

received mention, nor the euthanasia program, which the Catholics, largely alone, were able to stop. The war itself was never questioned.

Although some individual Adventists seemed to have resisted the Nazi temptation, no active official opposition to the inhuman Nazi regime seemed to have existed nor even to have been permitted among Adventists. Yet, many Adventists did die, unfortunately, for the dia-

bolical policies of that state. Then it was possible to pen a parting word for the dead, saying, as happened in one instance, that in "faithful execution of his duty he gave his young life, so that his Volk might live and prosper."

Finally, even such statements ceased. There was only silence as the government ordered all church publications to close. All raw materials, including paper, were needed for the war.

known Christian Darwinists in the United States, having long promoted a theistic view of evolution. Although he faithfully defended the Bible's historical accuracy, he saw no conflict between Genesis and geology and no reason to insist on a worldwide flood. It was not until after World War I, when Price emerged as their scientific spokesman, that fundamentalist leaders began insisting on a 6,000-year-old earth and a universal deluge.

On the eve of the Scopes trial in July 1925, in which a high school biology teacher in Dayton, Tenn., was found guilty of violating a state law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in public institutions, the high priest of fundamentalism, William Jennings Bryan, invited Price to assist the prosecution as an expert witness. Price was a logical choice, being both an acquaintance of Bryan's and the best-known scientist in the fundamentalist camp. Unfortunately, Price was teaching at the time in an Adventist college outside London and could not attend the trial. Instead, he wrote Bryan a letter advising him to avoid any *scientific* arguments and to charge the evolutionists with being un-American for compelling a parent to pay taxes "to have his child taught something that he utterly repudiates and considers anti-Christian."

At one point during the epic trial, Clarence Darrow asked Bryan if he respected any scientist. When Bryan named Price, Darrow scoffed: "You mentioned Price because he is the only human being in the world so far as you know that signs his name as a geologist that believes like you do . . . every scientist in this country knows [he] is a mountebank and a pretender and not a geologist at all." Eventually, Darrow browbeat the broken old man into conceding that the world was indeed more than 6,000 years old and that the six days of Cre-

Sciences of Satanic Origin: SDAs on Evolutionary Biology



by Ronald L. Numbers
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Ronald L. Numbers is William Coleman Professor of the History of Science and Medicine at the University of Wisconsin. He incorporated this essay featuring George McCready Price into his recent prize-winning book, The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism (Knopf, 1992). Numbers, the son and grandson of Seventh-day Adventist ministers (his grandfather, W. H. Branson, was president of the General Conference), grew up in the mission field, graduated from Southern Missionary College and received his doctorate in the history of science from the University of California at Berkeley before teaching at both Andrews and Loma Linda universities. He is the editor and author of many books that emphasize the part Adventist

figures have played in American history. He also served for several years as the executive secretary of the Association of Adventist Forums. (For more on Numbers, see the profile elsewhere in this issue and Jonathan Butler's "The Historian as Heretic," the brilliant and moving introduction to the enlarged edition of Prophets of Health [University of Tennessee Press, 1993]).

Through his numerous articles and books, [George McCready] Price significantly altered the course of fundamentalist thought, slowly but perceptibly steering it in the direction of the traditional Adventist interpretation of Genesis. Prior to the appearance of Price on the fundamentalist scene, many evangelicals had compromised with the teachings of modern science. As late as 1910, for example, the editors of *The Fundamentals*, the series of pamphlets whose publication [is often said to mark] the beginning of the so-called fundamentalist movement, chose George Frederick Wright, a clergyman geologist from Oberlin College, to write on evolution and religion. His selection is surprising in retrospect, because Wright was one of the best-

ation had probably been longer than 24 hours each—departures from strict fundamentalism that Price never forgave. . . .

Despite the rise of Clark and Marsh, who themselves disagreed on the limits of speciation and the role of amalgamation, Price continued to influence Adventist science until his death in 1963 at age 93. During the last decades of his life, he worked closely with a small but growing community of Adventists in southern California interested in problems related to creation and evolution. As early as 1936, this group had urged the General Conference to sponsor field work in areas like the Grand Canyon, but the expense of such a program apparently frightened the Takoma Park brethren. Rebuffed, Price and his friends in Los Angeles area organized the Deluge Geology Society in 1938 to collaborate “in the upbuilding of a positive system of faith-building science.” Between 1941 and 1945, they published *The Bulletin of Deluge Geology and Related Sciences*, mailed to over 200 subscribers. As described by Price, the society consisted of “a very eminent set of men. . . . In no other part of this round globe could anything like the number of scientifically educated believers in Creation and opponents of evolution be assembled, as here in Southern California.” Among the active members of the group were several physicians, including Cyril Courville and Molleurus Couperus, and Benjamin F. Allen, an amateur geologist and frequent contributor to *Signs of the Times*.

A schism in 1945 between the physicians and Allen resulted in the disbandment of the original group and the creation of the Society for the Study of Natural Science, composed largely of the same membership, except for Allen. Until 1948, this organization published *The Forum for the Correlation of Sci-*

ence and the Bible, edited by Couperus. During this time, *The Forum* devoted considerable attention to the age of the earth, with Price and Couperus arguing for an earth “probably older than two billion years” and Clark defending the “ultra-literal view. . . that the matter composing the earth was spoken into existence as the first step in the six-day creation process.” . . .

Before long, the Research Division, renamed the Geoscience Research Institute and moved to Berrien Springs, Mich., split down the middle. Marsh insisted on using the historic Adventist interpretations of the Bible and the writings of Ellen White as the foundation of his scientific investigations. Hare and Ritland, on the other hand, expressed a willingness to reinterpret the Biblical account of creation and writings of Mrs. White if the scientific evidence so indicated, an “open-minded” approach their colleague regarded as “satanic.” . . .

Through the early 1960s, Marsh, who directed the institute, urged the General Conference to endorse his conservative views. President Figuhr, however, apparently felt “that this discussion [regarding the age of the earth] has gone on during the 40 years that he’d been in the ministry, and he didn’t think that it really amounted to much, it wasn’t something that we should put too much time on.” In 1964, the General Conference retired Marsh, who attributed his fall to “a no-holds-barred process of indoctrination” carried on by his “open-minded” colleagues. A consolation appointment in the Andrews University Biology Department seemed to him little better than “banishment into the farthest corner of Siberia.”

Marsh’s successor, Ritland, did indeed prove to be more “open-minded” than his predecessor. Unlike Marsh, who allowed his understanding of the Bible and the

writings of Ellen White to determine his science, Ritland believed that God had revealed Himself both through nature and the Scriptures. Apparent conflicts between the two revelations might just as easily result from misreading the written work as from misinterpreting the natural record. Using this approach, Ritland prompted many Adventist scientists and not a few administrators to re-evaluate their attitudes toward geology and paleontology and to abandon the notion that the Noachian flood explained virtually the entire geological record. In his book *A Search for Meaning in Nature* (1970), he emphasized the positive evidence of design in the world rather than the negative aspects of modern science. . . .

This approach, however, proved too liberal for the administration of Robert H. Pierson, who soon after his election to the presidency in 1966 made his position clear: “In our controversy with proponents

Ritland believed that God had revealed himself both through nature and the Scriptures. Apparent conflicts between the two revelations might just as easily result from misreading the written work as from misinterpreting the natural record. Ritland emphasized the evidence of design.

of the evolutionary theory," he declared in the *Review and Herald* in 1968, "we must keep in clear perspective—the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are not on trial." It soon became evident that Ritland's days as director were numbered, that Marsh was now more attuned than he to the pulse of the church. In 1971, Ritland, finding it increasingly difficult to function within the constraints imposed by the administration in Takoma Park, resigned his position as director of the Geoscience Research Institute and joined Marsh in what was becoming an Adventist Siberia, the An-

draws University Biology Department. The church's brief experiment with "open-mindedness" thus came to an end.

Under its new director, Robert H. Brown, the Institute quickly swung into line behind the Pierson administration. Those scientists who resisted the revival of the White-Price-Marsh philosophy soon found themselves without a platform or, worse yet, without a job. . . .

Adventist leaders as late as the mid-1970s still considered evolutionary biology and geology to be "sciences of satanic origin."

for the first time, two days of those discussions on Ellen White. Many consider that in Spectrum's 25 years of existence it is these pages that have most affected Adventist thinking. It is a fact that extra copies of this issue quickly sold out.

What follows are excerpts from Couperus' introduction and from the two days of the 1919 discussions that followed it in Spectrum.

Introduction

The struggle that has been present in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to come to an acceptable and honest decision about the place which the writings of Ellen White should have for our church and those in other churches is illustrated by the discussions which took place at the Bible Conference in Takoma Park, from July 1-21, 1919, and which was followed immediately by a three-weeks long meeting of the Bible and History Teachers Council. In the *Review and Herald* of Aug. 14, 1919, W. E. Howell lists 22 delegates from our colleges attending the Bible and History Teachers Council, and other evidence indicates that the total number attending the Bible Conference was over 50. The president of the General Conference at that time, Arthur G. Daniells, reported on the Bible Conference in the *Review and Herald* of Aug. 21, 1919, and informs us that the meeting was attended "by editors, Bible and history teachers from our colleges and seminaries, and members of the General Conference Committee." Among those present at the Bible Conference, besides A. G. Daniells, were G. B. Thompson, field secretary of the General Conference; F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald*; M. E. Kern, formerly president of the Foreign Mission Seminary (now Columbia Union College); W. W. Prescott, formerly

The 1919 Bible Conference



by Molleurus Couperus
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Molleurus Couperus, now retired in Angwin, California, has lived one of the most physically and intellectually adventurous Adventist lives of his generation. It is not surprising that he became the first editor of Spectrum, serving through its first six volumes. Couperus, born in Holland, graduated from Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) and the College of Medical Evangelists. He served as a missionary in what was then the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). He later settled in the United States, where for many years he chaired the department of dermatology at the Loma Linda University School of Medicine.

On his hundreds of international

trips he met many famous figures, including King Hussein of Jordan, whom he treated when the king was still a child, and Louis B. Leakey, the world-renowned Eastern African anthropologist of early man. Leakey many times stayed at Couperus' home and lectured in Couperus' course on physical anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles.

In the crucial first years of its existence, Couperus established Spectrum's reputation for excellence and irenic independence. (See the excerpt from Richard Osborn's essay printed above.) Couperus' editorial coups continued after he left the editorship. He secured for Spectrum a long-lost transcript discovered by the denomination's archivist, Donald Yost. The 2,400 pages record discussions of two meetings held in Takoma Park, Maryland in 1919: a Bible Conference, held July 1-21, followed by a three-week long Bible and History Teachers Council attended by some of the church's highest elected leaders, including General Conference President A. G. Daniells. The full transcript has yet to be published. However, 60 years after the event, Spectrum published,