

# Adventist English Teachers: Some Roots

by John O. Waller

Seventh-day Adventists ventured into higher education, founding Battle Creek College in 1874, a mere 17 years after Lafayette, a small liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, became the first American college to establish a chair of English language and literature. Lafayette, in 1857, so appointed a remarkable young scholar of language, Francis Andrew March (1825-1911), who remained at Lafayette for the next 40 years while becoming one of the world's most eminent philologists. He wrote *A Comparative Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (1870), became director (1879) of the American staff of the great *Oxford English Dictionary*, was elected third president (1892) of the Modern Language Association of America.

These facts alone might make us suspect that English studies in their American infancy were decidedly language-centered, English-language-centered. Indeed they were. For centuries, higher education had been dominated by the intensive study of Latin and Greek. Now, from the mid-1850s, this ancient language emphasis, already being diluted by such expanding disciplines as history, philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences, would be further challenged by a different, and rival, brand of language study. For the entrenched classicists, the era of decline had begun. The new philologists such as March would demonstrate that English had always been more Germanic than

Latinistic, so that studying Latin could not take the student more than a short way toward truly understanding English.

The new study of English aspired to be no less rigorous than the older study of Latin and Greek had been. The new field was, first of all, the English language, as language — its history, the derivations of its words, its grammar, its own best ways of being distinctively itself in rhetorical situations, its triumphant realization of its sublime potentialities when voicing the thoughts and dreams of great orators, essayists and poets. The study of the English language would provide keys to unlock the unique riches of English and American literature.

It was not intended, then, that language and literature would be allowed to drift apart, and decidedly not intended that language study would ever become subordinate, practically crowded out by the study of literature. But neither was it intended, and this point needs emphasizing now when so many self-confident echoes are urging us to scurry “back to the basics,” that the study of grammar would be the end-and-all, driving out the study of literature. The basics, our professional ancestors would have stoutly insisted, were firmly implanted in Professor March's title, “English Language *and* Literature” (emphasis supplied). The two together, always together, an educative force for developing men and women in a dynamically expanding new nation — this ideal would impel the growth of English studies in the second half of the last century.

Even more revolutionary during that same half-century was the transformation of the American public schools from wretchedly taught, haphazardly administered, pov-

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erty-hampered places into something at least recognizably resembling the highly organized, professionally staffed, centrally funded ones we have now. The post-Civil War years, and especially the 1880s and 1890s, witnessed a ferment of newly established and fast-expanding teacher-training institutions, called normal schools; of state and county and district teachers' organizations; of frequently held teachers' institutes at horse-and-buggy distance apart, all over the United States, where successful teachers, some sent from normal schools, would lecture and demonstrate; of the writing, publishing and promoting of textbooks. Suddenly, the education of average boys and girls had become a major American growth industry. It inseparably accompanied the new growth of systematic English studies. The normal schools admitted students with little or no Latin, but with enthusiastic determination to learn how to teach. Many had already begun teaching when as young as 16. They knew what they urgently needed. They looked to the normal schools to help them master the "common branches," and English was the branch from which the others hung.

A distinguished example was one new normal school established in 1879 in forested central Pennsylvania at Lock Haven. Its bulletin proudly announced its aim:

. . . to make the study of English the basis of all other acquirements. No school in the United States gives a more critical course in the study of all that tends to make pupils proficient in the proper and fluent use of their mother tongue. The study of English Classics receives special attention, and no pupil is presented to the Examining Board until he has made an application of English Grammar and Rhetoric in the criticism and analysis of at least *ten* English and American Classics by as many different authors. While pursuing this course he also studies somewhat extended biographies of at least *forty* British and American authors. These critical exercises, in connection with the frequent written recitations, reviews and discussions give our students an exceptional ease and fluency of expression in English.

We carefully note the sequence. The begin-

ning and the end were language. Linguistic — grammatical and rhetorical — insights were applied to the "English Classics." This process led to composition, both written and oral, and the end product was new public school teachers with "an exceptional ease and fluency of expression in English."

**I**n these two complementary contexts, the steady rise of English in the universities and its predominance from the outset in the normal schools, we should view the beginning of Seventh-day Adventist English education. Up to 1900, it is largely the story of two men — Goodloe Harper Bell (1832-1899) at Battle Creek College and George Washington Rine (1859-1938) at Healdsburg and Pacific Union Colleges. Although Bell taught at the college for only its first eight years, teachers he had trained succeeded him there, and his English textbooks were a force in Adventist education even after his death. Both Bell and Rine were recently baptized Seventh-day Adventists deeply committed to Christian education. Both had been nurtured as public school teachers in that time of burgeoning English studies. Bell's first language study textbook, published while he was still at the college, sold widely in the public schools. And at Battle Creek, whether we like it or not, he was primarily a teacher of future public school teachers. In 1877, at a time of almost no Adventist church schools anywhere, there were 235 enrolled in the teacher-training course.<sup>1</sup> Of necessity, they went out into the public schools, where jobs were plentiful. Out at Healdsburg, Rine arrived as a graduate of that normal school back at Lock Haven so resolutely committed to English. And both Bell and Rine, as we shall see, were men of aesthetic sensibility and imaginative literary appreciation who fervently believed that a heart knowledge of good literature would help turn Adventist youth into culturally rounded, spiritually mature, effective witnesses for their faith.

G. H. Bell in 1874 was already a seasoned teacher, 42 years old, who had begun teaching when only 19. We know almost nothing about his early life. His 1899 obituary sketch in the *Youth's Instructor* says he had very

briefly attended Oberlin College until family circumstances forced him out. Before Oberlin, he may have attended an academy somewhere, but this is not confirmed. After Oberlin, he had to educate himself, seizing every spare moment for “training the faculties with which God had blessed him.” By then, he was beginning to be recognized as a superior teacher. The obituary declares that he filled “important positions in various city schools” and “was known as one of the most thorough, successful, and intelligently progressive educators in Michigan.”

Concerning Bell’s teaching methods in his early Battle Creek years, we have very little evidence. A few surviving diary entries and snatches from his students’ letters are largely from his final years at the college. His first textbook was finished the year before he left. One student writes in 1879, “In grammar we are at present, and have been for 3 weeks, considering punctuation; Prof. Bell has worked out a chart by which any style of

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composition in the Eng. language can be punctuated; its rules are equally as concise as those which he has written for the use of capitals.” This same student, attending the college three years earlier, before leaving to earn money, had been delighted with the compositions he and his classmates had written for Bell: “I think here is a splendid chance for improvement especially for myself.” Another student in 1880 writes, “I now have five recitations daily . . . The first in the morning is Literature, which I enjoy *very* much. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

Most probably, though, Bell’s teaching methods and college classroom demeanor

were better suited to the children he had taught for more than 20 years than to the adults who came to Battle Creek. He had a loyal following, but by some students he seems to have been more feared than loved. During recitations, he was an exacting drillmaster who did not always avoid the pain-dealing weapons of ridicule. His Battle Creek principal, the University of Michigan-educated Sidney Brownsberger, writing years later, preferred to remember Bell as underappreciated because he had so persistently endeavored “to inculcate in youth the principles necessary to the formation of a perfect character. . . . The average youth will resist even the patient endeavors of such faithful and true men and women. . . . They are content to remain in a lower scale and resent any persistent effort to have them progress toward the highest ideal. . . . Still Prof. Bell was appreciated by many of his pupils and assigned his proper rank among educators.”<sup>4</sup> But Ellen G. White, by 1880, took a less benign view, testifying against Bell’s tactless severity and his unremitting concentration upon grammar, particularly in his “work for those that were to be ministers.” “He had not,” wrote Mrs. White, “adapted himself to the situation. He has not always been patient, and encouraged men who have left their fields of labor at a sacrifice of time and expense to learn what they could in a short time. . . . He might have done his part in sending forth these men with much greater knowledge if he had not made grammar his idol, and kept the minds under his charge drilling upon grammar when they should have been receiving a general education upon many subjects. . . . He has kept drilling certain students upon grammar — making that the one all-important study. . . and some have left college with only half an education. . . . In this particular he has kept the minds confined to such a thoroughness as would not be essential in one case out of a hundred.”<sup>5</sup>

Before Bell left Battle Creek to become the first principal of South Lancaster Academy (predecessor of Atlantic Union College), he had become unpopular with a large part of the college students. He himself, writing to Brownsberger some years later, said that he

had been “hissed out of the college when I left it.”<sup>6</sup> To what extent this experience, or Mrs. White’s counsel, or both may have altered his fundamental approach to grammar — or whether, indeed, his approach was ever substantially altered — we can only speculate. But his language textbooks present an educator to whom the finer details of grammatical theory were of only minor importance. His books consistently made a point of starting with actual sentences, first calling attention to just what each sentence said, its every implication — its “thought,” as he always called it. Only after the thought had been carefully explored did Bell venture to introduce any traditional grammatical terminology. The entire first volume of his language series, *Primary Language Lessons*, avoids using even one grammatical term — not even “noun” or “verb” — but gives short readings, mostly about nature, followed by question after question, simply worded, all eliciting the thought brought out by every word or phrase, but never abstractly labeling any. A child starting with such instruction would have been thoroughly habituated to grammatical ways of thinking before encountering any grammatical terms.

**B**ell stressed this philosophy in his instructions to teachers. “For example,” he wrote, “we think of *objects*, and in speaking of them must *name* them; we think of the *qualities* and *actions* of objects, and in expressing such thoughts must have words to denote qualities and actions; we think *when*, *where*, *how*, and *why* certain actions took place, or certain conditions existed, and must have words for the expression of such thoughts. This plan is adhered to, not only in the introductory lessons, but throughout the entire work.” “Thus,” he explains, “the energetic teacher will be enabled to prevent his pupils from losing the *thought* in the intricacies of grammatical analysis. . . . This is of utmost importance; for how often the pupil becomes wholly oblivious to the meaning of a sentence while giving its grammatical analysis!” Concerning figures of speech, Bell insisted, “The name of the figure, being in itself of little consequence, is made wholly incidental;

but the figure is so explained as to show why it is appropriate, and what gives it its chief charm.” And finally he admonishes the teacher: “Do not be too strenuous or exacting in those mere technical forms of parsing that have no practical bearing upon the use of the language. Remember that parsing is only a means to an end. . . .”<sup>7</sup> The sentences quoted in this paragraph were dated May 29, 1881, before Bell left the college but after the comments by Ellen White. They may or may not represent a change in philosophy or practice. Mrs. White had criticized the wasteful prolongation of grammatical drill, inflicted upon mature ministerial students to the neglect of more valuable information, and the professor’s impatience — his failure to adapt “himself to the situation” — not necessarily the fundamentals of the method itself.

To insure that the thoughts in the sentences studied should be well expressed and intrinsically valuable, Bell frequently turned to the works of leading English and American authors. Lines from Bryant, Whittier,

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Longfellow, Lowell, Coleridge, Shelley grace his grammar exercises, so that grammar and literature blend obliquely together. “Good taste in language, like good manners,” he explained, “is acquired by association. This continued association with the best thoughts and the best forms of expression is afforded by the multitudinous examples furnished for class drill. . . . In this way a love for the concise and beautiful in thought and style is steadily, and certainly, though unconsciously attained. The culture thus secured. . . leads the learner to select and enjoy the best reading our literature affords, and to shun the coarse and vulgar.”<sup>8</sup>

In his direct teaching of literature, Bell believed in minimizing biography and history and studying the literature itself. Here, too, he emphasized thought. "How do you progress in the study of literature?" he wrote a former student. "The book I lent you is not a book that treats of literature so much as of literary men. I can form a better acquaintance with authors from reading their writings than I can from reading what other men say of them. . . ." His preface to the literature volume of his language series was even more emphatic: "The first thing to be considered is the primary object for which the study is to be pursued. It is pleasant to know who wrote this or that book, and to know the history and peculiarities of noted authors; but all this does not necessarily ennoble one's character, discipline his mind to more vigorous thinking, or materially improve his language. It is not studying literature, but simply its history. The real study of literature is the becoming acquainted with such writings as are by their intrinsic worth valuable to all people in all times. Such is the Bible; and such are all writings whose tendency is to call into healthy action the nobler attributes of our nature, thus contributing to the building up of a beautiful and symmetrical manhood. . . to become fully acquainted with such writings is to drink in of their spirit, — to be stirred by the motives and emotions that prompted them. Here is where the help of the teacher is most needed. Reading aloud with the class is one of the best things a teacher can do. His enthusiasm, his appreciation, his sympathy with the thoughts and motives of the author, will be contagious."<sup>10</sup>

And even more pointed for Adventist teachers is this appeal:

This leads to the paramount object of studying literature in schools; namely, the developing of so pure a taste that the learner will be able to discriminate at once between real literature and trash. The time will come for our pupils when they cannot have parents, teachers, or friends by their side to tell them whether or not a book is good reading. They must learn to recognize for themselves the moral tendency, the literary character, the trend of influence, which constitute the inherent power

for good or evil of any piece of writing. There is but one way for teachers to inculcate this, and that is by getting their pupils so thoroughly enamored with what is true and beautiful that they will instinctively turn away from everything of an opposite nature.<sup>11</sup>

Healdsburg College, mainly an academy at first, was starting its fifth year when Rine, in his first year of Adventism, joined the faculty for the 1886-87 term. Rine was a Pennsylvania "Dutch" German, about 27, and strikingly diminutive, hardly five feet tall. But he was every precious inch a teacher, an 1883 graduate of the strenuous teacher-training program at Central State Normal School, Lock Haven, Pa., under the principalship of a phenomenal educator, Dr. Albert Newton Raub. A man of admirable integrity, Raub epitomized the finest order of progressive career educator during those boom years. When Rine finished there, the school Raub had founded six years before was leading the normal schools of the state in producing certified teachers. Raub himself was the product of a normal school, although he had honorary degrees from both Princeton and Lafayette (March's college). He had authored 17 textbooks in grammar, rhetoric, literature, arithmetic, reading, general teaching methods and school management, and was much sought as a lecturer and consultant at teachers' institutes. After leaving Lock Haven, he would found his own educational publishing company and issue a weekly magazine, *Educational News*, to promote his generally conservative brand of educational reform. Still later, Raub became president of Delaware College, which would evolve into the University of Delaware. Raub had a reasoned opinion on almost every conceivable educational topic, and Rine was his disciple, following his methods and introducing some of his textbooks at Healdsburg and sending him at least three articles for the *News*.

Two of these, written during the year Rine joined the Healdsburg faculty, show his professional pride and lively English prose. He deplores the mechanical use of "model lessons" from teachers' manuals: "What our

schools most need at the present time is a great deal more *doing* and a great deal less *talking about* doing, and a little less. . . of the disgusting 'Polly wants a cracker' reproduction of a 'A Model Lesson in numbers by Miss \_\_\_\_\_ of C. C. Normal School.' " Every teacher has the duty "to devote several hours" a day "to thinking out, devising and formulating plans for each day's work." Prepackaged lessons will not work because every particular school has its own "peculiar requirements," and no two teachers are the same: "We believe there is a deep, hidden well-spring of power in each one of us, but so many of us have not yet unearthed ourselves sufficiently to discover it. It is . . . vital . . . that every teacher should know whence the source of her power so that she may take advantage of it in her all-important mission of training that most subtle and susceptible organism of man — the mind."<sup>12</sup> Another short article protests

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against shallowness in self-cultivation, the "great tendency in our schools and colleges . . . to taste everything and digest nothing." Under such superficial study and teaching, "the mind becomes enfeebled and dwarfed, and languishes from sheer starvation. . . . Surface culture is worse than no culture at all. Its fruits are vanity, presumption and pedantry. It confers no practical ability, power, or material advantage. . . . Deep, thorough culture is what is needed. Every subject taught should be fully investigated, scrutinized, examined, analyzed, imbibed, and appropriated by the learner." Already, we discover a Rine mannerism that would become folklore during his 31 years (broken by periods of

other denominational service) at Healdsburg and Pacific Union: his delightful recitations of catalogs of synonyms, each word topping the previous one, reinforcing the power of the sentence! He concluded on a biblical note, " 'In all thy getting get understanding'; but to understand something is to know it completely, and comprehend it fully. We must be masters of something or everything will be master of us."<sup>13</sup>

**W**e remember that Bell believed that studying literature itself was more important than learning facts about authors' lives. No doubt Rine would have agreed, but from his master Raub he adopted a method of using authors' lives to arouse student interest in the authors as human beings. When we begin to know a person, supposedly, we want to know his thoughts, listen to his songs, hear the stories he has to tell us.

This method provided a scenario for our most fruitful source of Rine's literary ideals. During 1898 and 1899, his twelfth year at Healdsburg College, he sent the *Youth's Instructor* a series of articles concerning American literature. An imaginary high school teacher, undoubtedly modeled after Rine himself, and a class of "bright, earnest, ambitious students," who also, improbably, write and talk like Rine, spend a term discussing the lives and writings of Irving, Bryant, Hawthorne and ten other American writers. The students look up their authors in reference books (exemplifying Raub's principle that "it is what a child does for himself that gives him culture and strength"), and write their findings in their own best English to read aloud in class. Quite patently, however, Rine's chief motive throughout, using both teacher and students, was to give his *Youth's Instructor* readers his own ideas concerning literature.

Best of the series was an essay, "Poetry: Its Nature and Mission."<sup>14</sup> "The most suggestive and poetical of attempted definitions that I have found is from the poet Shelley: 'A great poem is a fountain forever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight.' " Rine's matured aesthetic orientation, we observe, was of the English Romantic

Movement—his germinal critics Shelley and Coleridge. “A genuine fountain,” he continues, “bubbles, sparkles, refreshes, and gladdens forever. The most protracted draught can not exhaust its lusty life. Its uses and interests are perennial. We quaff its cool, limpid waters with as much zest and delight the thousandth time as we did the first. Even so is a great poem.” And then like Shelley himself in his similes for the skylark, Rine gives equivalents for a poem: “like the first acorn ‘which held all oaks potentially,’ ” “a candle from which a thousand other candles may be lighted without in the least diminishing its own light.” True poetry gives a “refined, spiritual pleasure which beautifies and expands the soul and warms and deepens the sympathies.”

Rine valued literature for its *affective* value, what it can *do* to and for readers:

The genius of the poet, with his metaphors, similes, personifications . . . looks upon a dry stick, and it instantly becomes like Aaron’s rod, budding and blossoming into a thing of life and power and beauty. He lifts his wand over the arid waste, and it becomes a sunlit garden. The mission of poetry is to enable those who have eyes and see not, and ears, but hear not, to perceive and enjoy the beauty and the eternal meaning which God has put into all his works; it is to make men happier, stronger, and more useful by making them better.

As we move into our own century, the roots of our profession proliferate in many directions—several expanding colleges, various new academies and church schools across the land. A competently edited Seventh-day Adventist educational periodical, *Christian Education*, provides details of English curricula and teaching philosophies.

A Battle Creek College graduate and sometime colleague of Rine’s at Healdsburg, Warren E. Howell (1869-1943), while associate editor of *Christian Education* in 1911, summed up his position on the teaching of literature. This subject, he wrote, occasioned “differences of opinion,” but the diversity was “made needlessly wide and dissonant . . .

by wrong methods” of evaluating. We approach literature “in too ‘scientific’ an attitude of mind,” becoming too preoccupied with “its forms and technique, with minor, petty details of history and philology and biography . . . and attempt to reduce its production to rules and regulations . . . . With our compass we describe a circle on the plane of literature and say, ‘What is inside of this circle is good, what is outside is bad.’ With as much propriety might we fence off an acre in the heart of some city and say that all the people living on that acre are good, all the rest are bad. . . . People live in literature as they live in a city—all mingled together, good, bad, and medium. Truth and beauty, error and ugliness, dwell together in literature like trees in a forest. Analytical, dissecting, piecemeal processes do not work well in discovering any of them.” Howell, of course, an educator generally remembered for his conservatism, was not advocating an “anything goes” attitude toward literature that would condone the pernicious or trashy. What he desired was a rational overview. “It is not so much the gem of beauty here and the morsel of truth there that constitute the worth of a production, but what is the massed effect—what the influence upon my life that I can neither gage in inches nor decompose into its chemical elements, though I may be certain it is uplifting? The impression I carry away with me is what tells.” So we gather from literature “inspiration and food for nobler, broader, more fruitful living.” The greatest writers are among God’s “many interpreters of himself among men,” who help us see and learn “in the experience and work of others, the ways of God in dealing with men.” Through literature we “get outside of our own small circle of thinking and consider what other men and women have thought and said. . . . Reading the best thoughts of others is a powerful stimulus to our own thinking. By communing with the best minds, our own tastes are formed.”<sup>15</sup>

With Mahlon Ellsworth Olsen (1873-1952), our story encounters a man with an earned Ph.D. in English. The son of O. A. Olsen, a former General Conference president, he was in his middle thirties when he received his doctorate, at his own expense,

from the University of Michigan in 1909. For eight years previously, he had worked in England as managing editor of a health reform periodical, *Good Health*. His Ann Arbor dissertation, about the prose of the King James Version, was many years later (1947) reduced and revised for a book. The teaching of English—especially of writing and of literature—was Olsen’s best-loved work, although it directly occupied hardly more than a dozen full-time years of his life, divided between Washington Missionary College (1907-1917) and Union College (1920-1923). After 1923, he was president of Fireside Correspondence School (Home Study Institute) and worked tirelessly building and promoting that important work until his retirement in 1946.

Olsen attributed his great love of good literature largely to the influence of Bell, under whom he took private lessons while living at Battle Creek. Olsen liked to tell of his six a.m. visit to catch Bell, who also grew and sold vegetables, before he started on his morning rounds:

I found Professor Bell dressed in a suit of blue jeans with an old straw hat on his head. . . . At this . . . time the number of his students was very small, and his income must have been likewise. Yet he seemed as happy and unconcerned as if everything were going his way . . . It was restful just to be in the neighborhood of such a man. I began the conversation. “Good morning, Professor Bell.” “Good Morning, my young friend. Did you wish to see me?” “Yes, Professor Bell, I would like to study literature with you this summer.” “You are from Battle Creek College?” “Yes.” “Well, I have had one or two college students come to me and want to rush them through Literature in the summer, so as to get the grade. I don’t do jobs of that kind.” “But I want to study literature under you because I am interested in the subject and want to take plenty of time to do it full justice.” “Won’t you insist on my taking you through before school begins next fall?” “Not at all. I hope you will let me study with you for a year or more.” “Oh,

well, if that is your idea, come along and study with me. We’ll have the best time in the world. I thought you were one of those young fellows who are wanting a grade, and as little work attached to it as possible. But if you are of the other sort, we shall get along famously. When do you wish to begin?”

Olsen remembered the lessons as “exceedingly informal.” They “actually lasted, with some interruptions, throughout the rest of my college course, and in fact till Professor Bell died some five years later.” Olsen did most of the reading. Bell would ask a few questions, Olsen would ask more. “Sometimes he would read a few lines to bring out some special point, and he read with wonderful sympathy and interest, seeming to enter into the inner heart of the author, and give such an interpretation of the words as the writer himself would give. . . .” They would always begin punctually, but would not “end

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on the hour. It was a real companionship, and it led us afield under the open heavens.” They would sometimes bicycle out to “some deep wood where birds and squirrels kept us company. Sitting down on a fallen log we discoursed on the deep things of life. . . . It was not always what he said, but what he somehow inspired his pupil to think and say.” With Bell, Olsen first read Keats and developed a profound love for Wordsworth, who became his favorite poet. Bell “explained that the reading of the works of Wordsworth would mean so much to us in after life, how we would get a new insight into poetry of the noble and serious kind and would come to look on the woods and fields with a deeper sympathy and interest than before.”



“Suffice it to say,” Olsen testified, “that Professor Bell gave me his matchless companionship all along the way and every hour that I spent with him in the study of English literature was one of delight and sometimes of rapture. We walked hand in hand through the centuries, studying the noble and beautiful things that will live on through the ages, and feeding our souls on that which makes life precious and meaningful. The Bible became dearer and also more intelligible to me because it holds in itself all that is noblest and best in literature, and these other authors but lead up to it. Other studies became more interesting to me and likewise more intelligible, because of the intimate companionship I had cultivated with the best writers.”<sup>16</sup>

Olsen represented also the dedicated research scholar. He worked, as his busy schedule allowed, for many long months in and out of the libraries of the United States and Europe upon an immensely ambitious history of Adventism, culminating in Seventh-day Adventism, a study fated to be greatly reduced in scope before it was finally published. In his long letter to the General Conference Council in 1913, describing his complicated researches and requesting additional time, we find the credo of the true research scholar:

If we want a history which will not have to be re-written, which will be a credit to the denomination, it must not show signs of haste. There must be nothing in it ill-digested or immature; it must show wisdom in its statement of facts, as well as courage and skill in handling the narrative. It must be interesting without being sensa-

tional, and must give an account of the rise and development of this denomination which will cheer and encourage the hearts of our own people and at the same time set us in a proper light with the general public. Such a history is sure to be read by friends and by enemies, and a careless word here, and an unfortunate expression there, might work untold injury to the Cause. . . .

No book worthy of the name can be written except as the outgrowth of a deep heart experience. In fact, good books are never made mechanically; they grow, and sometimes their growth is slow. . . . I also want your earnest prayers. I feel that my path is beset with many difficulties. Unless divinely helped step by step, I am sure to go wrong. Indeed, had I at the outset realized to the full the difficulties that would confront me, I am afraid I should have declined the task. But now that I have gone so far, I am determined never to give up, but with God’s help to press forward to the goal.<sup>17</sup>

Upon stout foundations laid by such articulate scholar-teachers, such lovers of the beautiful and true in thought and language, Seventh-day Adventist English education has rested. With prayerful humility, trusting never in our own unaided wisdom, but guided by Scripture and later prophetic witness, we like them must do our work with the proper measure and quality of unassuming pride. Why should we, too, not be proud to perform and daily strive to do better, the always rewarding work that God Himself has commissioned us to do?

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16. Taken largely from typescript by Olsen, "A Teacher of the Olden Time," in Olsen private papers. Courtesy Mrs. Alice Olsen Roth. See also Olsen, "Recollections of Prof. G. H. Bell," *Youth's Instructor*, May 18, 1920.

17. Archives, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Record Group 11, Incoming Letters, 1913. T. L. S., M. E. Olsen to General Conference Council, Jan. 16, 1913. Permission of Archives and Mrs. Alice Olsen Roth.