH, March 26, 1959, 8.

⁶Obit. RH, Jan. 20, 1944, 19-20.

⁷Obit. RH, Oct. 27, 1955, 27.

several conferences in the southern United States before becoming president of the Southeastern Union Conference in 1915. From 1920 to 1930 he served as a missionary to Africa. He later became president of the General Conference (1950-1954).⁸

Caviness, Leon Leslie (1884-1955). Editor. Caviness received a B.A. from the University of Michigan (1906). From 1906-1913 he taught at Union College. He later earned an M.A. from the University of Nebraska (1913) and a Ph.D. from George Washington University (1926). In 1913 Caviness moved to Washington, D.C., to help W. W. Prescott edit *The Protestant Magazine*. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference Caviness was assistant editor of the *Review and Herald*. Caviness later held a number of administrative and educational posts.⁹

Chase, Fannie Dickerson (1865-1956). Editor and educator. Chase was a member of the faculty at Atlantic Union College from 1882 to 1903. She served as editor of the *Youth's Instructor* (1903-1922).

Comer, Joseph Mark (1875-1947). Minister. Ordained in 1907, Comer pastored in the Minnesota and Oregon conferences. In 1911 he went to India. While home on furlough in 1918, he was invited to participate in the 1919 Bible Conference. Soon after the conference he returned to the mission field until sickness forced his

⁸D. E. Rebok, "Life Sketch of Elder William Henry Branson," RH, Feb. 9, 1961, 5.

⁹Obit. RH, Aug. 25, 1955, 27; L. L. Caviness, "An Analysis of the Gothic Vocabulary of the Gospel of Matthew," M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1913; idem, "The Prophet Daniel: A Critical Study of Daniel as a Prophet," Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1926.

permanent return in 1922. He later pastored a number of churches across the United States.¹⁰

Daniells, Arthur Grosvenor (1858-1935). Minister and president of the General Conference. Daniells became closely associated with James and Ellen White as a ministerial intern under Robert M. Kilgore in Texas in 1878. In 1886 he went as a missionary to Australia and New Zealand where he held several administrative posts. In 1901 he was elected chair of the General Conference Committee, and became president of the General Conference until 1922. In this role Daniells was the *de facto* moderator of the meetings and deliberations at the 1919 Bible Conference. Daniells was a church administrator who was primarily concerned about church unity. At one point he became so frustrated about the issue of the king of the north and the two-horned beast that he wished he could send them both up together in a balloon.¹¹

Detwiler, Howard J. (1889-1951). Minister. Detwiler was trained at Mount Vernon College, Ohio. He was an evangelist in the Pennsylvania Conference at the time of the 1919 Bible Conference. In 1920 he was called to be a Bible teacher at Mount Vernon Academy. It seems that Detwiler may have been invited to participate in the 1919 Bible Conference as a soon-to-be teacher. After 1924 he became the president of several conferences.¹²

Evans, Irwin Henry (1862-1945). Minister and administrator. In 1897 Evans became a member of the General Conference Committee (a position he held until his death)

¹⁰Obit. RH, Oct. 30, 1947, 25.

¹¹Percy T. Magan, "Life Sketch of Arthur Grosvenor Daniells," RH, April 18, 1935, 2, 6; RBC, July 17, 1919, 996.

¹²Obit. RH, Aug. 30, 1951, 20.

and was elected president of the General Conference Association (until 1901). He served in a variety of administrative posts including president of the North American Division (1913-1918). At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he was vice-president of the General Conference (1918-1936).¹³

Field, Frank William (1863-1944). Bible teacher. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, Field was from Mt. Vernon Academy where he had taught since 1893. Soon after the conference Field went as a missionary to Japan. He later taught Bible and biblical languages at Pacific Union College.¹⁴

French, Thomas Marian (1883-1949). Educator. He taught business and accounting at Keene Academy and later at Union College. In 1908 he went as a missionary to Africa. During 1915 and 1916 he taught Bible at Stanborough Park Missionary College, forerunner of Newbold College. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he headed the School of Theology at Emmanuel Missionary College (1918-1922). He later taught Bible and served in a variety of administrative posts including associate editor of the *Review and Herald* (1934-1938).¹⁵

French, William Robert (1881-1969). Minister and Bible teacher. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, French was teaching Bible at Oshawa Seminary.¹⁶

Fulton, John Edwin (1869-1945). Minister. He began ministry in Oregon and California (1890-1893). In 1894 he went as an evangelist to New Zealand and spent ten years in Fiji (1896-1906). He held several administrative posts in Australia

¹³*SDA Encyclopedia* [1996], 525.

¹⁴Obit. RH, Feb. 17, 1944, 21.

¹⁵Obit. RH, Jan. 26, 1950, 20-21; *SDA Encyclopedia* [1996], 571.

¹⁶Obit. RH, Feb. 6, 1969, 24.

including president of the Asiatic Division (1915-1921). In 1922 he became president of the North American Division (through 1926).¹⁷

Hamer, Clemen (1883-1952). Stenographer. In 1900 Hamer accepted a call to serve as secretary to W. C. Sisley, and later to A. G. Daniells. A gifted musician, he also taught music. At the 1919 Bible Conference, Hamer transcribed some of the talks including Daniells' talk on July 19. In 1920 he entered medical school and later practiced medicine at Glendale Sanitarium.¹⁸

Haynes, Carlyle Boynton (1882-1958). Minister and author. During World War I he was secretary of the Adventist church's War Commission. During the first half of 1919 Haynes held a well-attended series of evangelistic meetings in Washington, D.C. He was one of the best-known Adventist evangelists between World War I and World War II, and later served in several pastoral and administrative posts.¹⁹

Heald, George Henry (1861-1934). Physician and editor. Heald practiced medicine at St. Helena and Battle Creek Sanitariums. In 1899 he became editor of the *Pacific Health Journal* which in 1904 became *Life and Health*.²⁰

House, Benjamin L. (b. 1881). Bible teacher and minister. About 1902 he held evangelistic meetings in Ohio. In March 1907 he began ministry in the Washington, D.C. area, later moving to Virginia. From 1917 to 1920 he taught Bible at Southwestern Junior College, which he represented at the 1919 Bible Conference.

¹⁷Obit. RH, May 24, 1945, 18.

¹⁸Obit. RH, May 29, 1952, 22.

¹⁹R. E. Harter, "The Washington (D.C.) Theater Report," RH, April 3, 1919, 25-26; Obit. RH, April 24, 1958, 27.

²⁰Obit. RH, March 15, 1934, 22-23.

From 1920 to 1929 he headed the Bible department at Pacific Union College, where he wrote a textbook, *Analytical Studies in Bible Doctrines for Seventh-day Adventist Colleges*. From 1929 to 1932 he headed the Bible department at Union College. He left the church in 1932 after a student confessed to an affair, but shortly before his death he was re-baptized.²¹

Howell, Warren Eugene (1869-1943). Educator. Howell began the Fireside Correspondence School (1909), forerunner of Home Study Institute and Griggs University. He became assistant secretary of the General Conference Education Department (1913-1918), and then head of that department (1918-1930). Howell was instrumental in planning the Bible and history teachers' portion of the 1919 Bible Conference, which included several pedagogical presentations.²²

Isaac, John (1873-1956). Minister and educator. In 1902 Isaac went to Germany as a missionary. From 1906 to 1913 he taught at Walla Walla College, and from 1918 to 1920 was an instructor at Clinton Theological Seminary.²³

Jacobsen, Edward Claire (1893-1971). History teacher. Jacobsen taught at several Adventist schools. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he was teaching at Oakwood Junior College.²⁴

John, Otto M. (1883-1938). Educator who served in a variety of capacities. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, he had just served for five years as dean of the

²¹Phone conversation with Franklin House, M.D, grandson of Benjamin L. House, June 19, 2006. Mayme Harriet House, Sustentation File, GCA.

²²John Francis Waters, "Warren Eugene Howell, Seventh-day Adventist Educational Administrator" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1988).

²³Obit. RH, Aug. 30, 1956, 27.

²⁴Obit. RH, Dec. 2, 1971, 30.

College science department at Washington Missionary College and was about to begin a four year term as associate secretary of the General Conference Department of Education.²⁵

Johnston, Harlan A. (1893-1988). Dean of men and social science teacher at Southern Junior College (1918-1922). Originally from Iowa, Johnston appears to have left denominational employment after 1922.²⁶ According to his own testimony he was one of the younger conferees and expressed thankfulness that he had the privilege of this conference at the beginning of his career. He said that it had only been one year since he had been out of school.²⁷

Kennedy, John Millikin (1884-1956). Teacher. A graduate of Washington Missionary College, no additional information about Kennedy is readily available.²⁸

Kern, Milton Earl (1875-1961). Bible teacher and youth leader. Kern taught Bible at Union College (1900-1904). He then became secretary of the young people's department for the Central Union Conference. When the General Conference organized a young people's department in 1907, Kern became its first secretary. From 1908 to 1912 he also served as president of the Foreign Mission Seminary, forerunner of Washington Missionary College. In 1930 he became associate secretary, and in 1933 secretary, of the General Conference. Kern also served as president of Potomac

²⁵Obit. RH, Feb. 10, 1938, 22.

²⁶Elva B. Gardner, *Southern Missionary College: A School of His Planning*, rev. ed. J. Mabel Wood (Chattanooga, TN: Starkey Printing, 1975), 306.

²⁷RBC, July 19, 1919, 1079.

²⁸Obit. *Pacific Union Recorder*, Dec. 17, 1956, 14.

University (1936-1943) and later as chair of the Ellen G. White Estate Board of Trustees.²⁹

Knox, Walter Tingley (1858-1931). Administrator. Knox held several administrative posts, eventually becoming treasurer of the General Conference (1909-1922). Knox's son-in-law was E. F. Albertsworth.³⁰

Kress, Daniel Hartman (1862-1956). Physician and minister. Kress spent several years in overseas mission service. He returned in 1907 to become the first medical superintendent of the Washington Sanitarium and Hospital where he remained until his retirement in 1939.³¹

Lacey, Herbert Camden (1871-1950). Bible teacher. Born in England, Lacey spent part of his childhood in India and Tasmania. He along with his family joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Tasmania in 1887. After attending Healdsburg College, Battle Creek College, and some experience as a pastor, he went to Australia in 1895 to teach at the Avondale School. Returning to the United States in 1902, he taught at Healdsburg College (1902-1904), Stanborough Park Missionary College in England (1904-1913), Union College (1914-1919), and Washington Missionary College (1919-1920). Lacey gave several presentations at the 1919 Bible Conference. His sister, Ethel May Lacey, was married to W. C. White.³²

Lewis, Charles Clarke (1857-1924). Teacher of history and English. Lewis was chair of the English department at Battle Creek College (1882-1885). After studies at

²⁹Obit. RH, Feb. 22, 1962, 21.

³⁰Obit. RH, Dec. 17, 1931, 21.

³¹Obit. RH, Dec. 27, 1956, 27.

³²Obit. RH, Jan. 25, 1951, 22; *SDA Encyclopedia* [1996], 10:890.

Yale University, he taught at Union College (1891-1896). He later became principal of Southwestern Junior College (1896-1903), president of Walla Walla College (1903-1904), and president of Union College (1904-1910). At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he taught history and other courses at Washington Missionary College and was in charge of the Fireside Correspondence School.³³

Longacre, Charles Smull (1871-1958). Administrator. In 1913 Longacre became religious liberty secretary for the General Conference, a position he held for 30 years.³⁴

Neilsen, Nels P. (1871-1947). Educator and minister. From 1918-1920 Neilsen was president of Hutchinson Seminary. He later spent time in South America as a missionary.³⁵

Olson, A. J. (fl. 1919). President of Oshawa Seminary.

Olson, Herman Olaf (1885-1982). History teacher. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference Olson was president and history teacher at Broadview Swedish Seminary, Illinois. He later served in a variety of administrative and educational positions.³⁶

Palmer, Edwin R. (1869-1931). Administrator. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, Palmer was general manager of the Review and Herald.³⁷

³³Obit. RH, Nov. 27, 1924, 22.

³⁴Obit. RH, Nov. 27, 1958, 27.

³⁵Obit. RH, Dec. 25, 1947, 31.

³⁶Obit. *Adventist Review*, April 15, 1982, 21.

³⁷Obit. RH, March 5, 1931, 27-28.

Parsons, Daniel Alonzo (1879-1954). Minister. Parsons served in a variety of pastoral and missionary posts. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, he was president of the East Pennsylvania Conference.³⁸

Plummer, Lorena Flora Fait (1862-1945). Administrator and educator. A former school teacher, in 1886 she became an Adventist and became actively involved in the Iowa Conference Sabbath School department. From 1918 to 1936 she was secretary of the General Conference Sabbath School department.³⁹

Prenier, Henry Stephen (1881-1958). Bible teacher. A pioneer missionary to Brazil (1908-1911) after his return Prenier taught Bible at a number of Adventist schools. In 1919 he was teaching at South Lancaster Junior College.⁴⁰

Prescott, William Warren (1855-1944). Minister, educator, and administrator. Prescott was the main devotional speaker at the 1919 Bible Conference. At the time of the conference he was a field secretary of the General Conference.⁴¹

Quinn, Rollin David (1869-1928). Minister and administrator. President of the Atlantic Union Conference.⁴²

Robbins, Frank H. (1871-1952). Administrator. Robbins was the president of several conferences. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he was president of the Columbia Union Conference (1919-1938).⁴³

³⁸Obit. RH, Dec. 30, 1954, 23.

³⁹Obit. RH, May 24, 1945, 19.

⁴⁰Obit. RH, Sept. 25, 1958, 27.

⁴¹Obit. RH, Feb. 17, 1944, 18-19; *SDA Encyclopedia* [1996] 11:380-381; Gilbert M. Valentine, *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005).

⁴²Obit. RH, Aug. 30, 1928, 22.

Robinson, Dores Eugene (1879-1957). Editor and minister. In 1919 Robinson was on the editorial staff of the Southern Publishing Association.⁴⁴

Shaw, J. L. (d. 1952). Administrator. In 1919 Shaw was associate secretary of the General Conference.

Shull, Claude Archer (1890-1956). History teacher. Shull taught at several Adventist schools. From 1913 to 1921 he was professor of history at South Lancaster Junior College. He later earned advanced degrees and was the head of several Adventist institutions.⁴⁵

Sorenson, Christian Martin (1875-1965). Minister and Bible teacher. Sorenson earned an M.A. from George Washington University in 1918. During the 1919 Bible Conference he was dean of theology at Washington Missionary College. Sorenson gave a presentation on “Sunday in the Roman Empire” along with a series of presentations on the “King of the North” (with H. C. Lacey) at the Conference.⁴⁶

Spalding, Arthur W. (1877-1953). Editor and teacher. Spalding taught at a number of Adventist schools (Emmanuel Missionary College, Graysville Academy, Bethel Academy, and Fletcher Academy), and from 1917 to 1922 was editor of the *Watchman Magazine*. From 1922 to 1942 Spalding was secretary of the Home

⁴³Obit. RH, March 27, 1952, 20.

⁴⁴Obit. RH, Aug. 29, 1957, 26.

⁴⁵Obit. RH, Jan. 31, 1957, 25; Claude A. Shull, “Supplementary Reading in Social Science Courses of Junior College Grade,” M.A. thesis, Stanford University, 1931; Idem, “The Suitability of the Commercial Entertainment Motion Picture to the Age of the Child” Ed.D. diss., Stanford University, 1939.

⁴⁶Obit. RH, Oct. 7, 1965, 25; Christian Martin Sorenson, “Methods of Character Education in the School,” M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 1918; RBC, July 6, 1919, 208-227.

Commission of the General Conference. Spalding was a prolific writer including several books about Adventist history.⁴⁷

Swedberg, August (1857-1926). Bible teacher and editor. As a student at Battle Creek College he began to work for James White in the Review and Herald office. He edited an Adventist periodical in Swedish and translated many early Adventist publications into that language. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he was teaching Bible at Broadview Swedish Seminary.⁴⁸

Tait, Asa Oscar (1858-1941). Editor. In 1898 he joined the Pacific Press and in 1913 became editor-in-chief of *Signs of the Times*. Tait published several books on Bible prophecy and was a significant contributor to discussions about prophecy and similar issues at the 1919 Bible Conference. He also gave a series of presentations on the covenants.⁴⁹

Taylor, Clifton Lindley (1882-1963). Bible teacher and minister. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he was teaching at Lacombe Junior College, Alberta, Canada. In 1922 he enrolled in Washington Missionary College and upon graduation taught at Atlantic Union College. He later taught and pastored in a number of places across the United States.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Obit. RH, Feb. 18, 1954, 28; A. W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host: First Volume of a History of Seventh-day Adventists Covering the Years 1845-1900* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1949); idem, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1961-1962).

⁴⁸Obit. RH, July 29, 1926, 22.

⁴⁹Obit. RH, May 22, 1941, 21; A. O. Tait, *Heralds of the Morning: The Meaning of the Social and Political Problems of To-day and the Significance of the Great Phenomena in Nature* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915).

⁵⁰Obit. RH, Aug. 1, 1963, 25.

Teesdale, William Homer (1889-1974). Teacher. From 1914 to 1919 he was a teacher at Mount Vernon Academy. He then taught at Southwestern Junior College. He later taught at several other schools and served as associate secretary of the General Conference Department of Education (1935-1946).⁵¹

Tetzlaff, Alfred Bert (1886-1977). Educator. Tetzlaff immigrated to the United States from Russia in 1904. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he was teaching history at Clinton Theological Seminary.⁵²

Thompson, Charles (fl. 1919). Northern Union Conference president.⁵³

Thompson, George B. (1862-1930). Administrator. From 1912 to 1918 Thompson was general secretary for the church in North America. At the time of the conference, he was general field secretary for the General Conference (1918-1926).⁵⁴ In 1919 Thompson published the book, *What Think Ye of Christ* (RHPA).

Town, Nelson Zane (1863-1936). Administrator. Secretary of the General Conference Publishing Department (1908-1930).⁵⁵

Underwood, R. A. (1850-1932). Administrator and minister. Underwood held a large number of administrative posts. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference he was president of the Central Union Conference.⁵⁶

⁵¹Obit. RH, July 11, 1974, 23; William Homer Teesdale, "Plantation Discipline," M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1928; Idem, "Ellen G. White: Pioneer, Prophet," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1933.

⁵²H. E. Rogers, ed., *1920 Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, [1920]), 220.

⁵³RBC, July 6, 1919, 246.

⁵⁴Obit. RH, July 24, 1930, 28.

⁵⁵Obit. RH, Aug. 6, 1936, 22.

⁵⁶Obit. RH, May 5, 1932, 21.

Wakeham, William Henry (1858-1946). Bible teacher. Wakeham taught at several denominational schools before serving in the Middle East and Europe as a missionary (1903-1913). He served as Dean of the School of Theology at Emmanuel Missionary College (1913-1935).⁵⁷

Waldorf, Nels John (1873-1947). Bible teacher. From 1903 to 1918 Waldorf was a missionary in Australia. Upon his return he taught Bible at the White Memorial branch of the College of Medical Evangelists. In 1924 he went to the Southern Union where he worked as a pastor and chaplain. He later taught Bible and church history at Washington Missionary College (1931-1937).⁵⁸

Washburn, Harry Allen (1872-1952). History teacher. From 1910 to 1924, Washburn was head of the history department at Pacific Union College.⁵⁹

Wilcox, Francis McLellan (1865-1951). Editor. A charter student of South Lancaster Academy in 1882, he worked as an evangelist for several years. Ellen G. White participated in his ordination service in 1889 and in 1892 he became editor of the *Sabbath School Worker*. In 1894 he was elected secretary of the Foreign Mission Board and editor of the *Home Missionary* magazine. In 1909 he was elected associate editor of the *Review and Herald*, and two years later became editor-in-chief. He was one of the prominent participants in the 1919 Bible Conference.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Obit. RH, Jan. 30, 1947, 20.

⁵⁸Obit. RH, Jan. 29, 1948, 20. In 1928 Waldorf was chaplain at the Orlando Sanitarium.

⁵⁹Obit. RH, July 31, 1952, 20. H. A. Washburn was not related to Judson S. Washburn who would later become an outspoken critic of the 1919 Bible Conference.

⁶⁰R. F. Cottrell, "Life Sketch of Francis McLellan Wilcox," RH, Sept. 27, 1951, 13.

Wilcox, Milton Charles (1858-1935). Editor. In 1882-1883 he assisted Uriah Smith on the *Review and Herald*. He went in 1884 to England where he started the *Present Truth*. He returned to the United States in 1887 where he assisted E. J. Waggoner on *Signs of the Times*, eventually becoming editor of that paper for more than 25 years. He also served as a general book editor of Pacific Press. In 1918 he took a brief leave of absence from editing to become dean of theology of the College of Medical Evangelists. Wilcox was one of the more venerable conferees at the Bible Conference and gave a lecture on “principles of prophetic interpretation.” Milton was the older brother of Francis M. Wilcox.⁶¹

Wilkinson, Benjamin George (1872-1968). Administrator and educator. Wilkinson graduated from Battle Creek College in 1891. After graduation he did evangelism in Wisconsin. He received a B.A. from the University of Michigan in 1897 and that same year became dean of theology at Battle Creek College. In 1898 he became president of the Canadian Conference and in 1899 became dean of theology at Union College. In 1908 he graduated with a Ph.D. from George Washington University. He also served as dean of theology at Washington Missionary College for five years. From 1908 to 1918 he was president of the Columbia Union. After 1920 he served in a variety of administrative posts.

Williams, Flora H. (1865-1944). Educator. At the time of the 1919 Bible Conference, Williams was educational superintendent for the East Michigan Conference (1919-1920).⁶²

⁶¹Obit. RH, Nov. 14, 1935, 21.

⁶²Obit. RH, Jan. 18, 1945, 20.

Wirth, William G. (1884-1975). Bible teacher. In 1911 Wirth joined the faculty of South Lancaster Academy. For the 1918-1919 school year he taught at Pacific Union College. In 1919 he began graduate studies at the University of California where he obtained an M.A. and Ph.D. and then was employed by the College of Medical Evangelists.⁶³

⁶³Obit. RH, Nov. 6, 1975, 23; W. G. Wirth, "Camille Jordan and the Freedom of Cults in France in 1797," M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1921; idem, "The Recent Near East: A Study and a Solution," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1923.

APPENDIX D

1919 BIBLE CONFERENCE CONSENSUS STATEMENT

In the providence of God we have been granted the enjoyable privilege of meeting together for Bible study, prayer, and Christian fellowship. This has proved to be a season of great blessing. To retire from life's busy activities for a period of quiet thought and deliberation, has brought to us needed spiritual refreshing, and furnished us with increased incentive for future service.

We therefore express our appreciation of the following definite features which have marked the sessions of this Bible Conference:

1. For the spiritual refreshing which has characterized the sessions of the conference throughout. This has been particularly manifest in the devotional service conducted each morning by Elder A. G. Daniells. The studies given on the work of the Holy Spirit, together with the seasons of prayer and social service, have brought encouragement and comfort to all present.
2. For the strong, positive lessons on the character and ministry of Christ conducted by Elder W. W. Prescott. These studies have emphasized anew the deity of Christ and the power of his saving ministry of grace in daily practical Christian experience. It was strongly emphasized that Christ should be made the central theme in all our teaching and preaching.
3. For increased confidence in God, in the integrity of his Holy Word, and in the system of doctrine which we denominate present truth. We can say with added emphasis in the words of Peter, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables." The advent hope appears brighter than ever before. The sure word of prophecy is a true light in the darkness and confusion of the great world of religious thought.
4. For the general unanimity of Christian fellowship and of doctrinal belief which marked the consideration of the fundamental features of the message. This is the more remarkable when it is considered that this is the first conference of the kind which has been held in the denomination. Each teacher has, for the most part, studied and labored alone, but the conference has demonstrated that all stand as a unit on the vital and fundamental principles of Christian doctrine.
5. For the incentive to more earnest Bible study which the conference has aroused. We rejoice in the clear and unmistakable light for this day and generation which Heaven has graciously given us. We recognize, however, that there are still many mines of truth in the Holy Scriptures, and that these will yield their treasures to the earnest, prayerful, humble seeker after right. We therefore pledge ourselves to greater faithfulness in Bible study, not alone of the prophetic word which is meeting a fulfillment in our own day, but of the deeper spiritual truths as well.

6. We believe that the blessings and benefits which result from Bible conferences such as we have enjoyed, should be perpetuated in the future. The few days of study in the present conference have been all too short to reach definite conclusions regarding some details of prophetic interpretation and the comparative value of historic statement. We believe opportunity should be afforded in the future for further comparison of the results of personal study. We therefore earnestly request the General Conference Committee to arrange for another conference of this character in 1920, to be attended by such delegates as may be determined by the committee.

We further suggest that a careful selection of topics be made and assigned to the ministers and teachers at an early date, so that they may have ample time for study and preparation before the next conference convenes.

—Reported by A. G. Daniells, “The Bible Conference,” RH, August 21, 1919, 4.

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Archives and Manuscript Collections

This section describes the principal archives, collections, and unpublished sources used in this study. Published materials will be treated in the final section of the Bibliography.

Billy Graham Center Archives Wheaton, Illinois

The Billy Graham Center Archives located on the campus of Wheaton College has a wealth of historical materials that document the historical Fundamentalist movement. The Center has a rich collection of historical documents on the prophetic conference movement including copies of many of the early conference publications. One of the most valuable collections was small collection 108 that contained a flyer for the 1918 New York prophecy conference.

Biola University Archives La Mirada, California

The Biola University Archives has a rich collection of documents about the career of Lyman Stewart. The most useful part of their collection for the purpose of this dissertation were the Stewart letterbooks, which document his involvement and financing of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*. The Archives also has a number of Fundamentalist serials and other archival materials.

Center for Adventist Research, James
White Library, Andrews University,
Berrien Springs, Michigan

The Center for Adventist Research unites the former Adventist Heritage Center with the Ellen G. White Estate Branch Office in the James White Library. The Center for Adventist Research has an extensive collection of monographs, photographs, artifacts, dissertations, theses, research papers, correspondence, and numerous manuscript collections. The “Seventh-day Adventist Obituary Index” was especially helpful for locating biographical information about conferees. One of the most helpful items found there is a manuscript by B. G. Wilkinson of a talk he gave at the 1919 Bible Conference, but which was not kept with the rest of the transcripts.

General Conference Archives
Silver Spring, Maryland

The General Conference Archives is the official repository for the Seventh-day Adventist Church that, in addition to official records, houses the papers of church leaders. The 1919 Bible Conference transcripts were discovered in 1974 during the organization of the General Conference Archives which was set up in 1973. These transcripts were the principal source utilized in studying the 1919 Bible Conference. One of the most useful collections was the papers of LeRoy Edwin Froom and the sustentation files for which I was able to look up most of the conferees. Another resource that I utilized on an almost daily basis was their online digital archives (www.adventistarchives.org) which contains extensive runs of many Seventh-day Adventist serials including an almost complete run of the *Review and Herald* from 1850 to 1982.

Private Collection of Steven Hopkins
Apopka, Florida

Steve Hopkins is the grandson of Clifton L. Taylor, one of the original conferees at the 1919 Bible Conference. He has in his possession the diaries of his grandfather including those Taylor wrote during the 1919 Bible Conference. Mr. Hopkins provided scanned images of his grandfather's diary entries during the 1919 Bible Conference and placed copies (with accompanying transcriptions) at the Loma Linda University Department of Archives and Special Collections.

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