

the Genesis kinds. The resulting argument appeared to be circular. A year later he completed *Studies in Creationism*, a mimeographed text used during 1946 and 1947 as a reference for his classes at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Marsh devoted some twenty-five pages to the amalgamation question, again restating most of the previous arguments. The Review and Herald Publishing Association published a heavily revised

version of *Studies in Creationism* in 1950 that stressed the impossibility for Genesis kinds to cross, but completely omitted any discussion of the amalgamation problem itself.

26. Harold W. Clark, "Amalgamation, A revision of a paper issued March 1, 1942," (Angwin, Calif.: March 1, 1948).

27. Information in a letter to the author from Marsh (Jan. 10, 1979).

Ellen White & Doctrinal Conflict: Context of the 1919 Bible Conference

by Bert Haloviak
with Gary Land

From the late 1890s until the 1920s, the Seventh-day Adventist Church faced theological controversies over pantheism, the sanctuary, and the meaning of the "daily" (to early Adventists, "daily" was a crucial word found in Daniel 8:11-13 in the King James Bible). These controversies resulted in several leading figures leaving the denomination; moreover, they engendered ad-

ditional controversy over the doctrinal and historical authority of the writings of Ellen White. Indeed, the authority of Ellen White became the focus of discussion and an important source of the divisions at the 1919 Bible and History Teachers Conference. Even defenders of Ellen White developed divergent understandings of inspiration (see SPECTRUM, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 23-57). What follows is an account of this turbulent period of theological debate. The ideas debated then have some parallels today. Certainly opposing interpretations of the authority of Ellen White have re-emerged in strikingly similar terms.

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Pantheism

The debate about pantheism had its roots in the aftermath of the 1888 General Conference. Out of prolonged discussions following the 1888 General Conference session debate over justification by faith

arose a movement urging Adventists to "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The conviction that, after the acceptance of God's righteousness, the Lord would pour out His Spirit to enable the finishing of the work occupied a central position in the *Review and Herald*, and at campmeetings during 1897 to 1899; it was articulated primarily by A. T. Jones, newly-named editor of the *Review and Herald*, and A. F. Ballenger, a prominent SDA minister. As editor, Jones concluded practically every editorial for over a year with the words "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." As a revivalist, Ballenger traveled from church to church and campmeeting to campmeeting preaching that same theme.

Jones had by this time added a significant element to the message, one with the potential, it seemed, of uniting the often antagonistic medical and ministerial elements of the church:

Perfect holiness embraces the flesh as well as the spirit; it includes the body as well as the soul. Therefore, as perfect holiness cannot be attained without holiness of body, and as holiness of body is expressed in the word "health," so perfect holiness can not be attained without health . . . Do you not see by all this that in the principles of health for the body and righteousness for the soul, both inwrought by the Holy Spirit of God, the Lord is preparing a people unto perfect holiness, so that they can meet the Lord in peace, and see him in holiness?

The connection of health reform with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit received consistent emphasis in the *Review and Herald* during this period.¹

As did others who preached the Holy Ghost message, Ballenger considered it to be the culmination of the 1888 emphasis. He presented the message as consisting of five essential steps:

First, repentance of sin; second, a claiming of pardon, or the imputed righteousness of God by faith; third, the claiming of the keeping power of God, or imparted righteousness by faith; fourth, the claiming of "the promise of the Spirit through faith;" fifth, the claiming of the gift of healing by faith.

According to Ballenger, "physical healing is now present truth to Seventh-day Adventists, but only to those who will give the Lord the glory." He urged the church to "clear the King's highway" of sins so that "signs and wonders may be done by the name of his holy child Jesus." Reports of physical healings regularly arose out of the campmeetings where Ballenger preached.²

Ballenger's concept of physical healing depended upon his understanding of the atonement, which for him included Christ's bearing of the physical illnesses of the world upon the cross. As he explained in his book *Power for Witnessing*, published in 1900:

It is clear that our Lord took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses that we might not have to bear them; that we might be loosed from them; that they might depart from us. Jesus bore them therefore, that He might bear them away from us, that we might bear them no more. All this proves that the gospel includes salvation from sickness as well as salvation from sin.³

A similar view appeared in the writings of E. J. Waggoner, who had edited the *British Present Truth* during the 1890's. He taught that the power by which a person received forgiveness of sins was the same power that healed disease and asserted that "perfect purity" was "absolutely necessary" for God's remnant people.⁴

Opposition to these views soon arose, notably from George Irwin, president of the General Conference, in letters to Ellen White. He observed that the Battle Creek physician J. H. Kellogg, who was influenced by these views, seemed to be moving increasingly away from teaching that could be termed "denominational." Furthermore, younger doctors—such as David Paulson, D. H. Kress, and Howard Rand, and ministers, including W. W. Prescott, E. J. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones—were "running along extreme lines also." He told Mrs. White, "I feel more and more to thank God for the Spirit of Prophecy; for it is our rudder that will guide us safely over the shoals and breakers that are before us." He called upon her to return to the United

States from Australia as soon as possible.⁵

Meanwhile, Irwin turned to his long-time associates to restore the fundamentals. He noted that Stephen Haskell in his work brought out the "great underlying principles of the message, which exploded many errors and beliefs that have been gaining a foothold in the minds of some." Haskell and J. N. Loughborough could combat these elements, he believed, because of their previous experience in dealing with fanaticism.⁶ Subsequently, articles by Haskell, Loughborough, and others appeared that were seemingly designed to counter the new perfectionism that was becoming more extremist.⁷ The Holy Flesh movement, concentrated in Indiana, was a major manifestation of this extremism at the end of the century.⁸

The issues came partially to a head when, at the British Conference meeting at Southsea, England, in 1903, conservative Adventists in England criticized E. J. Waggoner because of his teachings at the Bible School and in the *Present Truth*. The question of continued financial support for both the school and magazine arose. G. A. Irwin, then president of the Australasian Union Conference, who was representing the General Conference, reported that "the brethren there just came right up and took their stand, and said they could no longer sanction such teaching that was tearing down all order and organization." According to Irwin, Waggoner retorted that "the whole denomination was in the dark, and that sometime they might possibly see it if they did not drift entirely away and merge into a papacy."⁹ Waggoner soon submitted to Daniells a letter of resignation, remarking that Brother Irwin had done "his duty nobly for 'the old landmarks.'"¹⁰

The pantheistic implications of the new perfectionist theology appeared most clearly in John Harvey Kellogg's *The Living Temple*, which the denomination eventually refused to publish. The roots of Kellogg's philosophy reveal a remarkable similarity to that of Ballenger, Waggoner, and others. Kellogg's path led from a certain view of Christ's atonement. In 1902 he wrote:

Christ came to this earth with a mission of deliverance, whose scope was large enough to comprehend the whole world,

with all its needs, . . . Man needs physical healing as much as moral regeneration, and complete success is not possible in either one without the other.¹¹

Thus through the atonement, according to Kellogg, there was present in nature and in every living being, in man, a beneficent intelligence which is continually creating, restoring, renewing, and rebuilding, always doing the best that could possibly be done under the circumstances. This is the real healing power, active in every living cell, and particularly in the blood.

At the same time, Kellogg expressed his belief in a personal God in heaven. He wrote Mrs. White: "Some of the brethren have gotten the idea that we do not believe in a personal God, which is certainly very wrong. There could be no worship without a personal God."¹²

" . . . Waggoner retorted that 'the whole denomination was in the dark, and that sometime they might possibly see it if they did not drift entirely away and merge into a papacy.' "

Kellogg denied pantheism, mysticism, or any other false teaching and considered attacks against him as largely manufactured. He noted that he had believed the concepts presented in *The Living Temple* since the 1890's and pointed to instances where those concepts were published by himself and others during the 1890's. He specifically mentioned the writings of Mrs. S. M. I. Henry, W. W. Prescott, and Ellen White. By 1903 Kellogg believed he saw the source of the difficulty. He wrote W. W. Prescott:

When we say God is in the tree, the word "God" is understood in its most comprehensive sense, and people understand the meaning to be that the Godhead is in the tree, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, whereas the proper understanding is that God the Father sits upon his throne in heaven where God the Son is also; while God's

life, or Spirit or presence is the all-pervading power which is carrying out the will of God in all the universe.¹³

Kellogg's explanations were insufficient, however, and opposition to his book prevented its publication by the denomination. A. G. Daniells, president of the General Conference, observed:

I consider the whole matter a deeply laid scheme to overthrow our cause and work, and to defeat the movement for which this denomination has been called into existence.¹⁴

Daniells, I. H. Evans, and others saw *The Living Temple* crisis as part of a "spiritualistic" teaching within the denomination that had existed for many years.¹⁵

Ellen White supported their position, noting that such "spiritualistic sentiments," had "for years been coming in." In several testimonies, she noted that Kellogg was misapplying scriptures, taking them out of context, and "giving a wrong application" to them; he was advocating erroneous views that were destructive to the landmarks; he was accepting erroneous theories that had been met time and time again in the past; his system led to a downplaying of the Sabbath; it taught, in effect, that "My Lord delayeth his coming"; it subverted the truth found "in the revelation given by Christ to John to give to the churches."¹⁶

W. W. Prescott extended Ellen White's testimonies regarding Kellogg to the entire church:

The instruction of the Testimonies does not have reference simply to one man or one book. There is no doubt that repeated efforts will be made to introduce error into the teaching of this message; and the instruction given in these Testimonies is designed to prepare our people so that they may be able to discern between truth and error by whomsoever presented.¹⁷

The testimonies did help, in fact, to clarify the differences between the pantheist group and other Adventists. As a result of reading these messages, some pulled away from the pantheist path—Prescott himself among them—whereas others, including E. J. Waggoner, refused to acknowledge that they were teaching error. A. G. Daniels

regarded the conflict over pantheism as an opportunity for the reassertion of historic Adventist theology, writing Ellen White in appreciation of her call "for us to come back to the peculiar and special truths given to this people at the beginning of this movement."¹⁸

Despite Daniell's appreciation for Ellen White's role in the conflict over pantheism, the Kellogg crisis raised important questions about Ellen White that refused to disappear. Many of those who moved toward pantheism originally took an extremely literal—perhaps fundamentalist would be an accurate term—view of Ellen White's writings. When urged, for example, to explain a pre-1900 testimony relating to medical work, Kellogg stated in 1905: "I don't know that it needs explanation. There is just the statement there." He further affirmed, "What is the use of trying to explain what the Lord is doing, what the Lord says. The Lord says it as he wants to say it." This approach to Ellen White's writings may explain why Kellogg believed he saw parallels between his own theology and hers.¹⁹

A. T. Jones also espoused a fundamentalist interpretation of Ellen White's writings. He told the congregation at the Battle Creek Tabernacle:

I have not a cent's worth of respect for any such plea as is made too often and especially of late years on "Testimonies up-to-date"; as if a Testimony up-to-date is to take the place of all that ever went before it. Mahomet taught the doctrine as to his revelations—that the last revelation took the place of all that went before it. But God's revelation is not that way. God's revelation is truth, and is just as good today as it was a thousand years ago. It never gets out of date; and the last one that comes is not going to contradict, or vitiate, or set aside, or annihilate any that went before it. . . . No sir, the Bible is the Word of God. It is the same today as it was when Isaiah wrote it, when Amos wrote it, when Hosea wrote it, when Paul wrote

it, and will be the same after the world is ended and gone. It is so with the Testimonies, too, as certainly as they are the truth of God.²⁰

In line with this, Jones refused to interpret in historical context an 1897 testimony that there should not be a single person regarded as General Conference president, and thus he continually opposed A. G. Daniells' ascendancy to that office. When Ellen White herself offered to help resolve his questions, Jones replied,

Such a proposition in itself surrenders at once the whole ground of the claim in behalf of your writings as the word of God, or as given by inspiration of God. For if the writings were really the word of God—a. They need no explanation. b. If the writings to be explained were not the word of God, then I would not want any explanation on them; for I would not care any more for them than for any other writings that were not the word of God.²¹

The Jones-Kellogg position on the inspiration of Ellen White seemed to place them in an awkward situation with respect to apparently inconsistent messages. They could totally reject all the messages or explain the inconsistencies away. They followed the latter route and concluded that in some of her testimonies Mrs. White was influenced by others. Thus not all that she wrote could be considered inspired. Once they placed themselves into the position of having to decide which of the writings were inspired and which were not, it seemed merely a question of time before they no longer would feel comfortable in the church.²²

Responding to this, Ellen White accused Jones and Kellogg of “undermining the foundation pillars of the faith.” She noticed “misrepresentations and falsehoods” regarding the testimonies and warned that “Very adroitly some have been working to make of no effect the Testimonies of warning and reproof that have stood the test for half a century. At the same time, they deny doing any such thing.” She frequently alluded to the alleged human influences on the testimonies, stating that many had gone into infidelity through the position “some-

body has told Sister White.” She pointed out:

Unless there is a breaking away from the influence that Satan has prepared, and a reviving of the testimonies that God has given, souls will perish in their delusion.²³

Nevertheless, the Kellogg-Jones crisis was only the beginning of the disunion over the “spirit of prophecy” that was to plague the denomination in the early years of the century. Other apostasies sprang from—and operated in conjunction with or independently of—the Battle Creek faction. The element that most had in common was their conclusion that portions of Ellen White's writings were not inspired.

“Once they placed themselves into the position of having to decide which of the writings were inspired and which were not, it seemed merely a question of time before they no longer would feel comfortable in the church.”

With Ellen White's testimonies helping to sharpen the differences, Daniells was able to form an alliance with Butler, Evans, Haskell, and others against Waggoner, Kellogg, Jones, and their associates who, in addition to preaching varying degrees of pantheism, were questioning Ellen White. Although the lines seemed sharply drawn, there were greater theological differences, particularly in relationship to Ellen White's writings, among the defenders of historic Adventism than the participants realized.

The Sanctuary

Cracks in this alliance of defenders began appearing as Adventism responded to A. F. Ballenger's teachings on the sanctuary, the second topic of theological controversy to achieve dominance near the turn of the century. Ellen White was still deeply

concerned with the pantheism crisis and its effects when reports arrived from England, where Ballenger was teaching that full atonement was made when Christ died. When He ascended, He went into the Most Holy Place and has been there ever since. This is substantiated, Ballenger argued, by Hebrews 6:19 where the phrase "within the veil," when compared to Old Testament usage, clearly refers to the Most Holy Place. Finally, Ballenger believed that it was impossible to harmonize his position with Ellen White's writings, the differences being "irreconcilable." This sprang from his understanding that Ellen White's use of "within the veil" theologically resolved the meaning of the expression.²⁴ Ballenger's critics regarded these teachings as a challenge to fundamental Seventh-day Adventist doctrine and reported that they were causing problems in England, Wales, and Ireland.²⁵

At the 1905 General Conference session, Ballenger presented his sanctuary teachings in three one-hour discussions before a select committee of twenty-five. In his first presentation Ballenger examined texts that used the phrase "within the veil" and put forward nine inconsistencies between scripture and the Adventist teaching that Christ performed his first-apartment ministry after the cross.²⁶

Although a full transcript of Ballenger's presentations on the second and third day apparently was not taken, it is clear that he spoke on the atonement. In answer to one question he said, "When Christ died on Calvary, by that act he had reached down and put his arms around the fallen world, and lifted it right back up to the place where it was before it fell off the platform of the garden of Eden, and left men again free to choose, where Adam was free to choose, between eternal loss and eternal gain."²⁷ It is quite likely that Ballenger at least implied that the atonement included physical benefits, a teaching with which he was already identified.

Although Ellen White apparently did not attend these meetings, she did present a testimony the day following the Ballenger presentations. She gave a message on May 24, 1905, not only to Ballenger, but "to our people," and treated it as divine guidance

specifically pertaining to the Ballenger situation, frequently using such words as "our Instructor spoke words to Brother Ballenger," "I am bidden to say in the name of the Lord," and "thus did the heavenly messenger pronounce."

Within this context, Mrs. White mentioned "erroneous theories" mingled with truth, compared Ballenger's theology with Kellogg's and "many ministers among us" who had "departed from Christ's plan," noted his "mystification" of the gospel, asserted that his teaching would "undermine the mighty truths" established for ages, and observed that his ideas would likewise destroy fundamental Adventist truths. Directly quoting heavenly counsel, she stated: "Our Instructor spoke words to Brother Ballenger: 'You are bringing in confusion and perplexity by your interpretation of the Scriptures . . . Put away any exposition of Scripture which means, 'My Lord delayeth His coming' ' ' ' By bringing the benefits reserved for heaven to the present life, she seemed to be saying, Ballenger was in effect delaying the coming of the Lord."²⁸

After an appearance before the General Conference Committee in May 1905, Ballenger was retired from the ministry to his 25-acre farm in Virginia. He remained relatively quiet in denominational affairs until 1909, when he wrote a letter to Ellen White that he later published that same year in his pamphlet *Cast Out for the Cross of Christ*. In that letter he quoted 12 passages of scripture that use the terms "within" and "without the veil." He also quoted Mrs. White's use—to him mistaken—of the phrase in *The Great Controversy* and concluded that she was not in harmony with Biblical teaching. He thus lost confidence in Mrs. White over her use of one word.²⁹ In 1911 he aligned with A. T. Jones and, by 1912, was visiting churches throughout the country espousing his cause. He began publication of the periodical *The Gathering Call*, which he edited until his death in 1921. The publication assumed an anti-organization tone and closely identified with the Pentecostal movement, stressing divine healings, speaking in tongues, and reception of the Holy Ghost.

By 1911 many within the denomination

questioned why no adequate response to the Ballenger pamphlet, *Cast Out for the Cross of Christ*, had been published. Reflecting upon the situation, Irwin suggested the E. E. Andross, who had been responding to Ballenger throughout California, write a rejoinder. A. G. Daniells had fears of such a project, however, based on his sense of lack of agreement even among the conservative defenders of traditional Adventist doctrine. He wrote W. C. White:

I suppose you know that there is quite a difference of opinion among our ministers regarding some features of the Sanctuary question. Some of us feel that Ballenger, Jones, Crisler, and Keck could have nothing better placed in their hands than positions concerning which our leading men could not agree . . . I am sure that some of the arguments presented by Brother Andross in his manuscript would be repudiated by a large number of our ministers.³⁰

The Daily

This variety of opinion within Adventism regarding “some features of the sanctuary doctrine” had its roots in the third of the trio of controversies that, as we are here suggesting, focused denominational concern over the authority of Ellen White. This was the controversy concerning the obscure term “daily” in Daniel 8:11–13. This passage has the “little horn” transgressing against the sanctuary, taking away the “daily”, and leads up to the famous announcement of the cleansing of the sanctuary: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days . . .” In the past most Adventists had supposed the term “daily” to refer to ancient Roman paganism. But as developed in Europe by such people as L. R. Conradi, W. W. Prescott, and E. J. Waggoner, the “new view” supposed “daily” to refer to the taking away, by the institution of a false sanctuary system, of the knowledge of Christ’s “continual” mediation in the heavenly sanctuary. The potential for conflict became apparent at least by 1900 when E. E. Andross wrote Haskell that the new view conflicted with

Mrs. White’s statement concerning the “daily” in *Early Writings*.³¹

Conradi and Prescott presented the new view to Daniells as he traveled through Europe in 1900 on his way to the 1901 General Conference session; at the session itself Waggoner and Prescott sought to present this view to Mrs. White. According to W. C. White, Mrs. White was instructed through vision not to listen to the views of Waggoner and Prescott “because that which they were counting as of superior value was mingled with views that were misleading,” particularly “overstrained ideas of sanctification.” Indeed, at the conference, Mrs. White, in her public addresses, sought to counteract Waggoner’s and Prescott’s influence. Nonetheless, Mrs. White herself neither examined nor condemned the new view of the “daily” that Waggoner and Prescott wanted to present to her. She instead suggested that they discuss their positions with Uriah Smith to get his reaction.³²

“It is only a question of time when the present teaching concerning the daily will be discarded, and the sooner we do it, the easier it will be to do.”—W. W. Prescott

During the pantheist crisis of 1902 to 1907, the dispute over the “daily” was generally submerged. Beginning in 1907, however, the denominational position on Daniel 8 as enunciated in the books of Uriah Smith and others came under severe attack by non-Adventists and former Adventists. Prescott observed: “It is only a question of time when the present teaching concerning the daily will be discarded, and the sooner we do it, the easier it will be to do.”³³

The General Conference Committee in the fall of 1907 studied the subject and at that time Daniells fully accepted the new view. As did almost everyone who engaged in the debate, Daniells believed that the real issues involved far transcended the question over whether the “daily” represented paganism. If that was the only issue, he said, “I would

not waste much of my time arguing with men who persist in making claims utterly at variance with all the reliable history of the world.”³⁴

Although the statement in *Early Writings* concerning Millerite “correctness” on the question of the “daily” initially troubled Daniells, his study of the contextual and historical background to the statement resolved the question for him. The central point of the vision given Mrs. White, he concluded, concerned the “time” of the ending of the 2300 days, not the specific interpretation of the “daily.” Daniells believed those interpreting her statement similarly were the “truest friends of the gift of prophecy” and that “short-sighted expositors” were forcing a situation that would place the writings in an “indefensible position.”³⁵

During the 1909 General Conference session, the two views of the “daily” received a public airing for the first time. The writing and distribution to the delegates of a tract by O. A. Johnson that supported the old view provided the spark for a two-evening discussion of the subject following the session. W. C. White, who chaired the meetings, noted that in most cases the discussions were not antagonistic, except for a paper by L. A. Smith, son of Uriah Smith, and editor of the *Southern Watchman*, which he had left with the delegates but did not present personally.³⁶

L. A. Smith and F. C. Gilbert, then a minister in the Atlantic Union Conference, shortly thereafter published a tract that greatly inflamed the situation. They contended that the new view completely and consciously attacked the fundamental teachings of the church in terms of both doctrine and the role of the spirit of prophecy, “the infallible interpreter of the Bible.” Affirming that there was no possible escape from this conclusion, they said “that a view contradicts the Spirit of Prophecy should, we think, be sufficient condemnation of it in the minds of all Seventh-day Adventists to cause them to drop it at the start.”³⁷

Other advocates of the historic position,

such as Stephen Haskell, agreed, believing that once the leadership of the church accepted the position that the testimonies “do not mean what they say,” the church would compromise away the spirit of prophecy.³⁸

In responding to the Smith-Gilbert pamphlet, the advocates of the new view stressed the context both of the *Early Writings* statement and of Daniel 8, claiming this showed the new view to be consistent with Adventist teaching about Ellen White. They also stressed Ellen White’s articles written between 1890 and 1892 on the reception of advancing light, as well as her statements about the importance of studying the books of Daniel and Revelation. W. A. Spicer noted, “when the Testimonies have urged us to study the books of Daniel and the Revelation, it surely has not been with the idea that we have nothing to learn.” The new view gained wide exposure at union conference sessions and other meetings and through pamphlets by Prescott and Conradi during 1909 and 1910.³⁹

In light of L. A. Smith’s claim that those who held the new view did so in complete opposition to Ellen G. White’s teaching, Daniells believed himself justified in presenting his views of the “daily” at the seven union conference sessions of 1910. He believed that the influence of the General Conference officials holding that view was thereby being destroyed and required a response, and he bristled at the “fierce, fighting, arbitrary attitude” some held who defended the old view. He decried the access some seemed to have to “private testimonies” concerning others, believing that they had made “shockingly indiscreet” use of some of those testimonies.⁴⁰

It was apparent that the alliance which had defeated the pantheists was shattering over the position Ellen White should occupy in interpretation of the “daily.” By mid-1910 it seemed that Irwin, Haskell, Loughborough, and Butler would publicly join Johnson, Smith, Gilbert, J. S. Washburn, G. B. Starr, and a host of others to publicly oppose those holding the new view. In writing to Mrs. White about his intention of publishing on the subject, G. I. Butler stated:

I cannot see why we old hands ought

not to speak out on this great innovation, and stand for the old positions our people have endorsed, led by yourself, and your testimonies. I for one feel that I should act the coward, as one of the old hands in this cause, to keep still while they preach in Washington and in every union conference that which I consider an utter heresy.⁴¹

Between 1908 and 1910 Mrs. White had issued a number of warnings concerning the possibilities of a division over the question of the "daily." Her counsel had prevented earlier expositions of the issue in the *Signs of the Times* and the *Review and Herald*. Even as late as May 1910, however, she expected that the issue would be resolved by a thorough biblical study of the issue. She wrote Stephen Haskell:

If Elder Daniells thinks that some of the interpretations of Scripture that have been held in the past are not correct, our brethren should listen to his reasons, and give candid consideration to his views. . .

Is not the present a favorable time for you and others of our ministering brethren in this conference to meet with Elder Daniells for a thorough examination of the points of faith regarding which there are different views?

At the same time, Mrs. White noted, "At present there is not that unity that should exist among our brethren, and the Lord says, 'Come together.'" Only when the proposed conference did not take place and Butler was on the verge of publishing did Mrs. White finally issue two testimonies on the "daily."⁴²

Significantly, these testimonies dealt with the larger question of Ellen White's role in settling a doctrinal dispute. She requested that her writings "not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy." In noting that she had no specific instruction from the Lord on the "point under discussion," she again urged that her writings not be used in the debate. The testimony, dated July 31, 1910, was significantly entitled "Our Attitude Toward Doctrinal Controversy." The second testimony, dated August 3, 1910, contained the following call for unity:

We must blend together in the bonds of Christlike unity; then our labors will not be in vain. Draw in even cords, and let no contentions be brought in.⁴³

While advocates of the new view of the "daily" were pleased with Mrs. White's observation that, in *Early Writings*, she had not used the term "daily" in a technical, theological sense, they were disappointed that she called for "silence" on the subject and seemed to relegate it to minor status. They considered a proper understanding of the "daily" to have great significance, not only concerning the context of Daniel 8, but for understanding the mediatorial role of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.⁴⁴

"Advocates of the new view of the 'daily' found themselves closely analyzing the role Ellen White's writings should play in the church. It seemed, however, that no useful dialogue in this area was possible."

Pressured by the pantheists from outside the church and by the supporters of the historic Adventist position on the "daily" from within it, advocates of the new view of the "daily" found themselves closely analyzing the role Ellen White's writings should play in the church. It seemed, however, that no useful dialogue in this area was possible. With the pantheists outside the church and attacking the spirit of prophecy, most of the opponents of the new view were calling for a spirit of prophecy that was an "infallible interpreter of Bible principles." This left the supporters of the new view isolated in their attempts to forge a new understanding.⁴⁵

Inspiration and the 1919 Bible Conference

The "daily" was one among several questions that led such men as M. C. Wilcox, A. O. Tait, and W. C. White to call for a

meeting of editors, Bible teachers, and ministers. Although the first call for such a conference appeared in 1913, it was not until 1919, in Washington, D.C., that the meeting finally took place.⁴⁶

The area of perhaps greatest interest during the discussions in 1919—both in the Bible Conference from July 1–21 and in the meeting of the Bible and History Teachers Council that followed—concerned the inspiration of the spirit of prophecy. The subject was discussed on several occasions; stenographic reports of meetings (some of which were published in *SPECTRUM*, Vol. 10, No. 1) afford insight into the various understandings of the nature of Ellen White's inspiration.

W. W. Prescott, General Conference field secretary, first broached the subject on July 10 by suggesting that statements of Ellen White needed to be "interpreted" to bring them into "harmony with history and fact." This, he noted, might at times conflict with the normal first reading of a specific statement. Prescott then moved from that point to concluding that Mrs. White should be "corrected" when errors of fact were uncovered. He listed six such "corrections" that had been made in the 1911 edition of *The Great Controversy*.⁴⁷

A. O. Tait picked up Prescott's theme and stated, "In other words, Ellen White never claimed that she had inspired evidence in regard to those dates and historical facts." Prescott responded by attributing the following position to W. C. White: "I talked to Elder W. C. White about this matter, as I had something to do with this book, and he has told me that there was no claim that this book was to be an inspired authority on facts of history." White, however, had in fact studiously avoided distinguishing between so-called inspired and uninspired aspects of Ellen White's writings.⁴⁸

While D. E. Robinson offered an explanation that could account for at least three of the six "corrections" mentioned by Prescott, W. G. Wirth, a Bible teacher from Pacific Union College, affirmed that he had never believed "that the history of the spirit of prophecy was to be taken as inspired." He considered that the "history was merely

thrown in to substantiate the principles."⁴⁹

Six days later A. G. Daniells expressed pleasure for the opportunity of meeting and having a "plain talk about this question." He also expressed happiness for the chance to place himself "on record regarding this gift to the church" because of the criticisms that seemed to plague him and other members of the General Conference that they were "shaky with reference to the spirit of prophecy," and that they stood on slippery ground.⁵⁰

During his July 30 talk, Daniells revealed rather fully his concept of the inspiration of Ellen White. While he clearly considered her testimonies to be from the Lord, he likewise stressed that there was a need for interpretation. He emphasized that the real basis for his confidence in the gift was its fruitage within the church.

Daniells considered Ellen White's writings to be inspired commentary upon the Bible, but he rejected the concept that it was the only safe or infallible interpreter of the Bible. On questions of interpretation, Daniells stressed his belief that the "whole trend of teaching and thought that is put through the Testimonies on that subject" should determine the conclusions.⁵¹

Daniells asserted that Mrs. White had never claimed "to be an authority on history, or a dogmatic teacher on theology." "Her gift has not the gift of exegesis," he affirmed. He emphasized that he believed that "as far as she was concerned, she was ready to correct in revision such statements as she thought should be corrected." Just as Mrs. White should not be considered an "infallible interpreter" of the Bible, he stressed, so she should not be considered an "infallible guide to history." Daniells distinguished between the question of infallibility and inspiration and stated, "I never understood that she put infallibility into the historical quotations," affirming that the final proof of the inspiration of the spirit of prophecy was its spiritual value rather than its historical veracity. He further warned that while all efforts should be made to avoid casting doubts upon the gift to students, another way to injure the student would be "to take an extreme and unwarranted position."⁵²

The most prominent feature in the discussions of Ellen White's writings on August 1, 1919, was the question of verbal inspiration. F. M. Wilcox stated that because of his knowledge of the methods used in the Ellen White works he "never believed in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies." He called for cautious moves towards educating church members to avoid the serious crisis that might someday occur. Daniells seemed to be reacting to those who questioned his stand concerning Ellen White's inspiration when he stated:

I think more mischief can be done with the Testimonies by claiming their verbal inspiration than can with the Bible. If you ask for the logic of it, it might take some time to bring it out, and I might not be able to satisfy every mind; but if you ask for practical experience, I can give it to you, plenty of it.

Daniells expressed his opinion that holding to a verbal inspiration concept of Mrs. White's testimonies was illogical "because everybody who has ever seen the work done knows better, and we might as well dismiss it."⁵³

G. B. Thompson believed that church members had been incorrectly educated and thus the denomination faced the possibility of a shock on the question of verbal inspiration. His confidence in Ellen White's gift was not in its verbal inspiration, he stated, but rather in its "influence and power in the denomination." He concluded that Ellen White's writings "are not verbally inspired—we know that—and what is the use of teaching that they are?" When M. E. Kern suggested that the question of verbal inspiration did not settle the problem of defining the inspiration of Ellen White, Daniells responded by suggesting that difficulties sprang from the two questions of infallibility and verbal inspiration. He then referred to James White statements in the *Review and Herald* that attempted to correct erroneous ideas about verbal inspiration. Believing that, because that explanation had not been accepted "and passed on down," the present generation was facing perplexity, Daniells continued:

We could mention some old and some

young who think they cannot believe the Testimonies without just putting them up as absolutely infallible and word-inspired, taking the whole thing as given verbally by the Lord. They do not see how to believe them and how to get good out of them except in that way. . . . 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. . . . Brethren are we going to evade difficulties or help out the difficulties by taking a false position? (VOICES: NO!)

The next three pages of transcript depict Daniells applying the question of verbal inspiration to such questions as salt, eggs, butter, and book revision. How, he asked in connection with the last point, could the writings be revised if they were verbally inspired.⁵⁴

"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."—A. G. Daniells

Several attempts were made to arrive at a practical way to deal with the concept of inspiration. B. L. House considered the problem not to be the question of verbal inspiration, but rather the methodology used in preparing the books. Because he believed the Testimonies were prepared differently than other works containing historical extracts, he implied that the Testimonies were more inspired. F. M. Wilcox stressed his over-all concept of inspiration that would allow for the possibility of fallibility in a specific detail. But he added, "It seems to me I would have

to accept what she says on some of those general policies or I would have to sweep away the whole thing."⁵⁵

Perhaps the most basic question was that posed by C. L. Benson, dean and history teacher at Pacific Union College:

If there are such uncertainties with reference to our historical position, and if the Testimonies are not to be relied on to throw a great deal of light upon our historical positions, and if the same is true with reference to our theological interpretation of texts, then how can we consistently place implicit confidence in the direction that is given with reference to our educational problems, and our medical school, and even our denominational organization? If there is a definite spiritual leadership in these things, then how can we consistently lay aside the Testimonies or partially lay them aside when it comes to the prophetic and historic side of the message and place these things on the basis of research work.⁵⁶

Others asked similar questions but no definitive answers emerged from the conference.

Despite the failure of the conference to resolve the leading issues, Daniells wrote W. C. White, who had been unable to attend: "I think I can truly say that at the close of this important meeting, we stand together more unitedly and firmly for all the fundamentals than when we began the meeting."⁵⁷

But not everyone agreed. Claude E. Holmes, linotype operator and Washington correspondent of the *Southern Watchman*, was among the unofficial attendants at the conference. Reflecting a view of Ellen White's writings not shared by the conference's invited participants, Holmes published an open letter to J. S. Washburn, a long-time Adventist minister. He decried the statements he heard at the conference "again and again by a number of our Bible and history teachers that Sister White is not an authority on history." He considered that position as the ultimate evil, since those views would be "poured into the receptive

minds of our young people to undermine their faith in the spirit of prophecy." Holmes interpreted the positions taken in 1919 to mean that the conference had concluded that Mrs. White selected relevant historical materials just as any researcher would; therefore if the facts selected happened to be erroneous, they should be rejected. Holmes' view of inspiration led him to totally reject this view and to assert, instead, that Mrs. White selected from divergent historical sources those items that she recognized as true and that thereby those items could be regarded as authoritatively and infallibly true. According to Holmes, everything dealt with by a prophet became authoritative. He continued:

If her historical writings are to be discredited because she is not an "authority on history, then the logic of the situation forces us to the conclusion that all her writings must be thrown overboard, for historical facts are inextricably interwoven in all her messages. . . One tells me her books are not in harmony with facts historically, another that she is wrong scientifically, still another disputes her claims theologically, and another questions her authorship, and others discredit her writings grammatically and rhetorically. Is there anything left? If these claims are all true, how much spirit of prophecy does the remnant church possess?

Holmes concluded this 11-page open letter by emphasizing his uncompromising stance on the absolute inspiration of Ellen White. He affirmed that he drew no line "between the so-called human and divine; they are all Scripture to me."⁵⁸

Holmes also issued a protest against the teachings of E. F. Albertsworth and H. C. Lacey, two of the three teachers from Washington Missionary College who had attended the conference. He advised certain students to protest, too. Although the student objections initially involved only Professor Albertsworth's alleged "light esteem" for counsels of Ellen White, the upshot of the episode was the severance, by mid-1920, of all three of the Washington Missionary College representatives at the 1919 Bible Conference.⁵⁹

Having been involved in the debate over the "daily," J. S. Washburn looked back on the 1919 meetings as the continuation of that "terrible controversy." In 1921 he wrote F. M. Wilcox, "You were in that secret Bible Council which I believe was the most unfortunate thing our people ever did, and it seemed to me you were losing the simplicity of your faith." He also noted that Wilcox had defended the three Washington Missionary College representatives when their teachings were brought into question before the college board. Bringing the issues of the "daily," the Washington Missionary College teachers, and the 1919 Bible Conference together in a 16-page open letter to Claude Holmes, dated April 8, 1920, Washburn implied that the conference participants had agreed that Ellen White was not inspired on history, and in some cases even concluded that she was uninspired regarding theology and health reform. He alleged that these positions led "inevitably to infidelity, as was demonstrated by Dr. Albertsworth. . . ."

Washburn also published the information that the Columbia Union Conference president, a year previously, had attempted to rid the college of the three "infidel" teachers, but that the General Conference had assisted them and instead had "forced out of office" that president. He noted that, although the three teachers differed in other beliefs, all three were united in advocating "the new doctrine of the daily as taught by Professor Prescott" and others. Washburn identified the denominational origins of the "new view" with E. J. Waggoner, A. T. Jones, and J. H. Kellogg. He pictured that view as "besieging and threatening to desolate and destroy the work of God's last message at its headquarters, at its very heart." Washburn assured the readers of his letter that the three teachers would not be teaching at the college the next year. The "Omega apostasy" had received a setback at Washington Missionary College, he affirmed.⁶⁰

While the controversy intensified from that point onward, it was to reach a still more volatile point at the 1922 General Conference session in San Francisco. Two open letters to A. G. Daniells, dated May 1,

1922, circulated among the delegates. In his letter Claude Holmes listed 12 specific areas in which, he said, Daniells ignored or subverted Ellen White's counsel. Holmes concluded:

I firmly believe that the deplorable conditions found in the church today are due largely to the course you have followed. In all seriousness I ask: Should men be leaders in our work year after year who neglect to follow God's counsel and persist in following their own way?⁶¹

"By 1932, F. M. Wilcox was noting the consequences of the division. He stated that entire churches were stirred up and that college students were lining up their teachers as to whether they were 'fundamentalist' or 'modernist.'"

Washburn's 36-page open letter was even more comprehensive. He again accused Daniells of seeking to destroy Mrs. White's testimonies in order to uphold his own views on the "daily," recalling an all-night conversation in 1910 that had shattered his faith in Daniells. Furthermore, Washburn said that the 1919 Conference had been a meeting of "doubters":

Two of our best writers told me that articles on the Turkish question were kept out of our papers since that secret council had thrown doubt on that question and many others. So while Islam is gathering her millions for the last great fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 11th and 12th chapter, our papers, our ministers, our sentinels are chloroformed to sleep, are muzzled into silence by this Council of Darkness, this Diet of Doubts. Was not this secret council a crowning act in the program of doubt and darkness and criticism that has been enveloping Washington recently? Will this bring the latter rain, the full assur-

ance of faith and the victorious life? And you and Professor Prescott were the leading figures in that Institute. No doubt you found it impossible to agree with all the new chaotic theology of that council, but Elder Daniells, how could you permit such a dangerous parade of doubts, and preside over such a cloud of misty higher criticism? Did that institute cure the criticism you tell me is destroying our work? No, it multiplied it a hundred times. And you more than any other man are responsible.⁶²

Washburn later claimed that his "Open Letter" was largely instrumental in defeating Daniells' bid for reelection to the General Conference presidency in 1922. Indeed, San Francisco newspaper accounts depicted Daniells emotionally defending his leadership, but decrying the bitter attacks against him and holding a "handful of written documents, which he said were the proofs of his charges of propaganda and villification."⁶³

Daniells' defeat did not end the basic alignments that had begun to solidify earlier. By 1932, F. M. Wilcox was noting the consequences of the division. He stated that entire churches were stirred up and that college students were lining up their teachers as to whether they were "fundamentalist" or "modernist."⁶⁴

Through these years of theological controversy, three broad approaches to Ellen White's writings had emerged. One, held by Jones, Ballenger, and Kellogg assumed a literal understanding of her work. It believed that a primary function of Ellen White was to resolve specific points of

theological conflict. When, after the turn of the century, Ellen White began to issue testimonies that questioned beliefs they held throughout the 1890s, that group decided that Ellen White was being influenced by others. They concluded that the writings could be divided into inspired and uninspired portions. Ballenger took an even stronger position. Because of her use of the phrase "within the veil," he came to the point of considering Ellen White a false prophetess.

A second approach, held by Haskell, Butler, and Washburn, also downplayed contextual considerations in its literal understanding of Ellen White's writings, but did not divide her work into inspired and uninspired portions. This group believed that positions that seemed to conflict with Ellen White's writings should not be advocated, lest confidence in her be undermined.

Finally, such men as Daniells, Prescott, and W. C. White emphasized the need for a non-literal, contextual approach to Ellen White's statements. Although they did not divide her work into inspired and uninspired parts, they did allow for the possibility of error in her writings. They did not consider that Ellen White had claimed exegetical authority for her writings, but believed that the Bible itself should be its own interpreter. By 1910 most literalists who rejected Ellen White had left the church. Proponents of the other two views, literalist defenders of all of Ellen White's work, and contextualists who assumed that some errors might be found in her writings and that the Bible must be its own ultimate interpreter, continued to struggle for supremacy. Today proponents of all three approaches continue to confront each other over Ellen White's work.

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63. Washburn to A. L. White, Oct. 7, 1948, DF 242: Washburn, J. S., WE; RG 21: Documents, 1920s-50s, Clippings Regarding 1922 GC Session Folder.

64. F. M. Wilcox to C. H. Watson, April 17, 1932, RG 21: "Special Files," Columbia Union Folder.