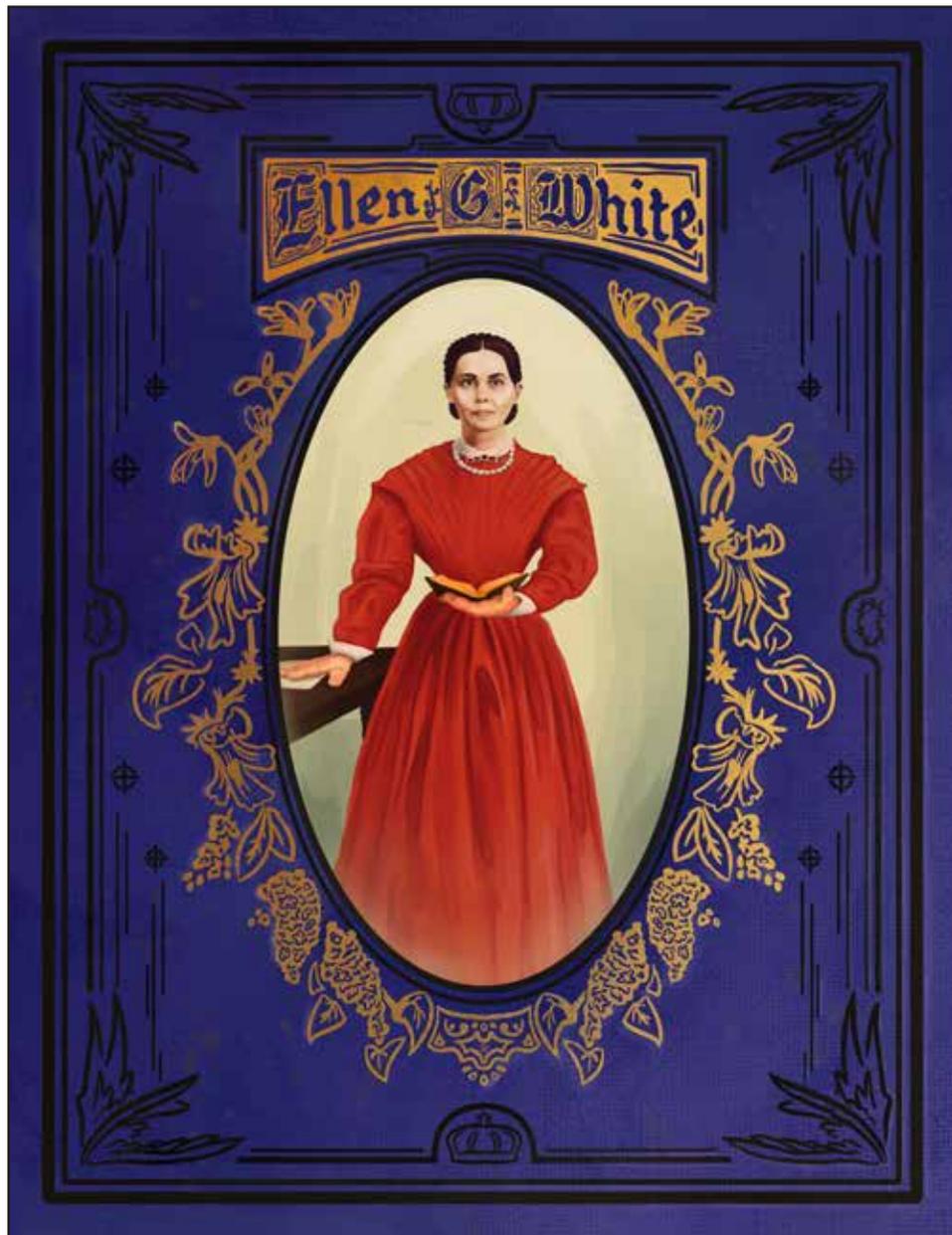


 community through conversation

SPECTRUM



Ellen White's After Life

The Apocalypse as Liturgy • *1919 Bible Conference* • [enditnow](#)

VOLUME 47 ISSUE 1 ■ 2019

community through conversation

SPECTRUM

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ABOUT THE COVER ARTWORK

Faced with the opportunity to illustrate one of the most influential minds from the Adventist community, I strove to find a suitable way to depict her as strong and focused. Ellen G. White is most known by her numerous published works, so I found inspiration in nineteenth-century book covers and created a design of my own. I wanted her standing, facing and looking at the viewer, because so many versions of her are only looking up, away, and I wanted her to feel present instead. Reading through some of Ellen G. White's writing on very simple day-to-day advice, it just reminded me how she had a personal life beyond what she wrote and preached, something I hoped would be captured in this piece.



ABOUT THE ARTIST: VANESSA COX

Vanessa Cox is 16 years old and living in California, working on a portfolio to get her onto the path of an art career. She enjoys working on art pieces that convey some personal part of her life or reveal a new

perspective on the world. Until the day she creates her first world-changing work, Vanessa will continue to cultivate an extensive book collection and medieval armory.

ABOUT SPECTRUM

SPECTRUM is a journal established to encourage Seventh-day Adventist participation in the discussion of contemporary issues from a Christian viewpoint, to look without prejudice at all sides of a subject, to evaluate the merits of diverse views, and to foster Christian intellectual and cultural growth. Although effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and discriminating judgment, the statements of fact are the responsibility of contributors, and the views individual authors express are not necessarily those of the editorial staff as a whole or as individuals.

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Now and Then | BY BONNIE DWYER

“Blessed is the one who reads,” begins Revelation (1:3), “reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.”

What does it mean to read the words of the prophecy today? And how does the current socio-political climate affect what we hear? How does it compare to what the pioneers of Adventism heard in the words as the US Civil War was raging? How is our understanding of the time prophecies affected by events that have taken place since then such as the Holocaust? The Civil Rights Movement in the US?

In this issue of the journal, we bring together significant historical Adventist documents about Revelation and the Spirit of Prophecy with contemporary commentary. We explore the Now as well as the Then. We reprise the

“Apocalypse as Liturgy” and the “Minutes of the 1919 Bible Conference” from past issues of *Spectrum*. Then we add the lively commentary of favorite Adventist authors Charles Scriven, Carmen Lau, Kendra Haloviak Valentine, Sigve Tonstad, George Knight, and Jonathan Butler. We hope the combination opens windows for you in your understanding of Adventism, Revelation, and Ellen White. We are also delighted to introduce the Roy Branson Investigative Reporter Alex Aamodt with a timely history of the enditnow program.

Blessed is the one who reads.



BONNIE DWYER is editor of *Spectrum*.

On Rejecting the Spirit of Prophecy | BY CHARLES SCRIVEN

When a community misreads the Bible, it warps the Gospel, a little or a lot. When it misreads a signature Bible passage—one by which it defines itself—the damage is worse, and is also deeply inexcusable. Defining passages, after all, receive constant attention, so when misreading persists you wonder how such attention can be so unquestioning and self-satisfied?

Revelation 19:10 has been precious to Adventism from the beginning. The “testimony of Jesus,” it declares, “is the spirit of prophecy,” and this verse has usually been paired with the description of the remnant, in Revelation 12:17, as “those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.” For Adventists these words, taken together, evoke a movement shaped by the prophetic presence of Ellen White, and Ellen White’s ministry is what we have emphasized.

But if we actually attend to the Bible, we will see that, for Jesus, the spirit of prophecy was very much the spirit of

the Hebrew prophets. Two compelling examples are Luke 4 and Matthew 11, where he invokes Isaiah as fundamental to his entire ministry. The first of these is a record of Jesus’ inaugural sermon. His vocation, Jesus declared, is “to bring good news to the poor.” God’s Spirit “has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free....” He was quoting Isaiah, one of the greatest of the prophets, and his identification with the prophetic tradition becomes clear again when, according to Matthew 11, the disciples of John the Baptist ask him if he is the “one who is to come.” Alluding again to Isaiah, Jesus “answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.’” Then Matthew himself, in chapter 12, declares that Jesus fulfills Isaiah 42:1-4. Part of what he quotes from Isaiah is this: “Here is my servant. . . . he will

proclaim justice to the Gentiles,” or “nations”; Matthew then says that Jesus will persevere “until he brings justice to victory.”

Although such echoes of Hebrew prophecy occur frequently in the Gospels, two recent episodes show unmistakably that both official and Americanized lay Adventism fail to grasp what this means. At Annual Council in October, 2018, the General Conference president expressed disapproval for those who “overemphasize social issues while downplaying or neglecting biblical truth and its relevance for today’s society.” When precisely parsed, the sentence seems to deflate social concern into something minor and distracting. Do not let such a thing “overshadow” proclamation of “God’s last-day message,” the president said.

Whether or not he meant to go this far in his effort to keep all attention focused on “God’s last-day warning” instead of “social issues,” all nine presidents of historically black conferences in North America objected. The Gospel, they said in a statement, addresses “social injustices.” They could not, they said further,

condone, under any circumstances, any attempt to silence or demoralize any who seek to follow in the footsteps of the Savior who spoke on the issues of social injustice—“If you have done it unto the least of these you have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). It is the Gospel of love that demands we speak from the pulpit to the streets and from the streets to anywhere where injustice is tolerated, and to be a voice for those who have no voice.

These conference presidents sought and received a private meeting with the General Conference president, where, according to their report, he was cordial and allowed that that he “could have found a better way of ex-

pressing what he was trying to say.” But he was not even trying to say what the New Testament declares; namely, that the concerns of the Hebrew prophets are central to Jesus’ entire testimony. During the American Civil Rights Movement, the white men at the church’s official magazine, then called the *Review and Herald*, claimed that concern for civil rights was an interruption of Adventist mission. Then, as now, black Adventist ministers, among them the iconic E. E. Cleveland, objected. So what happened this past fall repeats what has happened before. White leaders tend to minimize, or ignore altogether,

what the Hebrew prophets emphasize; black leaders, or some of them, try to correct the oversight.

It seems clear that until official (and still largely white) Adventism repents of the constricted meaning it ascribes to Revelation 19:10, it will, with respect to justice and injustice, continue to falsify the Gospel. “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”—this is a signature passage for us, and misrepresenting it is disastrous. The prophet Amos (5:16) even takes “justice in the gate”—institutional justice; justice at the political level—

as a proper concern of the “remnant”; but such a convention-blasting remark continues to have little effect on official sensibility. If a black minister, Carlton P. Byrd, of the Oakwood University Church and the Breath of Life Telecast, has this very month affirmed Adventist social “activism,” our white General Conference president has again, this very month, defined Adventist mission as a “message,” not as prophetic engagement of poverty, injustice and oppression.*

Since at least the time of the American Civil Rights Movement, a few Adventist scholars, pastors and journalists (from a variety of races) have been attempting to nudge the church toward the embrace of Hebrew prophecy that Jesus himself epitomized. Just weeks ago, a pastor

If we cannot interpret our eschatology in such a way as to buttress, not weaken, passion for social justice, we cannot legitimately call ourselves Christian, let alone indulge the fantasy that we, and we alone, are the bearers of God’s last word to the world.

from the Netherlands, J. A. O'Rourke, chimed in with a heavily footnoted argument, replete with references to the prophets, for what he called a "theology of social justice." It was published on this website, and comments on the article, some affirming and some not, climbed to more than 200. The first was entirely negative. The commenter, who entered the conversation numerous times, said that O'Rourke was reading Scripture through the lens of "Liberal-Socialism," and that the "concept of social justice" has little to do, in fact, with "treating others according to the principles of God's laws."

Although he had a political agenda familiar (or all too familiar) in the American context, this commenter did emphasize the Christian obligation to do, in the here and now, "the good works Jesus told us to so..." But the telltale point came in several remarks that would surely seem odd to anyone not steeped in official Adventism. Why, he wondered, all the preoccupation with "prophecy"? "Through almost my entire life," he explained, "we've had an overwhelming emphasis on prophecy to the exclusion of actually doing" what Jesus wants us to do.

But Jesus himself emphasized prophecy, so what gives? The answer is that official Adventism has construed Revelation 19:10 as pointing exclusively to Ellen White—and to her reading, in particular, of last-day events. This is a misconstrual—prophecy is by no means merely predictive; it is divinely ordained speech against heedless power. The consequences of the misconstrual worsen, moreover, when official Adventism largely overlooks Ellen White's own attunement to

prophecy as passion for the poor, the brokenhearted, the captive and the bruised. Prophecy is about justice, and in prophetic perspective, justice is biased for underdogs. Ellen White got that.

The commenter who objected to J. A. O'Rourke's argument may be assured that no contemporary take on social justice, whether socialist, libertarian or otherwise, exactly replicates the biblical vision. That vision came to expression, after all, before modern political institutions were invented, and its applicability in today's circumstances must stir us to urgent conversation, not cocksureness. But it is a gross betrayal of what Jesus stood for—a gross betrayal of the Gospel—to pretend that Revelation 19:10, or any other passage of Scripture, exempts the church from obligations the Hebrew prophets put at the center of covenant responsibility. If we cannot interpret our eschatology in such a way as to buttress, not weaken, passion for social justice, we cannot legitimately call ourselves Christian, let alone indulge the fantasy that we, and we alone, are the bearers of God's last word to the world.

*Byrd's comment appeared in the February, 2019, issue of *Adventist Journey*, and the General Conference president's in the February, 2019, issue of *Adventist World*. These magazines arrive in North American Division homes bound together as one.



CHARLES SCRIVEN is a member of the Adventist Forum Board, and he served as chairperson of the Board from 2004-2018. He lives in Arizona.

The Coddling of the Adventist Mind | BY CARMEN LAU

Social psychologist, Jonathan Haidt, and his co-author Greg Lukianoff, have attracted both support and criticism for their book, *The Coddling of the American Mind: How Good Intentions and Bad Ideas are Setting Up a Generation for Failure*. Adventists might be wise to consider if the Adventist cultural context breeds mind coddling. Haidt identifies three lies that engender a suffocating milieu that inhibits intellectual growth; nurturing parrots rather than thinkers. What

attracted and maintains my commitment to Adventist Forum has been its trust in our God-imagined minds to think and to do by challenging and affirming thinking on a variety of subjects. Adventist Forum through *Spectrum* magazine and website, as well as its conferences and publications, can never be accused of coddling the mind. Yet, I fear that in its history, and increasingly in its current practices, Adventism coddles its members. So, this book can be instructive.

The first lie is that humans lack resiliency and must be protected from all threats, even threatening ideas. Put another way, twenty-first-century helicopter parents, those who exhibit paranoid parenting from toddlerhood to university, are actually hurting their children's development. Within our history, that is clearly exhibited by the 1919 Bible Conference which is reprinted in this issue of *Spectrum*. The leaders decided that the membership could not handle the truth and the adverse consequences of that "protection" continue to reverberate today. How many Adventist university students are familiar with this piece of history? Are we still coddling? Imagine how much healthier dialogue would be possible if all Adventists knew about the real tensions and struggles Ellen White's inspiration caused for the leadership and members as the denomination was founded. Haidt's argument asserts that higher education is not the time "to prepare the road for the child," but instead, "to prepare the child for the road." As a start, should not students in an Adventist History class be required to read this document?

"Always trust your feelings" is the second lie. Relying on feelings alone can lead to myriad cognitive distortions. This will be familiar to those who have been involved with Nedley's Depression Recovery Programs. All-or-nothing thinking. Over-generalization. Mental filtering. Catastrophizing. Is this what we are witnessing when students, acting on feelings, have "called out" professors for addressing an uncomfortable topic in a manner that differed from what a student had "always heard?" The all-or-nothing fear of heading down a path to atheistic heresy has triggered repeated cycles of pseudo-accountability for targeted professors. Such fear-based actions become barriers to academic freedom and higher education. Decisions based solely on feelings are seldom wise and

thwart the task of discerning the relevance of the Adventist apocalyptic message, among other things.

"Life is a battle between good and evil people" is the third lie that coddles the American mind and the Adventist mind. If one adopts a superficial Cosmic Conflict ethos, Adventists may be tempted to agree with such a binary view. Seeing the great controversy as solely a battle between good and evil people is a superficial idea, and a lie. More accurately, the line of good and evil crosses the heart of each person and our view of the great controversy demands a nuanced worldview. A binary view of humans as good or evil leaves little room for peacemaking efforts and inevitably leads to common-enemy politics,

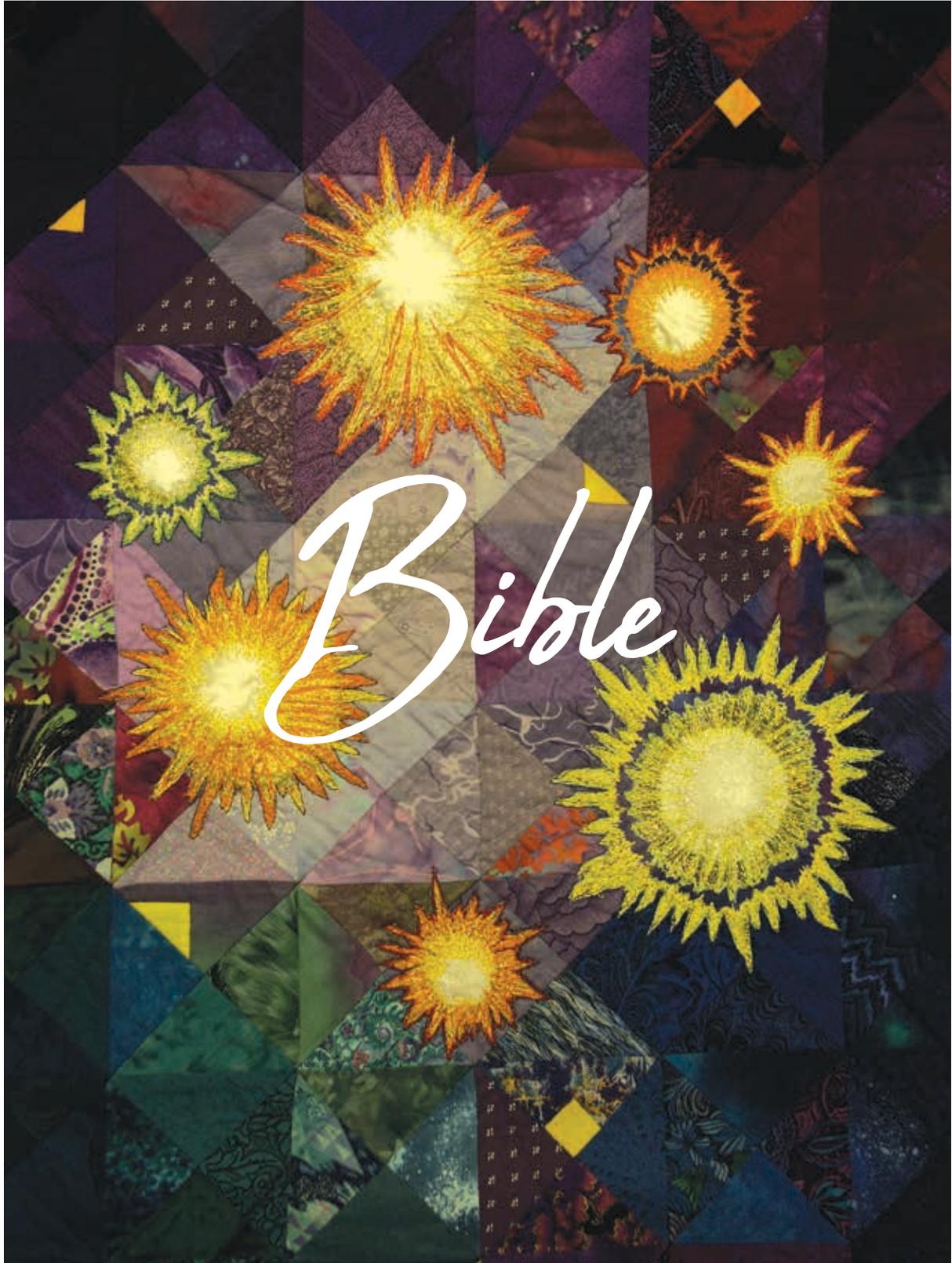
competition about which group is the greatest victim, and scapegoating. For example, coddled Adventist minds, armed with compliance committees, might be viewed as embracing this lie. Many crusades to squelch what is perceived as evil will ultimately fail and will often lead toward mirroring, causing the "evil bashing" crusade to adopt the unsavory tactics of the group it is targeting.

Coddled minds distort the image of God and suppresses the three things that will last: faith, hope, and love. A coddled mind removes a person from the task of living one's faith. These three myths that coddle American minds probably also coddle Adventist minds. A mature Adventist will grow strong by challenging presumptions, controlling fearful feelings, and developing a realistic view of the world with a lens that removes binary categorizations. A fully formed Adventist will not be coddled.

What attracted and maintains my commitment to Adventist Forum has been its trust in our God-imaged minds to think and to do by challenging and affirming thinking on a variety of subjects.



CARMEN LAU is board chair of Adventist Forum, the organization that publishes *Spectrum*. She lives and writes in Birmingham, Alabama.



"Radiant Lights Night" detail from *Philadelphia* from *The Seven Churches of Revelation* banners by Rosemary Peterson and Barbara Djordjevic.

Books to Read on the Book of Revelation

An annotated bibliography

BY KENDRA HALOVIK VALENTINE

BAUCKHAM, RICHARD. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation.* Cambridge University Press, 1993. This small book is packed with insights as it considers Revelation from the perspective of key ideas, including the “victory of the Lamb,” and the “New Jerusalem.”

BOESAK, ALLAN A. *Comfort and Protest: The Apocalypse from a South African Perspective.* Westminster Press, 1987. A minister in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of South Africa, Boesak considers Revelation during the midst of his country’s struggle with apartheid.

BORING, EUGENE M. *Revelation.* Interpretation. John Knox Press, 1989. An excellent verse-by-verse commentary for both beginners and those who have loved the book of Revelation for some time. A new paperback edition is now available (2011).

BRUNT, JOHN. *How to Survive Armageddon.* Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2011. An Adventist pastor helps readers prepare for the end times without fear, and by suggesting practical ways to live God’s kingdom in our present experiences.

COLLINS, JOHN J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature.* 2nd ed. Eerdmans, 1998. The most demanding of the works in this brief bibliography, Collins considers the apocalyptic genre and then explores several groupings of such works, most of which are not in the Christian Scriptures.

DAWN, MARVA J. *Joy in Our Weakness: A Gift of Hope from the Book of Revelation,* rev. ed. Eerdmans, 2002. Dawn considers the book of Revelation from the perspective of the “gift of weakness.” As one who suffers from physical challenges, Dawn finds the book of Revelation moving for its positioning of the weak, including a slain Lamb.

GORMAN, MICHAEL J. *Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness.* Cascade Books, 2011. This introductory work explains various ways of reading the book of Revelation and supplies helpful background material. In addition, the last half of the book goes through Revelation, applying the principles discussed earlier.

HALOVIK VALENTINE, KENDRA. *Worlds at War, Nations in Song: Dialogic Imagination and Moral Vision in the Hymns of the Book of Revelation.* Wipf and Stock, 2015. This work considers the sixteen hymns in the book of Revelation using the literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin in its analysis. This is the published version of a dissertation completed in 2002.

KRAYBILL, J. NELSON. *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation.* Brazos Press, 2010. Kraybill considers the subversive nature and political ramifications of Christian faithfulness, given the realities of life in the Roman Empire.

LONGENECKER, BRUCE W. *The Lost Letters of Pergamum.* Baker Academic, 2003. Using imaginative correspondence between Antipas of Pergamum (Revelation 2:13) and the gospel writer Luke, Longenecker explores the cultural context of Christians living in major cities of Asia Minor at the end of the first century.

MORRIS, LEON. *Revelation.* Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Eerdmans, 1987. A favorite with my students, this phrase-by-phrase exploration of the book of Revelation constantly encourages readers to consider what the images and symbols might have meant to John’s first readers.

PAULIEN, JON. *Decoding Revelation’s Trumpets: Allusions and the Interpretation of Revelation 8.7–12.* Andrews University Press, 1988. In this published version of his dissertation, Paulien considers ways of interpreting the challenging “trumpets” section of the book of Revelation. Paulien has also published many other books on Revelation that are more devotional in their approach.

PETERSON, EUGENE H. *Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination.* HarperCollins, 1988. Peterson, of The Message Bible, shares the results of months of joint study with his congregation as they together explore the book of Revelation as the experience of worship and prayer.

REDDISH, MITCHELL G., ed. *Apocalyptic Literature: A Reader.* Abingdon Press, 1990. This volume makes sections of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature accessible to beginners. A brief introduction begins each part of this anthology.

ROSSING, BARBARA. *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation.* Westview Press, 2005. This work not only analyzes rapture theology, it also notes how such theology is influencing American international policy.

SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, ELISABETH. *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment.* 2nd ed. Fortress Press, 1998. This work is for those who wish to go a bit deeper and explore ethical and historical issues raised by the book of Revelation.

STEFANOVIC, RANKO. *Revelation of Jesus Christ.* Andrews University Press, 2002. Written by a Seventh-day Adventist who is currently teaching at Andrews Theological Seminary, this work seeks to maintain a Christ-centered focus within the historicist approach.

TONSTAD, SIGVE K. *Saving God’s Reputation: The Theological Function of Pistis Iesou in the Cosmic Narratives of Revelation.* Library of New Testament Studies. T & T Clark, 2006. Using “cosmic conflict” as a framework for interpreting Revelation, Tonstad argues that “the faithfulness of Jesus” defeats evil while also saving God’s “embattled reputation.”

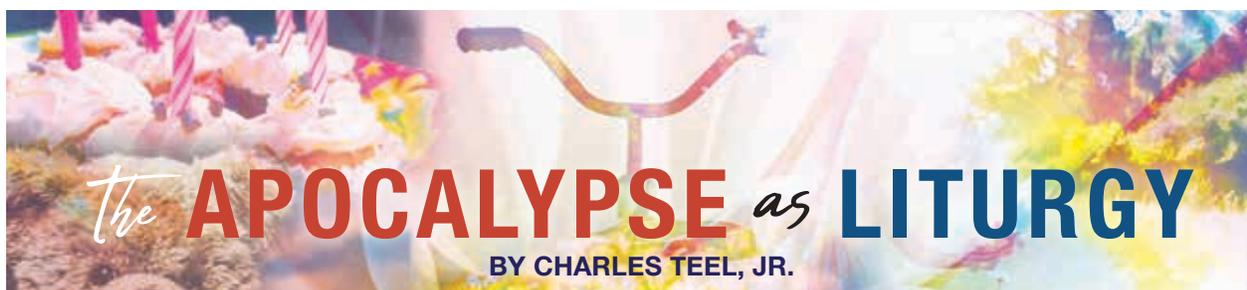


KENDRA HALOVIK VALENTINE is professor of New Testament Studies in the H. M. S. Richards Divinity School at La Sierra University. She has served as a pastor and taught at Adventist colleges and universities in the United States and Australia.

KEYWORDS: Revelation, worship, liturgy, the unlocked city, seven golden candlesticks

With Revelation as the topic for the first quarter of the 2019 Sabbath School Adult Bible Study Guide, we wanted to join the conversation in a meaningful way. The topic brought back fond memories of an Adventist Forum Conference where Revelation was turned into a liturgy that we wanted to reshare with readers looking for a way to have a dramatic conclusion to their Sabbath School class discussions.

Revelation specialist Sigve Tonstad, whose new commentary on Revelation is being published by Baker Academic, contributed several articles for our website on the topic. We include one here and encourage you to seek out the others in the Sabbath School section of our website.



The Seven Churches of Revelation banners by Rosemary Peterson and Barbara Djordjevic.

This service was part of the Second National Conference of the Association of Adventist Forums, conducted Sabbath morning, March 17, 1984, in the Loma Linda University Church.

Students in a class taught by Alan R. Collins, professor of art at Loma Linda University, created candlesticks representing the seven churches of Revelation to be used on the platform during the Sabbath morning worship service celebrating the Apocalypse as liturgy. The students included Jim Nazario, Teresa Robinson, Brad Rowe, Debra Sherman, and Reza Tabesh.

A worship service approaches the Apocalypse of John as a celestial liturgy. Believers in every age have viewed the Apocalypse not only as a work to be analyzed or deciphered but also as a psalm of praise to be enacted and celebrated. The liturgical format of the book builds on hymns and prayers that are punctuated by doxologies, alleluias, and amens. Worship aids include flaming candlesticks, golden bowls, and burning censers. Participants in the service, in addition to John, are the Risen Lord and assorted heavenly creatures, with fully 144,000 elect leading a vast multitude in antiphonal refrains.

John's liturgy was written for the seven churches of Asia Minor that endured the alien atmosphere of pagan Rome. These fledgling Christian congregations are implored to honor the Lord of history who conquered the ostentatious wealth and persecuting power of secular culture. As brutal persecution by the Babylonian beast threatens the body, and subtle cultural and economic seduction by the imperial harlot threatens the soul, these remnant communities are exhorted to stand against false religious and political systems and indeed to "come out of her."

The apocalyptic language of the liturgy hurls hearers through space and time as they journey into heavenly and earthly subterranean spheres while piecing together fragments of humankind's cosmic story. Divine and demonic symbols of this Great Controversy flash larger than life on the screen of universal history. Beasts rampage and nations give obedience. Harlots seduce and populations succumb. Winds blow and the earth shakes. Bowls are poured out and history screams. Woes are flung against space and the universe is hushed. And through it all the vast multitude shouts, "Alleluia!"

The Babylonian beasts, imperial harlots, and demonic dragons are real. Very real. The forms of these false systems change, of course, but they stalk the faithful of every age. Yet the shout of "Alleluia!" is also real. It proclaims that ultimate reality lies rather with the New Jerusalem than with Babylon. The unlocked city, the temple-less religion, and

the tree of life whose leaves heal the nations, all call up a radically new reality—a reality in which persons and cities and churches and nations spring from values inspired by One who says, "Behold, I am making all things new."

In anticipation of this new reality—and in the face of false Babylonian powers which coerce, manipulate, and persecute—the slain Lamb calls believers to form remnant communities which heal, nurture, and build. This call has enabled the faithful remnant throughout history to cope and to hope. And it is this same call that our own worshiping community celebrates and enacts.

"Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches!"

THE SETTING

The congregation enters the sanctuary in silence. Each worshiper is provided with a worship folder containing apocalypse art as well as the text of the liturgy. The chancel centrum boasts seven golden candlesticks which range from five to seven feet in height. Each candlestick is sculpted to bear witness to the characteristics of a given church which John the Revelator addresses at the opening of his work. With the reading of each of the seven messages to the seven churches, the respective candle is lit.

The hour previous to worship has included stories of contemporary remnants who have faced beastly Babylonian powers: Dietrich Boenhoeffer, German pastor-theologian who inspired the "confessing church" to resist Hitler's Third Reich; Anne Frank, young Jewish girl whose diary on the Holocaust survives as an eloquent testament of hope; Maximillian Kolbe, Catholic priest imprisoned at Auschwitz who volunteered to die in the place of a fellow prisoner; and Vladimir Shelkov, True and Free Adventist in Russia who was repeatedly imprisoned for his faith.

The congregation is thus prepared to celebrate the Apocalypse as a psalm of hope which speaks to every age; an affirmation that the baby, the woman, and the remnant triumph over the beast, the harlot, and Babylon.



The Seven Churches of Revelation banners by Rosemary Peterson and Barbara Djordjevic.

THE CHURCHES

First Reader:

I, John, your brother, who share with you in the suffering
 And endurance which is ours in Jesus—
 I was on the island called Patmos
 Because I had preached God's word
 And borne my testimony to Jesus.
 It was on the Lord's day, and I was caught up by the Spirit;
 And behind me I heard a loud voice,
 Like the sound of a trumpet, which said to me,

Audience:

Write down what you see on a scroll and send it to the seven churches:
 To Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira,
 Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Second Reader:

And when I turned, I saw seven standing lamps of gold,
 And among the lamps one like a Son of Man.
 He laid his right hand upon me and said,

Audience:

Do not be afraid.
 I am the first and the last, and I am the living one;
 For I was dead and now I am alive for evermore.

Here is the secret of the seven lamps of gold:
The seven lamps are the seven churches.

First Reader:

To the angel of the church at Ephesus write:
I know all your ways, your toil and your fortitude.
Fortitude you have;
You have borne up in my cause and never flagged.
But I have this against you that you have lost your early love.
Think from what a height you have fallen;
Repent, and do as you once did.

Children's Choir:

To those that are victorious I will give the right to eat
From the tree of life that stands in the Garden of God.

Audience:

Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Scripture says to the churches!

Second Reader:

To the angel of the church at Smyrna write:
I know how hard pressed you are, and poor—and yet you are rich!
Do not be afraid of the suffering to come.
The Devil will throw some of you into prison, to put you to the test:
And for ten days you will suffer cruelly.

Children's Choir:

Only be faithful till death, and I will give you the crown of life.
Those who are victorious cannot be harmed by the second death.

Audience:

Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches!

First Reader:

To the angel of the church at Pergamum write:
I know where you live; it is the place where Satan has his throne.
And yet you are holding fast to my cause. You did not deny your faith in me
Even at the time when Antipas, my faithful witness,
Was killed in your city, the home of Satan.
But I have a few matters to bring against you:
You have in Pergamum some that eat food sacrificed to idols and commit fornication.
So repent!

Children's Choir:

To those who are victorious I will give to eat of the hidden manna.

Audience:

Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches!

Second Reader:

To the angel of the church at Thyatira write:
I know all your ways, your love and faithfulness,
Your good service and your fortitude;
And of late you have done better than at first.
Yet I have this against you:
You tolerate that Jezebel, who claims to be a prophetess,
Who by her teaching lures my servants into fornication
And into eating food sacrificed to idols.
And now I speak to you others in Thyatira,
Who do not accept this teaching.
On you I will impose no further burden.
Only hold fast to what you have, until I come.

Children's Choir:

To those who are victorious and who persevere in doing my will to the end,
I will give authority over the nations.

Audience:

Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches!

First Reader:

To the angel of the church at Sardis write:
I know all your ways;
That though you have a name for being alive you are dead.
Wake up, and put strength into what is left, which must otherwise die!
For I have not found any work of yours completed in the eyes of my God.
So remember the teaching you received; observe it, and repent.

Children's Choir:

Those who are victorious shall thus be robed all in white;
Their names I will never strike off the roll of the living.

Audience:

Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the Spirit says to the churches!

Second Reader:

To the angel of the church at Philadelphia write:
I know all your ways;
I have set before you an open door which no one can shut.
Your strength, I know, is small,
Yet you have observed my commands and have not disowned my name.
Because you have kept my command and stood fast,

I will also keep you from the ordeal that is to fall on the whole world.
I am coming soon;
Hold fast what you have, and let no one rob you of your crown.

Children's Choir:

Those who are victorious I will write the name of my God upon them,
And the name of the city of my God,
That new Jerusalem which is coming down out of heaven from my God,
And my own new name.

Audience:

Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the
Spirit says to the churches!

First Reader:

To the angel of the church at Laodicea write:
I know all your ways; you are neither hot nor cold!
How I wish you were either hot or cold!
But because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold,
I will spit you out of my mouth.
You say, 'How rich I am! And how well I have done!
I have everything I want in the world!'
In fact, though you do not know it,
you are the most pitiful wretch, poor, blind, and naked.

Children's Choir:

To those who are victorious I will grant a place on my throne,
As I myself was victorious and sat down with my father on his throne.

Audience:

Hear, you who have ears to hear, what the
Spirit says to the churches!

HYMN: "THE CHURCH HAS ONE FOUNDATION"

Note: During the singing of the hymn-anthem, young people carry paper banners emblazoned with the names of patriots, prophets, and friends within the congregation. These banners are hung at various points in the sanctuary as slides bathe the walls with full-face photos of the congregation's diverse membership.

THE PORTENTS

First Reader:

At once I was caught up by the Spirit.
There in heaven stood a throne,
And on the throne sat one whose appearance was like

The gleam of jasper and cornelian.
In a circle about this throne were twenty-four other thrones,
And on them sat twenty-four elders wearing crowns of gold.
From the throne went out flashes of lightning and peals of thunder.
Burning before the throne were seven flaming torches,
And in front of it stretched what seemed a sea of glass,
Like a sheet of ice.
The twenty-four elders fall down
Before the One who sits on the throne
And worship him who lives for ever and ever;
And as they lay their crowns before the throne they cry:

Audience:

Thou art worthy, O Lord our God,
To receive glory and honor and power,
Because thou didst create all things;
By thy will they were created, and have their being!

Second Reader:

After this I looked and saw a vast throng,
Which no one could count,
From every nation, of all tribes, peoples, and languages,
Standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb.
They were robed in white and had palms in their hands,
And they shouted together:

Audience:

Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor, power and might,
Be to our God for ever and ever! Amen!

First Reader:

Then one of the elders turned to me and said,

Audience:

These that are robed in white
Are those who have passed through the great ordeal;
They have washed their robes and made them white
In the blood of the Lamb.
That is why they stand before the throne
And minister to him day and night in his temple;
And he who sits on the throne will dwell with them.
They shall never again feel hunger or thirst,
The sun shall not beat on them nor any scorching heat,
Because the Lamb will be their shepherd

And will guide them to the springs of the water of life;
And God will wipe all tears from their eyes.

Second Reader:

Next appeared a great portent in heaven,
A woman robed with the sun, beneath her feet the moon,
And on her head a crown of twelve stars.
She was pregnant, and in the anguish of her labor
She cried out to be delivered.
Then a second portent appeared in heaven:
A great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns;
And with his tail he swept down a third of the stars in the sky and flung them to the earth.
The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth,
So that when her child was born he might devour it.
She gave birth to a male child,
Who is destined to rule all nations with an iron rod.
But her child was snatched up to God and his throne;
And the woman herself fled into the wilds.

Audience:

At this the dragon grew furious with the woman,
And went off to wage war on the rest of her offspring,
That is, on those who keep God's commandments
And maintain their testimony to Jesus.

First Reader:

Then out of the sea I saw a beast rising.
It had ten horns and seven heads.
Men worshiped the dragon because he had conferred his authority
Upon the beast and they worshiped the beast also.
It was also allowed to wage war on God's people and to defeat them,
And was granted authority over every tribe and people,
Language and nation.
All on earth will worship it,
Except those whose names the Lamb that was slain
Keeps in the roll of the living,
Written there since the world was made.
Then I saw another beast, which came up out of the earth;
It had two horns like a lamb's but spoke like a dragon.
It was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast,
So that it could cause all who would not worship the image to be put to death.

Audience:

Moreover, it caused everyone,
Great and small, rich and poor, slave and free,

To be branded with a mark on his right hand or forehead,
And no one was allowed to buy or sell
Unless he bore this beast's mark, either name or number.

Second Reader:

Then I saw an angel flying in mid-heaven,
With an eternal gospel to proclaim to those on earth,
To every nation and tribe, language and people.
He cried in a loud voice,

Audience:

Fear God and pay homage;
For the hour of his judgment has come!
Worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the water-springs!

First Reader:

Then another angel, a second, followed, and he cried,

Audience:

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great,
She who has made all nations drink the fierce wine of her fornication.

Second Reader:

Yet a third angel followed, crying out loud,

Audience:

Whoever worships the beast and its image
And receives its mark on his forehead or hand,
He shall drink the wine of God's wrath
Poured undiluted into the cup of his vengeance.
And there will be no respite day or night
For those who worship the beast and its image
Or receive the mark of its name.

First Reader:

Here the fortitude of God's people has its place—
In keeping God's commands and remaining loyal to Jesus.

Second Reader:

And then I saw a woman mounted on a scarlet beast
Which was covered with blasphemous names
And had seven heads and ten horns.
The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet
And bedizened with gold and jewels and pearls.
In her hand she held a gold cup,

Full of obscenities and the foulness of her fornication;
And written on her forehead was a name with a secret meaning:
Babylon the great, the mother of whores and of every obscenity on earth.
The woman, I saw, was drunk with the blood of God's people
And with the blood of those who had borne their testimony to Jesus.
The angel said to me,

Audience:

The ten horns you saw are ten kings
Who will confer their power and authority upon the beast.
They will wage war upon the Lamb, but the Lamb will defeat them,
For he is Lord of lords and King of kings,
And his victory will be shared by his followers,
Called chosen and faithful.

Note: Prior to the singing of the hymn-anthem, slides are projected on the walls to depict modern expressions of Babylonian powers and remnant communities. Drawings of the manipulative beasts and dragons created by the congregation's children are interspersed with drawings and magazine pictures, selected by the children, which communicate both hope and despair:

swings	bombs
roller skates	guns
dolls	swastika
baseball	KKK
home	Hiroshima
trees	death
flowers	hunger
church	book-burning
family	bombed churches
friends	John F. Kennedy
community	Robert F. Kennedy
life	Martin Luther King, Jr.
clouds	their widows
sun	their families
rainbow	Gandhi

A bell is tolled.

HYMN: "FOR ALL THE SAINTS"

THE JUDGMENT

First Reader:

After this I saw another angel coming down out of heaven;

He came with great authority and the earth was lit up with his splendor.
Then in a mighty voice he proclaimed,

Audience:

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!
She has become a dwelling for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit,
For every foul and loathsome bird.
For all nations have drunk deep
Of the fierce wine of her fornication.

Second Reader:

The merchants of the earth also will weep and mourn for her,
Because no one any longer buys their cargoes,
Cargoes of gold and silver, jewels and pearls,
Cloths of purple and scarlet, silks and fine linens,
Wine, oil, flour, wheat, chariots, slaves, and the lives of men.

First Reader:

Then I saw the beast was taken prisoner,
And so was the false prophet who had worked miracles in its presence
And deluded those that had received the mark of the beast
And worshiped its image.
The two of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire
With its sulfurous flames.
Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key of the abyss
And a great chain in his hands.
He seized the dragon, that serpent of old, the Devil or Satan,
And chained him up for a thousand years;
He threw him into the abyss, shutting and sealing it over him,
So that he might seduce the nations no more.

Second Reader:

Then I saw a great white throne, and the One who sat upon it;
From his presence earth and heaven vanished away,
And no place was left for them.
I could see the dead, great and small, standing before the throne;
And the books were opened.
Then another book was opened, the roll of the living.
From what was written in these books the dead were judged
Upon the record of their deeds.
The sea gave up its dead,
And Death and Hades gave up the dead in their keeping;
They were judged, each man on the record of his deeds.
Then Death and Hades were flung into the lake of fire.

And into it were flung any whose names were not to be found
In the roll of the living.

First Reader:

After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a vast throng in heaven;
And they were shouting:

Audience:

Alleluia! Victory and glory and power belong to our God,
For true and just are his judgments!
He has condemned the earth with her fornication,
And has avenged upon her the blood of his servants.

Second Reader:

Again, I heard what sounded like a vast crowd,
Like the noise of rushing water and deep roars of thunder, and they cried:

Audience:

Alleluia! The Lord our God, sovereign over all,
Has entered on his reign!
Exalt and shout for joy and do him homage,
For the wedding of the Lamb has come!
His bride has made herself ready,
And for her dress she has been given fine linen, clean and shining.

OFFERTORY

Note: A brass ensemble plays an offertory of sonorous cadence by way of expanding the theme of judgment. Visuals include various symbols of justice/judgment: sword, scales, muse, restrained serpent.

THE HOPE

First Reader:

Then one of the seven angels spoke unto me and said,

Audience:

Come, and I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

Second Reader:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,
For the first heaven and the first earth had vanished,
And there was no longer any sea.
I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming out of heaven from God,
Made ready like a bride adorned for her husband.
I heard a loud voice proclaiming from the throne:

Audience:

Now at last God has his dwelling among men!
He will dwell among them and they shall be his people,
And God himself will be with them.
He will wipe every tear from their eyes;
There shall be an end to death, and to mourning and crying and pain;
For the old order has passed away!

First Reader:

Then he who sat on the throne said,

Audience:

Behold! I am making all things new!

Second Reader:

I saw no temple in the city,
For its temple was the sovereign Lord God and the Lamb.
The gates of the city shall never be shut by day—
And there will be no night.
Then he showed me the river of the water of life.
On either side of the river stood a tree of life,
Which yields twelve crops of fruit,
One for each month of the year.
The leaves of the trees serve for the healing of nations,
And every accursed thing shall disappear.

Audience:

There shall be no more night,
Nor will they need the light of lamp or sun,
For the Lord God will give them light;
And they shall reign for evermore.

First Reader:

Then I looked, and on Mount Zion stood the Lamb,
And with him were a hundred and forty-four thousand
Who had his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.
I heard a sound from heaven like the noise of rushing water;
It was the sound of harpers playing on their harps.
There before the throne they were singing a new song.
That song no one could learn
Except the hundred and forty-four thousand,
Who alone from the whole world had been ransomed.
They were singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

HYMN: "WORTHY, WORTHY IS THE LAMB!"

Note: As the congregation stands to join the choir for the singing of the final hymn, the children's pictures of hope appear on the chancel walls once again, including dolls, family, congregation, community, sky, sun, rainbow.

Second Reader:

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to you
With this testimony for the churches.
Happy are those who wash their robes clean!
They will have the right to the tree of life
And will enter by the gates of the city.

Readers:

Come! say the Spirit and the bride.

Audience:

Come! let each hearer reply.

Readers:

Come forward, you who are thirsty;

Audience:

Accept the water of life, a free gift to all
Who desire it.

Readers:

He who gives this testimony speaks, Yes, I
am coming soon.

Audience:

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Readers:

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.

Audience:

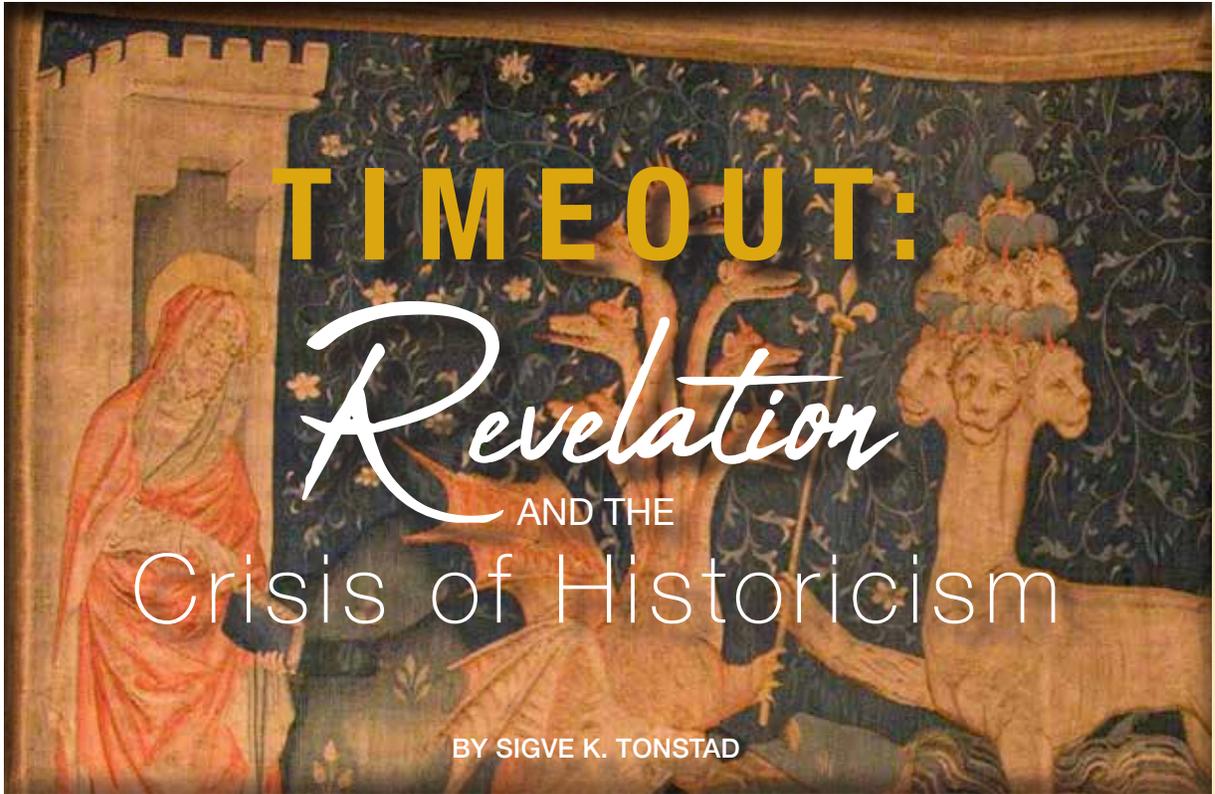
Amen.

Note: Worshipers are invited to remain in the sanctuary following the organ postlude, and to view the seven candlesticks with sculptors Alan Collins and students.

BENEDICTION

ORGAN POSTLUDE

CHARLES TEEL, JR. wrote this liturgy in 1984 when he was chairman of the department of Christian Ethics at Loma Linda University. Later he would create the Stahl Center at La Sierra University, honoring the memory of the pioneer Adventist missionaries to Peru Fernando and Ana Stahl, as well as the "Path of the Just." His own legacy as a beloved professor of religion at La Sierra University was celebrated in 2017, when he passed away.



“La Bête de la Mer” (The Beast of the Sea) from the *Tapisserie de l'Apocalypse*, a medieval tapestry in Angers, France, this detail of which shows John, the Dragon, and the Beast of the Sea.

The *historicist* school of interpretation claims that Revelation depicts history from the first century until the end of time. Martin Luther, who had grave reservations about Revelation as a canonical book, subscribed to historicist ideas in his later years and found resources for an anti-Catholic message in the book. (Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer, did not think that Revelation should be in the Canon, and John Calvin ignored it.) In the United States, historicism has lost market share to *futurism* among lay audiences, and it has lost ground to *preterist* interpretations among scholars. The historicist claim is bold: Revelation predicts events accurately and specifically right down to concrete dates on the calendar (such as 313, 538, 1565, 1798). Changes in the dating scheme put the histori-

cist paradigm at risk. Historicists have indeed paid a penalty for changing its map of events. C. Marvin Pate writes that “failed attempts to locate the fulfillment of Revelation in the course of circumstances of history has doomed it to continual revision as time passed and, ultimately, to obscurity.” To such observers, historicism is not only in *crisis*. It is worn-out.

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such observers, historicism is not only in *crisis*. It is worn-out.

The Sabbath School Quarterly for the first quarter of 2019 does not acknowledge any crisis, and it is unabashed in its claims on behalf of historicism. The following appears in the introduction on the Sabbath School Net website (ssnet.org):

A careful reading of Revelation’s prophecies (like those of Daniel) shows that the historicist method of prophetic interpretation

is the correct way to understand the prophecies' intended fulfillment, because they follow the flow of history, from the prophet's time to the end of the world. This method illustrates how we should make every effort to derive meaning from the text itself, rather than imposing a predetermined interpretation upon it.

I sense a contradiction in this statement. If the makers of the study guide truly believe that “we should make every effort to derive meaning from the text itself, rather than imposing a predetermined interpretation upon it,” there is no need to affix an *-ism* to the method. Let the text carry the weight of the interpretation. Do not burden the text with interpretations that it may not be able to carry. The historicist commitment falls short of the assertion made above. Some claims do not rise from the text; they would be implausible apart from the *-ism* and the “predetermined interpretation.” As I have perused the lessons, I have come away stunned at the audacity of the lesson makers. Claims are made that cannot be derived from the text of Revelation, *at least not the way the lessons present it*. They are salvaged by “the historicist method of prophetic interpretation.” Since little effort is invested in showing the merit of specifics and dates on exegetical and historical grounds—sometimes next to nothing, sometimes nothing—the reason for the paucity of evidence might be that 1) the lesson makers rely on prior interpretations without pointing us to them; 2) they don't care; 3) they don't expect us to care. The latter may be a safe bet. I have a hunch that several groups at my university will be studying other things than Revelation this quarter.

I will now comment on two specifics.

1. Where to Draw the Lines

First, the Quarterly asserts that the seven churches represent definite periods in history, and it proposes a clear-cut timeline.

The spiritual conditions in the seven churches coincide with the spiritual conditions of God's church in different historical periods. The seven

messages are intended to provide, from Heaven's perspective, a panoramic survey of the spiritual state of Christianity from the first century to the end of the world.

As the chart below shows, the time period proposed in 2019 differs somewhat from the hugely influential and long-lasting ideas in Uriah Smith's historicist scheme. While any change comes with a risk, perhaps we should be surprised that so little has been altered. A matter of note is that Thyatira gets a full 1,260 years in Smith's interpretation; it gets two hundred years less in the 2019 proposal. I was unable to find the dates 1565 and 1740 in Smith's interpretation. These dates are asserted in the study guide with very little evidence to back them up.

HISTORICISM AND THE SEVEN COMMUNITIES		
Church	Proposed Dates	
	URIAH SMITH	LESSON QUARTERLY 2019
Ephesus	31 – 100 AD	31 – 100 AD
Smyrna	100 – 323	100 – 313
Pergamum	323 – 538	313 – 538
Thyatira	538 – 1798	538 – 1565
Sardis	1798 – 1833 (?)	1565 – 1740
Philadelphia	1833 – 1844	1740 – 1844
Laodicea	1844 – present	1844 – present

I worry about several things on this chart, but here is just one concern in relation to Thyatira. In John's text, the report card on this church is mostly good. She is commended for “love, faithfulness, service, and endurance.” Jesus adds that “your last works are greater than the first,” suggesting a trajectory from good to better (Rev. 2:19). Yes, there is “that woman Jezebel,” but she is not the whole story (2:20). This church gets 1,260 years in Uriah Smith and more than one thousand years in the Quarterly. If the Thyatira text in Revelation is intended to cover more than one thousand years of history, it wields an exceedingly broad brush. Included in this sweep will be the Great Schism in 1054, the Crusades of 1095, the decimation of the Eastern Church in 1453 under the Ottoman conquest,

and the Reformation in its various manifestations, beginning in 1517. Is this what historicism does to real history, in a broad, one-size-fits-all sweep? The Quarterly says this about Thyatira:

Tradition replaced the Bible, a human priesthood and sacred relics replaced Christ's priesthood, and works were regarded as the means of salvation. Those who did not accept these corrupting influences were persecuted and even killed.

These elements are found in the period mentioned. Are these elements what John (or Jesus) had in mind in the vision on Patmos? Is this what we ought to say? Is it enough?

The Quarterly puts the suture line between Thyatira and Sardis at the year 1565, but it does not make the date reverberate with historical significance. Philadelphia gets only eleven years in Smith's scheme, a proposal that will seem risky in the extreme even to people who may be favorably disposed toward historicism.

2. The "Ten Years"

Believers in Smyrna are told that "the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction" (2:10). To Smyrna is allotted the period from 100 AD to 313 AD, or 323 AD, if we follow Uriah Smith. Here, for reasons that are not self-evident, the Quarterly commits to a specific event and precise dates.

The "ten days" mentioned in Revelation 2:10 point to the ten years of the Diocletian persecution from A.D. 303 until A.D. 313, when Constantine the Great issued the Edict of Milan, which granted Christians religious freedom.

The assertion is not tentative; there is no caveat or alternative option. It follows from this that the editors of the Quarterly have decided to make most or all the

time elements in Revelation conform to the "Year-Day Principle." Ten years it will be. But was it *ten* years? The so-called "Diocletian persecution" was pushed by Galerius, the emperor's co-regent in the East because he was truly anti-Christian, and the "Christian problem" was most evident in that part of the empire. Historians estimate that perhaps 20 percent of the population were Christians at that time, meaning that they represented a real challenge. In the West, the persecution sputtered, and it had already petered out in 305. That year Diocletian did what no emperor (except Nerva, perhaps) had done before him: he resigned, and he made his fellow Augustus, Maxminian, resign with him. Diocletian had

at the time been very ill, but he recovered, and he returned to Split on the Adriatic Coast where he took up horticulture.

Persecution continued in the East, and many Christians were killed, but persecution ended in formal terms with Galerius' Edict of Toleration in 311.

By that time Galerius was already dead. The arch-persecutor (Galerius) had admitted failure. Prisoners were released and churches re-opened. We are at this point eight years into the period of persecution, and the worst is over. Then came the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, with its promise of religious liberty. This is the ten-year mark in the historicist interpretation. And then, in the words of W. H. C. Frend, comes the following piece of bad news. "Within four years (317), the universal freedom of conscience proclaimed at Milan had been abrogated, and the state had become a persecutor once more, only this time in favor of Christian orthodoxy." Where do we put this in the prophetic scheme?

Questions

I will end my reflection with some questions.

1. Non-historicist readers of Revelation think that the historicist school is in crisis. Should we acknowledge this and, if we continue along the historicist path, try to win over the doubters? Mere assertions will not suffice.

The Sabbath School Quarterly for the first quarter of 2019 does not acknowledge any crisis, and it is unabashed in its claims on behalf of historicism.

2. Is the historicist view communally sustainable at a time when there is scant knowledge of actual history in our communities? The cognitive gap—and the cognitive dissonance—cannot be ignored. The literacy level about history is low. Is the strategy to close the gap by assertions or by genuine knowledge?

3. Will the historicist bent of the Quarterly confirm what has long been the problem in our relation to Revelation: we understand it, but we only understand it vicariously? By “vicarious,” I mean that we have a few scholars, some evangelists, and a few pastors who understand the book for us. We cannot on our own reproduce what they tell us is there; we depend on their expertise; we trust them; most of us are in no position to do what is required without such help.

4. Does the text of Revelation invite the kind of interpretation endorsed in the Quarterly, with ten years for the “Diocletian persecution” and more than a thousand years for Thyatira as test cases?

5. Will the 2019 version of historicism carry the day for the next generation of Seventh-day Adventists, in the United States, in Europe, and in the rest of the world?

I plan to return to these questions in another “timeout” later in the series. Before I close, I would like to share something I read in a wonderful book by Robert Markus, entitled *The End of Ancient Christianity* (1990) and then a thought from Peter Brown’s little book, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (1995). To begin, Markus says that the foremost characteristic of Christianity from the second century onwards was not increasing worldliness but increasing *other-worldliness*. This is most explicit in the monastic movement, one strand of which had a profound influence on Augustine (354–430). The allure of the city

and the pull of the desert competed for the upper hand among devout believers, and the desert won. Again, the problem was not worldliness but withdrawal from the world. Markus calls it an “ascetic invasion.” When the dust settled, other-worldliness won even as the monastic movement rejoined the city. Alasdair MacIntyre, quoted by Robert Markus, calls the transformation an “epistemological excision” in which the secular world all but disappears.

In this world of great paradox, society was massively “Christianized,” with Augustine as one of the most influential voices. Augustine was an ascetic, too, but he was not as intensely ascetic as contemporaries like Pelagius and Jerome. Markus attributes to Augustine the promotion of “Christian mediocrity,” a tempered spiritual state that

sought a realistic equilibrium between body and spirit, city and desert, aspiration and achievement. Throughout, Markus seeks to do justice to the complexity of history. Eastern Christianity differs from the West. North Africa differs from Italy. Italy differs from Gaul (France). Northern Gaul differs from the more developed south. The complexity is irreduc-

ible and not easily captured by an *-ism*. And yet there is a trend, and it is this: “the elimination . . . from Christian discourse of a whole sphere which we may call ‘secular.’”

Peter Brown is the world’s foremost expert on this period, now renamed Late Antiquity, a period extending well into what historians used to call the Middle Ages. What Markus calls the embrace of “Christian mediocrity” in Augustine is still a more austere version of the Christian life than had been the case in prior times. Augustine raises the bar for what it means to be a Christian. But what if the project fails? What, indeed, if “Christianization” is doomed to be an ambiguous notion in the best of times? For this possibility, Augustine has a Plan B. “A myth of the ‘decline of the Church’ began to circulate, especially in Latin ascetic circles.” Brown continues:

Philadelphia gets only eleven years in Smith’s scheme, a proposal that will seem risky in the extreme even to people who may be favorably disposed toward historicism.

The notion, of course, had always lain to hand, and was used by Christian preachers, such as Origen and Chrysostom, in order to rebuke their congregations for having degenerated from the high standard of an earlier age. But the notion of “the decline of the Church” became, now, a major explanatory device for the entire present state of Christianity.

The historicist view of history resembles Augustine’s Plan B. Once upon a time, in the first century, the Church was truly Christian. Then decline set in. To Brown and Markus, however, the world is becoming more Christian all along, although the contest continues over what it means to be Christian. (Does a Christian attend the games at the Circus? Does he or she watch NFL games on TV?) Markus calls the excision of the secular world in the Christianity of Late Antiquity a crisis, and he finds telling words for it.

Such a crisis occurs when established traditions have become sterile and are seen to lead intellectually to a dead end; when the use of hitherto accepted ways of thought “begins to have the effect of disclosing new inadequacies, hitherto unrecognized incoherences, and new problems for the solution of which there seem to be insufficient or no resources within the established fabric of belief.” Such a crisis is resolved by the adoption of a “new and conceptually enriched scheme” which can simultaneously deal with the sterility and incoherence produced by its predecessor, account for the previous difficulty in doing so, and carry out these tasks “in a way which exhibits some fundamental continuity of the new

conceptual and theoretical structures with the shared beliefs in terms of which the tradition of enquiry had been defined up to that point.” [Items in quotation marks are from MacIntyre.]

I apologize for this lengthy timeout, but I mean to be constructive. Is historicism in crisis, as scholars doubtful of its merits believe? Is there, as I have suggested in the foregoing, a discrepancy between the text of Revelation and some historicist interpretations, another discrepancy

between historicism and actual history, and yet another discrepancy between historicism and the audience—you and me? I told my sister the other day that historicism in its current form (the *Quarterly*) describes history the way I describe the Alps from an airplane on a cloudy day, my plane flying not only high above the ground but also high above the clouds. Perhaps Markus’ view of the crisis at *The End of Ancient Christianity* could be a template for the next step? He spots the crisis, and his proposed

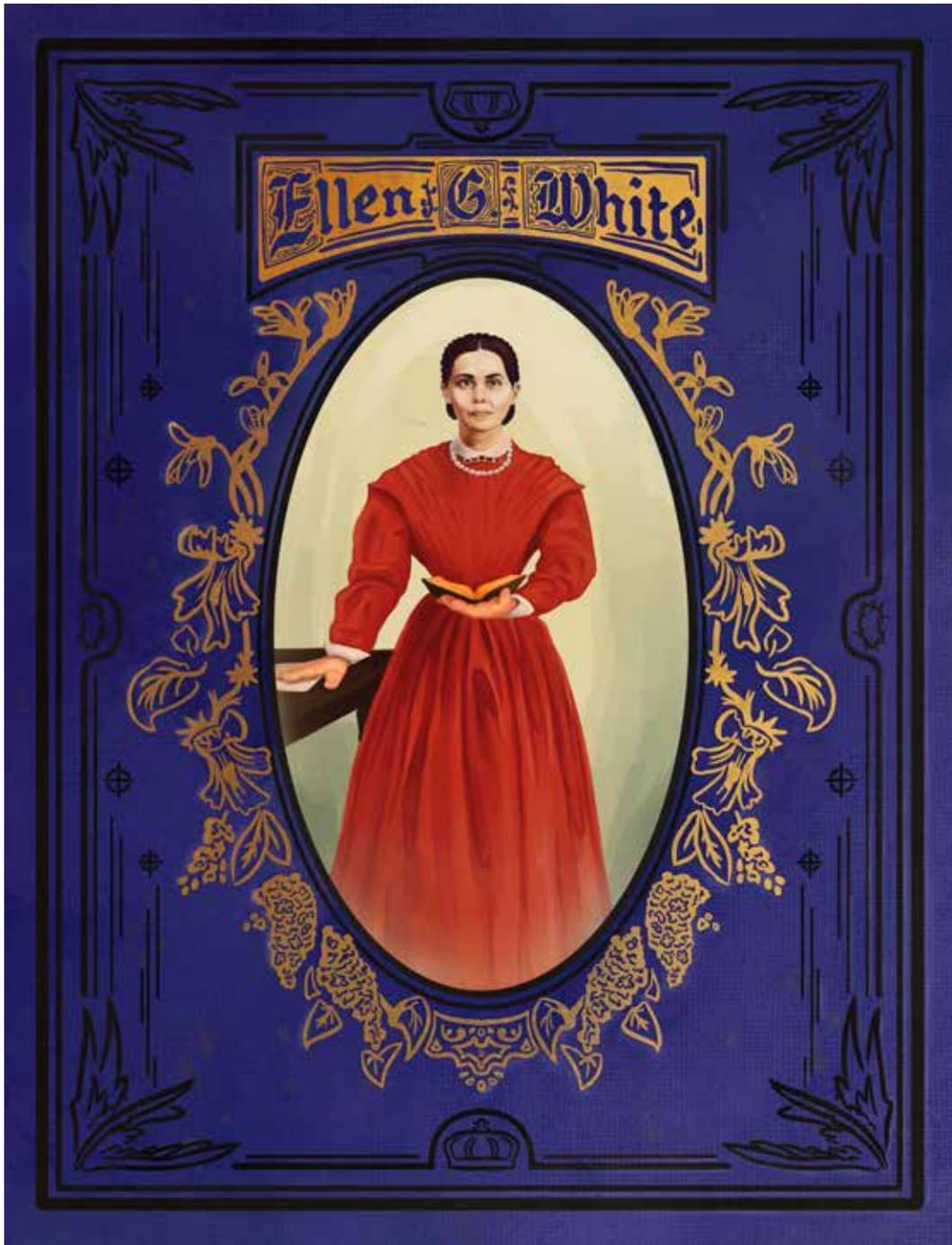
remedy is not rejection but adjustment and renewal.

I would be pessimistic about the prospect for change if not for the fact that the historicists in my neck of the theological woods are fond of the message to the church at Laodicea. This church says of itself that “I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing” (3:17). Let a discussion about the future of historicism begin by reading that text aloud.

Is the historicist view communally sustainable at a time when there is scant knowledge of actual history in our communities? The cognitive gap—and the cognitive dissonance—cannot be ignored. The literacy level about history is low.



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With the death of Ellen White in 1915, the Seventh-day Adventist Church entered a new era. Questions about how the church should relate to the now-dead prophet were vigorously discussed at a Bible Conference in 1919. On this 100th anniversary of that conference, we republish portions of the Minutes from that meeting. Historian George Knight also addresses the issues that have evolved for the church in its relationship to the prophet in the years since her death.

Ellen White's AFTERLIFE

DELIGHTFUL FICTIONS, TROUBLING FACTS, AND ENLIGHTENING RESEARCH

GEORGE R. KNIGHT

This paper was originally given as the Utt Visiting Scholar Lecture at Pacific Union College on October 2, 2018.

It is good to be a living prophet. But it may be better to be a dead one. At least it is more peaceful.

That was certainly true for Ellen White in the Angwin/PUC community in the early 1960s during my time as a student. Her days of conflict were over, her book sales were flourishing, and she was undoubtedly held in higher regard by a larger proportion of Adventists than she had been during her long life.

And to top it off, her daughter-in-law, W. C. White's widow, lived on Howell Mountain, and her son Arthur White was a frequent visitor to both her and Pacific Union College. A highpoint of Arthur's visits was his Sabbath-afternoon lectures. He was assured of speaking to a packed house in Irwin Hall as he rehearsed God's prophetic leading in his grandmother's life and ministry. Those were not-to-be-missed events for faculty, students, and community. The early 1960s were indeed the wonderful world of Ellen White and she was secure in it, at least within the borders of Adventism.

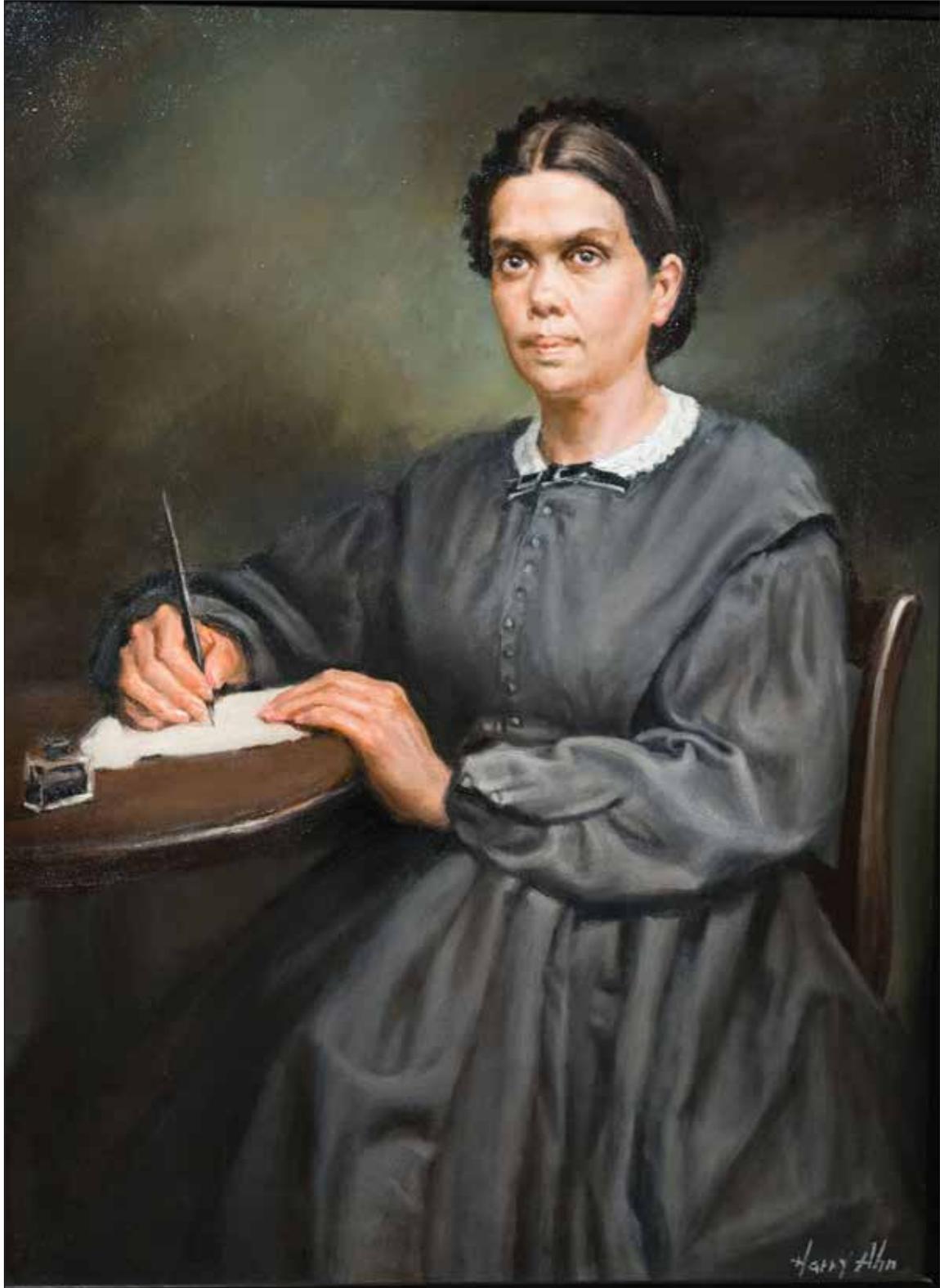
That wonderful world was a general phenomenon in Adventism. And it was certainly a significant aspect of Pacific Union College from 1962 through 1965 while I was a student.

The Wonderful World of Ellen White in the Early 1960s

Not the least to be influenced by Ellen White's authority was PUC's religion faculty. I remember Leo Van Dolson's course in the Life and Teachings of Jesus. The only books we read were by Ellen White, and his detailed syllabus was essentially a chronological and topical analysis of *The Desire of Ages* and *Christ's Object Lessons*. Van Dolson even explained how he used Ellen White to determine the chronological flow of events in Christ's life for those points that were not clear or appeared to be conflicted in the Bible. For him, Ellen White was authoritative in every way. The same can be said for Robert W. Olson, who later followed Arthur White as the director of the Ellen G. White Estate. While I never took Daniel and Revelation from him, I remember his

students carrying to class a compilation on those two biblical books that included the Ellen G. White Comments sections from the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Her comments were important and determinative in the presentations. I did take Olson's three-quarter sequence on Ellen White's life and writings. She, of course, was central due to the nature of the class. But what sticks out most prominently in my mind is that in the third quarter each student, on the basis of the Bible and Ellen White, was to

The early 1960s were indeed the wonderful world of Ellen White and she was secure in it, at least within the borders of Adventism.



Artwork: Courtesy of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

develop a chart indicating the flow of events at the end of time. I still have mine filed away, replete with arrows and a massive number of Ellen White references and two from the Bible. Such charts were not peculiar to PUC, but were ubiquitous in Adventism at that time.

Carl Coffman, who taught the practical topics, also held Ellen White to be centrally authoritative. Not only did he assign such books as *Gospel Workers* and *Testimonies to Ministers* as required reading, but he had each of us develop a loose-leaf notebook from Ellen White's writings with the various pages consisting of compilations on specific issues we might face in our ministry. William Hyde, who taught the systematic theology course, also let Ellen White be a deciding authority, although I do not remember him overly using her writings in his courses on the Old Testament Prophets. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind as I recall the authoritative, and even preeminent, role Ellen White's writings played in my PUC experience, especially in the Department of Religion.

But, and here is a crucial point, not all of the theological professors emphasized Ellen White or her authority. Among that group were Fred Veltman and Eric Syme. Of course, since Veltman only taught Greek and Greek exegesis at that time, one would not expect him to use Ellen White. But my impression from extended interaction with him is that he would never have used her for exegesis under any circumstances. More significant in this discussion is Syme, from whom I took Daniel and Revelation. I do not recall him ever using Ellen White's writings in that class. Midway between those who put Ellen White at the center and those who didn't was Lewis Hartin, who basically taught exegesis of the Pauline Epistles from scripture and only pointed out a few times during the year that she had an opinion on this or that difficult passage.

A point of special significance in the above discussion is that the religion faculty of PUC in the early 1960s was not agreed on the role of Ellen White in the classroom. We will see in the rest of this paper that

Adventists have never been united on the authority and proper use of Ellen White.

My impression of my fellow students, especially in the religious arena, is much more unified. With Ellen White we had the flawless authority on almost everything of importance. If we needed help in understanding the meaning of a Bible passage all we had to do was check Ellen White's comments, greatly facilitated by the scriptural index of the recently published *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, which helpfully supplied Ellen White input in the discussion of the verses themselves, an "Ellen G. White Comments" section at the end of the treatment of each biblical chapter that provided references to her

major remarks for many verses from her published writings, and a major section of "Ellen G. White Comments" at the end of each volume drawn from her unpublished writings and periodical articles that supplied material for a great many verses. With such an array of material

One of my great literary ambitions in my early Adventist life was to compile all of her comments on each verse in the entire Bible on the meaning of each scriptural passage.

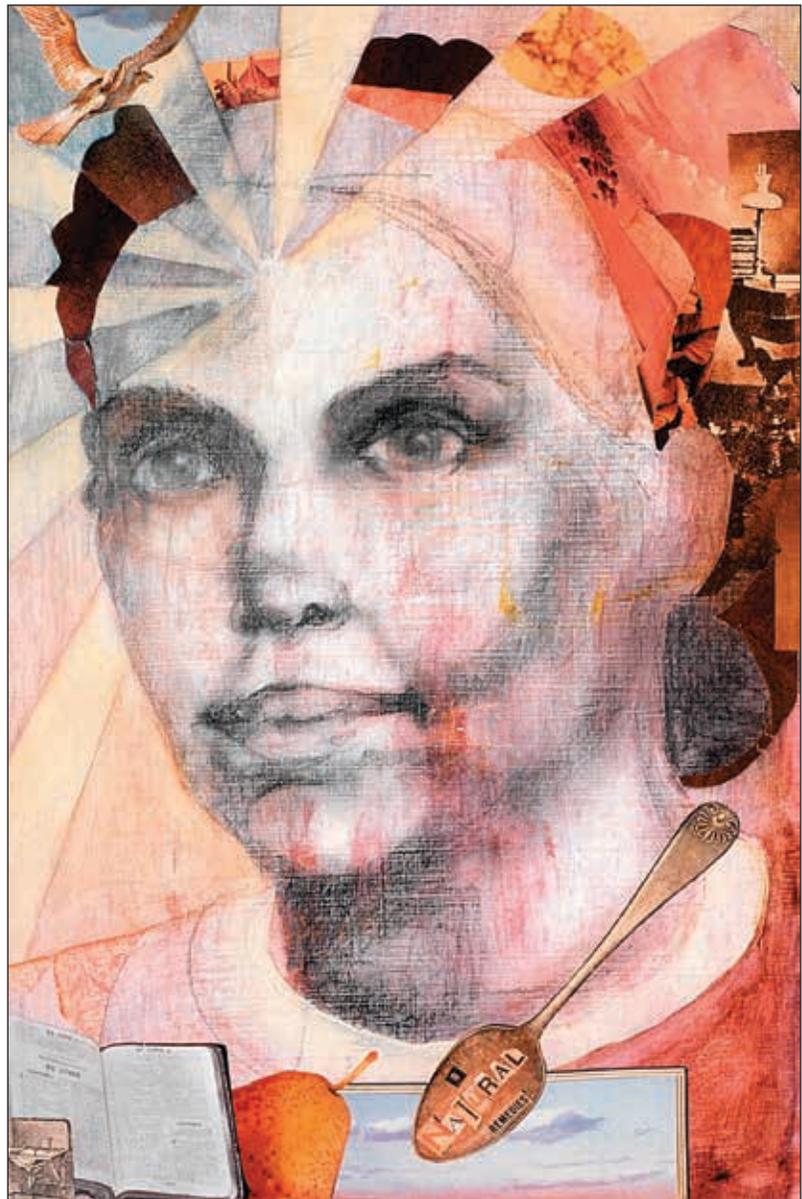
at hand it was easy to feel that she was indeed the ultimate Bible commentator, a divine one, "far above all other commentators," as the editor of the *Review and Herald* put it.¹ In fact, one of my great literary ambitions in my early Adventist life was to compile all of her comments on each verse in the entire Bible on the meaning of each scriptural passage. Such would provide the final word on biblical interpretation.

Her writings in the realm of doctrine and theology also provided us with the final word. It was off to the *Index* or other Ellen White resources if we had a theological problem that needed a divine answer. The Bible, of course, was important, most important theoretically, but in practice Ellen White had the final authoritative word, even on the most marginal and esoteric points. We did a great deal of theology from her writings. We were glad to have her writings since the Bible did not say much on many topics. And we used them to generate our homemade compilations to provide the final answer on topics not sufficiently covered in Scripture.

Ellen White was not only a divine, inspired Bible commentator and a valid source for doctrine, but she was also authoritative for history, chronology, science, and anything else she spoke on. Beyond that, those in my group had no doubt that she was infallible and inerrant and probably verbally inspired. On that last point, verbal inspiration, we were beginning to have some doubts since Book One of *Selected Messages* recently had been published in 1958 and was throwing cold water on that position.² But no matter, we were deep in recent Adventist practice on the point and made large arguments based on her choice of this word or that and even used the structural flow of her sentences to nail down our points, practices reinforced by some of our teachers.

And when it came to the source for her writings, we had not the slightest doubt. It all (except for such minor secular bits of information as the number of rooms in the Paradise Valley Sanitarium) came straight from heaven, as if there were some kind of pipeline from the throne of God through the top of Ellen White's head and out through her fingertips. And voilà, we had divine revelation transposed into divine inspiration. And revelation was the only model most of us ever thought of. Ideas of borrowing and possible plagiarism were far from our pure minds on the topic.

And, if those good things weren't enough, we were told by some authorities that she was 100 years ahead of her times. Combining all of those things with her flawless character and you had the best thing on earth. I still remember us students deciding if something was right or wrong by trying to discover Ellen White's practice on the topic. Thus we could even provide the ultimate answer on such questions as whether it was a sin to wash dishes on Sabbath. In my pre-college year, I still recall crossing the street from my home in Mountain View, California, to ask Alma McKibbin, who had lived with Ellen White in her younger years, questions about Ellen White that I



This portrait of Ellen by Stephanie Gifford Reeder appeared on the cover of *Spectrum* Volume 24, Issue 4, in Autumn 2001.

hoped would provide the final answer to certain esoteric points that I was struggling with. I remember her sorrowfully looking at me, perhaps wondering if I were nuts, and undoubtedly sensing my legalistic frame of mind.

Beyond the realm of academics, Ellen White's counsel was determinative at PUC in such areas as entertainment, recreation, and other aspects of conduct and dress. And a large portion of the students had arrived on campus with "Ellen White says" already ringing in their ears. In all too many cases the prophet's words had been used to muscle them into correct Adventist paths throughout their lives—a practice that set them up with a desire to



Artwork: Courtesy of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

escape her influence and avoid her writings when the opportunity seemed justified in the 1970s.

The role of Ellen White at PUC in the early 1960s was a subset of the practices and attitudes of mainline Adventism at the time. The prophet was at the apex of her respect and authoritative position in the denomination. The Sabbath School quarterlies and typical sermons were peppered with Ellen White quotations, and often dominated by them. And in the theological crisis stimulated by the publication of *Questions on Doctrine* in 1957 (which sported three Ellen White compilations in its appendices) the Adventist discussion was permeated by homemade Ellen White compilations on the nature of Christ, perfection, and almost every topic of interest. It was the age of homegrown authoritative compilations. That to a large extent was how theology was done.

The authoritative word of Ellen White settled the problem.

And her style and words themselves caught the attention of many in the 1920s through the 1960s. I have on my shelves a book published in 1953 titled *Literary Beauty of Ellen G. White's Writings* which analyzes her writings by literary standards and finds her “a master of style.”³ The influential M. L. Andreasen made the same point in 1948 when he admitted that he found it difficult to believe that a person with so little education could produce writings of such literary beauty. The only way that such beauty and style could be accounted for, he opined, was “on the basis of inspiration.”⁴ Those were typical evaluations before researchers began to carefully look at her use of literary assistants.

In summary, the early 1960s was a wonderful time to be Ellen White. She was not only authoritative for exegesis and theology, but also inerrant, infallible, 100 years ahead of her times, of a flawless character, and for many verbally inspired. And to top it off, everything she wrote came straight from heaven through divine revelation.

The most remarkable thing about those early-1960s perspectives related to Ellen White is that she herself did not believe them nor agree with them. And neither did most of those of her contemporaries who worked most closely with her.

Ellen White and Her Most Enlightened Contemporaries Never Believed in the Wonderful World Construct

One fascinating aspect of Adventist history is that so much about the nature of Ellen White's work was forgotten in the years after her death. That fact, as we will see, set the denomination up for an Ellen White crisis in the 1970s.

Many of her most enlightened colleagues clearly saw the problem that would be created if people claimed too much for her work. Foremost among that group was W. C. White, the son who worked extremely close to her for the last twenty-five years of her life.

In the wake of the 1911 revision of *The Great Controversy* and S. N. Haskell's reaction against the changes that had been made, W. C. White wrote:

I believe, Brother Haskell, that there is danger of our injuring Mother's work by claiming for it more than she claims for it, more than Father ever claimed for it, more than Elder[s] Andrews, Waggoner, or Smith ever claimed for it. I cannot see consistency in our putting forth a claim of verbal

inspiration when Mother does not make any such claim, and I certainly think we will make a great mistake if we lay aside historical research and endeavor to settle historical questions by the use of Mother's books as an authority when she herself does not wish them to be used in any such way.

It is of great significance to realize that Ellen White saw the same dangers. At the end of one copy of her son's letter we find the following handwritten note: “I approve of the remarks made in this letter. Ellen G. White.”⁵

It is of interest that during her lifetime, revisions of her works consistently raised the issue of verbal inspiration. After all, how can inspired words be changed? That problem surfaced in the early 1880s when what has become the first four volumes of *Testimonies for the Church* were being revised. One result of the problem was an action taken by the 1883 General Conference session that read in part that “we believe the light given by God to his servants is by the

In all too many cases the prophet's words had been used to muscle them into correct Adventist paths throughout their lives.

enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed.”⁶ Those sentiments were Ellen White’s personal position. Thus, in 1886, she could write that “it is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts.”⁷

That understanding was widespread among Ellen White’s closest contemporaries. Thus, General Conference president A. G. Daniells could note in 1919 that:

there are men who just hold me right up as a doubter of the Testimonies because I take the position that the Testimonies are not verbally inspired, and that they have been worked up by the secretaries and put in proper grammatical

shape. A few years ago a man came onto the nominating committee and wanted me kept out of the presidency because I did not believe the Testimonies were verbally inspired.⁸

Closely related to verbal inspiration is the topic of inerrancy (the idea that inspired writings are free from error). Part of the difficulty for some with the revision of her works was that some of the “facts” were changed. Thus W. W. Prescott was converted from a rigid view on inspiration through his work in revising *The Great Controversy*, a project that she wanted done. Noting that he had had to “adjust” his views during the process, Prescott had come to understand that the real point of Ellen White’s inspiration had to do with the larger themes rather than with factual details. “For instance,” he told the participants at the 1919 Bible Conference, “before

Great Controversy was revised, I was unorthodox on a certain point, but after it was revised, I was perfectly orthodox.”⁹ And, faced with the possibility that there might be mistakes and errors in the Bible due to the work of copyists or translators, Ellen White claimed that that was a genuine probability, but that “all the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth.” Her major concern had to do with the broad themes of scripture. “Not one soul would lose its way to heaven” if individuals followed the biblical “guidebook.”¹⁰ Along that line, she penned that the Bible is “an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will,”¹¹ rather than being infallible on every topic it touched.

A second set of ideas that Ellen White and those who worked closest to her were clear on was that her works should not be viewed as a divine, inspired commentary on the Bible and that they should not be used to settle doctrinal issues. Those issues arose during the 1888 era when G. I. Butler, president of the General Conference, and others sought to use her writings to



Ellen White, circa 1878, colored. (Courtesy of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.)

settle the arguments being hotly disputed over the identity of the law in Galatians and the ten horns of Daniel 7.

Not only did Ellen White decline to settle the biblical issues through appeal to her Testimonies, but she went so far as to infer to the delegates at the 1888 General Conference session on October 24 that it was providential that she had lost the testimony to J. H. Waggoner in which she had purportedly resolved the nature of the law in Galatians once and for all in the 1850s. “God has a purpose in this,” she asserted, “He wants us to go to the Bible and get the Scripture evidence.”¹²

Again, J. H. Morrison read several passages from her *Sketches from the Life of Paul* to “prove” Butler’s interpretation of the Galatian’s law. Ellen White was unimpressed. Earlier in the day she had said “I cannot take my position on either side until I have studied the question.”¹³ It was in that context that she had noted that it was providential that she could not find her testimony to Waggoner on

the topic since some were seeking to use her writings in place of studying the Bible. From her perspective, her writings had their purposes, but one of them was not to take a superordinate position to the Bible by providing an infallible commentary.

She would make that position explicit again twenty years later in the divisive controversy over the meaning of the “daily” in Daniel 8. In that struggle, S. N. Haskell and others were holding that the new interpretation would “undermine present truth” because Adventists had based their traditional view upon a statement in *Early Writings*. Haskell was explicit on his view of the relation of Ellen White’s writings to the Bible: “We ought to understand such expressions by the aid of the Spirit of Prophecy... All points are to be solved” in that manner.¹⁴ Ellen White was just as explicit, writing that “I request that my writings shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy. I entreat of Elders H, I, J, and others of our leading

brethren, that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their views of ‘the daily.’ . . . I cannot consent that any of my writings shall be taken as settling this matter.”¹⁵

Ellen White made it clear that her writings were to bring people “back to the word” and to aid them in understanding the biblical principles,¹⁶ but she never held them as a divine commentary on scripture. Nor did she see them as a source of doctrine. “The Bible,” she repeatedly asserted throughout her ministry, “is the only rule of faith and doctrine.”¹⁷

Daniells, Prescott, and others who worked closely with her held the same position on the respective roles of

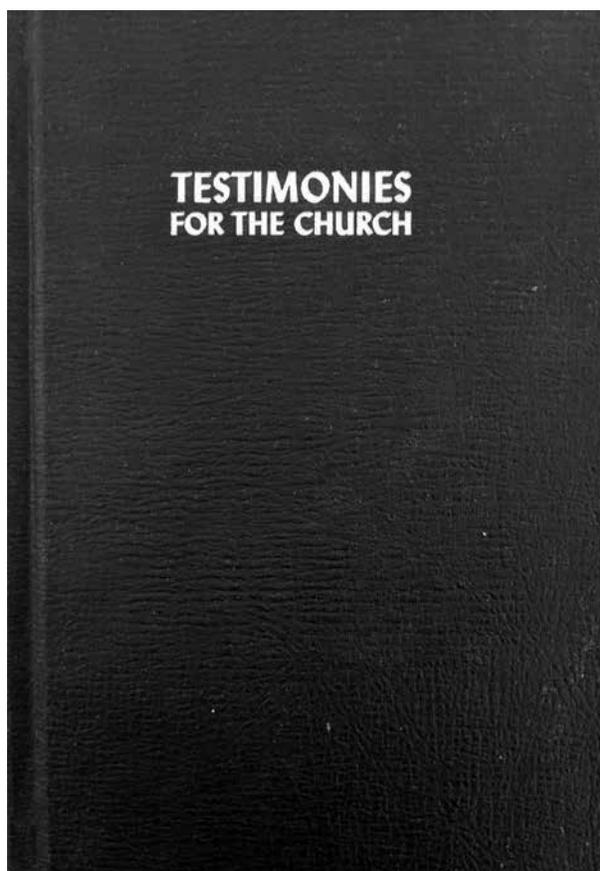
the Bible and Ellen White’s writings. Daniells, for example, noted at the 1919 Bible Conference that “we are to get our interpretation from this Book [the Bible], primarily. I think that the Book explains itself, and I think we can understand the Book, fundamentally, through the Book, without resorting to the Testimonies to prove up on it.” A little later he pointed out that “it is not

our position, and it is not right that the spirit of prophecy is the only safe interpreter of the Bible. That is a false doctrine, a false view. It will not stand.”¹⁸

A third important idea that Ellen White and her close associates were clear on was that not everything in her works came straight from heaven in the form of divine revelation, but that she used historical sources in her writing. “In some cases,” she penned in the introduction to the 1888 edition of *The Great Controversy*,

where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but except in a few instances no specific credit has been given, since they are not quoted for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject.

A second set of ideas that Ellen White and those who worked closest to her were clear on was that her works should not be viewed as a divine, inspired commentary on the Bible and that they should not be used to settle doctrinal issues.



Her basic claim was that God had revealed to her the spiritual dynamics of the controversy between Christ's and Satan's kingdoms, but that she went to the historians to provide the facts and to fill out the historical tapestry.¹⁹

W. C. White made that point clear when he explained the revisions in the 1911 edition of *The Great Controversy* to the Autumn Council of the General Conference on October 30, 1911. "In her public ministry," he pointed out, "Mother has shown an ability to select from the storehouse of truth, matter that is well adapted to the needs of the congregation [or reading audience] before her."²⁰

White expounded on that theme for the rest of his life. I will cite three illustrations from his presentations. First, he noted in 1911, "Mother has never claimed to be authority on history." Rather, she was given what he calls "flashlight pictures" regarding the flow of salvation history. "In connection with the writing out of these views, she has made use of good and clear historical statements to help make plain to the reader the things which she is endeavoring to present." *Histories of the Reformation*, for

example, "helped her to locate and describe many of the events and the movements presented to her in vision."²¹

Looking back some years later, White pointed out that,

she admired the language in which other writers had presented to their readers the scenes which God had presented to her in vision, and she found it both a pleasure, and a convenience and an economy of time to use their language fully or in part in presenting those things which she knew through revelation, and which she wished to pass on to her readers.²²

In a 1912 letter to W. W. Eastman, White indicated that his mother not only used general historians of Christian history in the writing of her works, but also the works of Adventist writers. Thus he pointed out that "Mother found such perfect descriptions of events and presentations of facts and of doctrines written out in our denominational books, that she copied the words of these authorities."²³

Daniells was also knowledgeable regarding Ellen White's use of sources and he could be quite frank in his discussion of the issue. At the 1919 Bible Conference, for instance, he noted that,

she never claimed to be an authority on history; and as I understood it, where the history that related to the interpretation of prophecy was clear and expressive, she wove it into her writings; but I have always understood that, as far as she was concerned, she was ready to correct in revision such statements as she thought should be corrected.²⁴

A bit later Daniells went on to point out the difficulties generated by Ellen White's *Sketches from the Life of Paul* (developed as a companion book for the Sabbath School lessons for second quarter 1883). "We could never claim inspiration in the whole thought and makeup of the book," he asserted,

because it has been thrown aside because it was badly put together. Credits were not given to the proper authorities [W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*].... Personally

that has never shaken my faith, but there are men who have been greatly hurt by it, and I think it is because they claimed too much for these writings. Just as Brother White says, there is a danger in going away from the Book, and claiming too much.²⁵

One thing that should be noted before we move on from Ellen White's use of historical sources is that the Adventist clergy and laity were in a general way familiar with many of the volumes from which she took material. That is not only true of Adventist authors such as Uriah Smith's *The Sanctuary and its Cleansing*, James White's *Life of William Miller*, and J. N. Andrews' *History of the Sabbath*, but also several non-Adventist authors including Merle D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation* and J. A. Wylie's *History of the Waldenses*. Those last two, among others, were advertised in Adventist publications. In fact, within about six weeks after *Sketches from the Life of Paul* was published, the *Signs of the Times* featured an advertisement of Corybeare and Howson's work on Paul (which she had used extensively) with an Ellen White endorsement: "*The Life of St Paul* [sic], by Conybeare and Howson," she wrote, "I regard as a book of great merit, and one of rare usefulness to the earnest student of the New Testament history." She also personally recommended D'Aubigné's history to readers of the *Review* as "both interesting and profitable" for gaining knowledge of the Reformation.²⁶ Such exposures to her source materials would suggest that Ellen White and her contemporaries believed there was nothing to hide or fear regarding her use of them. Beyond that, through such familiarity her contemporaries would have been much more familiar with overlap than a generation decades later who would be seriously shaken in the 1970s by the re-discovery of her significant use of the material of others.

A final topic that Ellen White was consistent on was that use of her works was not to be made prominent in sermons and other public formats. "In public labor," she

wrote in 1894, "do not make prominent, and quote that which Sister White has written, as authority to sustain your positions. . . . Bring your evidences, clear and plain, from the Word of God. . . . Let none be educated to look to Sister White, but to the mighty God, who gives instruction to Sister White."²⁷ It is probably significant that the references to that topic that I have discovered come from the 1890s. More work needs to be done on the use of Ellen White as authority in sermons and other presentations during her lifetime, but my impression is that use of her works in even theological argumentation was not practiced much until the early 1880s. But, by the early 1890s, such leaders as A. T. Jones were using some of her statements as "texts" for his messages to Adventist groups, although he claimed

that her writings should not be used that way in presentations to non-Adventists.²⁸

At this juncture it is important to note that although Ellen White's most enlightened contemporaries were aware of, and in basic agreement with, her understanding of such topics as verbal

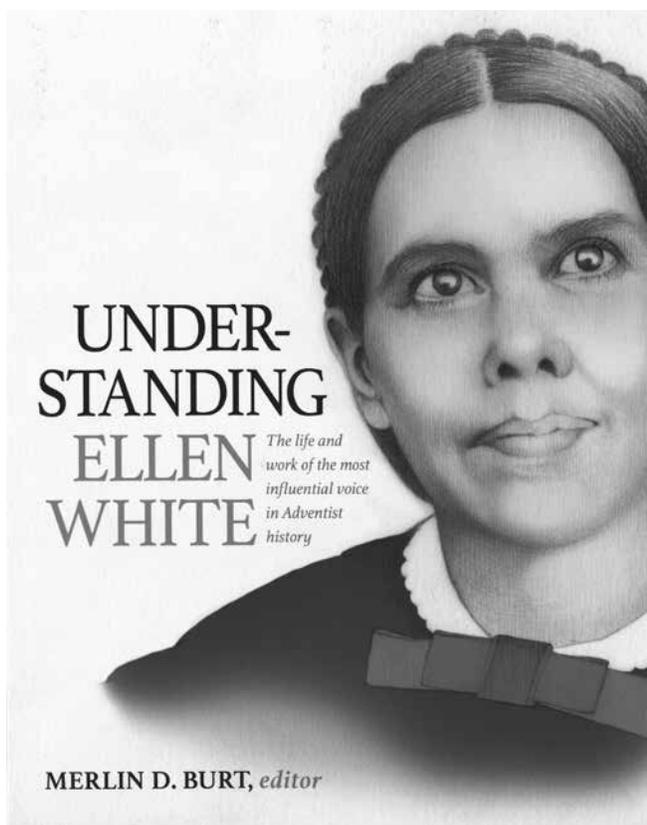
inspiration, inerrancy, the use of her works in relation to the Bible and doctrine, her use of historical sources, and the use of her writings in public presentations, that does not mean that all were. We have already seen that S. N. Haskell argued vigorously for such things as verbal inspiration and the validity of her works for historical detail. He battled until his death in arguing for the verbal position in spite of W. C. White's repeated pleas to him that he was in the wrong. "Do I believe that Sister White's writings are verbally inspired as much as the Bible?" he wrote in 1919. "Yes; I do," he answered, continuing on to supply seven reasons why "he believed" in the "verbal inspiration of Sister White's writings."²⁹ And the charismatic A. T. Jones shared many of the same views. "I must refer again to the attitude of A. T. Jones," Daniells told the 1919 Bible Conference attendees. "In his heyday you know he just drank the whole thing in, and he would hang a man on a word. I have

Her basic claim was that God had revealed to her the spiritual dynamics of the controversy between Christ's and Satan's kingdoms, but that she went to the historians to provide the facts and to fill out the historical tapestry.

seen him take just a word in the Testimonies and hang to it, and that would settle everything.”³⁰

Jones also set the stage for the twentieth-century use of Ellen White as a commentary on the Bible. “The right use of the Testimonies,” he wrote to the church in his 1894 week of prayer reading, “. . . is not to use them *as they are in themselves*, as though they were apart from the word of God in the Bible; but to study the Bible *through them*.”³¹

Thus, as we saw among the PUC Bible teachers in the early 1960s, Ellen White’s contemporaries were divided over the proper use, authority, and nature of her writings. Adventism has ever been a divided camp on that topic.



W. C. White never ceased warning about the dangers of claiming too much for Ellen White and her writings. That topic also came up during the very open and frank discussions of her work at the 1919 Bible Conference. Daniells, for example, pointed out that one way to hurt a student’s relationship to Ellen White and her gift was “to take an extreme and unwarranted position” on her works. “You can do that . . . but when that student gets out and gets in contact with things [i.e., the facts], he may be shaken, and perhaps shaken

clear out and away. I think we should be candid and honest and never put a claim forth that is not well founded.”³²

It is a fact that the warning signs had been placed on the table by those who had worked closely with Ellen White. But it is also a fact that those signs were ignored and even suppressed (as in the case of the 1919 Bible Conference minutes) in the polarizing atmosphere of the 1920s and a new generation of leaders who were more distant in terms of immediate contact with the prophet and how she worked. Between the 1920s and the 1960s mythology regarding her writings and her gift became dominant. And in the end, as W. C. White had predicted, it “hurt Mother’s work.” In fact, it hurt it much more than he probably expected. Such are the hard lessons when a church forgets its history, or when it puts forth claims that cannot be substantiated when faced with exacting scrutiny. One lesson to be learned is that the church and its members will be healthier when we get as much as possible of the truth about Ellen White on the table and then disseminate it. Only in that way can the criticisms of those who have built upon false conceptions be put to rest.

The 1919 Bible Conference represents the apex in openness regarding Ellen White and her work. But that openness had come at the wrong time. The 1920s witnessed the rise of the conflict between fundamentalism and liberalism, and in that polarizing context every Adventist leader who spoke openly at the conference would lose his position.

Thoughts on How the Real World of Ellen White Morphed into the “Wonderful World” of the 1960s

Daniells apparently deemed the discussions at the 1919 Bible Conference to have been too open. Because the report of the discussions was causing dissension on “the Eastern Question” and “the king of the North,” the General Conference president decided that it would be best “to lock . . . up in a vault” the 2,500-page typewritten manuscript of the minutes of the conference and that “it would be better not to print it at all.” And there it sat for over five decades. It would be rediscovered in December 1974 through the efforts of Donald Mansell, assistant director of the White Estate, and F. D. Yost, General Conference archivist.³³ The 1919 document did not come to the notice of Adventist scholars until May 1979 when *Spectrum*

dedicated most of an issue to the reproduction of those sections of the minutes related to Ellen White, along with a short introduction by Molleurus Couperus. That publication, as we will see in the next section of this paper, would fan the flames on a discussion of Ellen White that had begun in the same periodical in 1970.

Meanwhile, we should note, there were good reasons for keeping the 1919 minutes under wrap as 1919 moved into 1920. In that year, Curtis Lee Laws, the editor of a prominent Baptist paper, defined “fundamentalists” (a term he coined) as those willing “to do battle royal for the Fundamentals” of the Christian faith. Laws and 154 other Baptist conservatives called for a “General Conference on Fundamentals.” And May 1919 had witnessed the first meeting of the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association, which attracted over 6,000 people. The concern of these Protestant conservatives was symptomatic of the times. For more than a half century a confrontation had been developing in American Protestantism over how to relate to modern intellectual developments, including (but not limited to) Darwinism and the critical study of the Bible.³⁴

The issues in the conflict were many, but the central one was epistemology and the question of religious authority. The modernists had come to rely on reason and the findings of science and biblical criticism as their starting point and had arrived at the conclusion that the Bible, for all of its spiritual insights, was permeated with superstition, mythology, and historical error. As a result, it had to be interpreted and validated in terms of modern knowledge. If anything wasn’t rational (e.g., virgin birth, resurrection, and other miracles) it needed to be explained in such a way as to make sense to twentieth-century minds.

As might be expected, those who had been evolving into fundamentalists reacted vigorously in the 1920s. They had no difficulty realizing that the central issue was religious authority. After all, reasoned the conservatives, hadn’t the liberals departed the “Christian” path through their rejection of the authority of the Bible for that of

human reason? Thus the center of the struggle, as the fundamentalists saw it, was the concept of the Bible being completely trustworthy in every respect. Their platform in the controversy would be a Bible that was both verbally inspired (at least in its autographs) and inerrant. While the issue had been seething in the minds of conservative leaders since the turn of the century, in 1920 it exploded and would become the defining issue of the decade for American Protestantism.

It is into that loaded context that Claude E. Holmes and J. S. Washburn, two disgruntled Adventists who were still upset over the 1911 revision of *The Great Controversy* and the topic of the “daily,” became vocal in April 1920. Their immediate targets were the 1919 Bible Conference and those who had spoken openly about the work and authority of Ellen White. Holmes published a tract dated

April 1, titled *Have We an Infallible “Spirit of Prophecy”?* His answer was a resounding “yes.” “There is a dangerous doctrine that is rapidly permeating the ranks of our people,” Holmes noted in his opening sentence. “I feel that it ought to be met and met squarely. It is this: That Sister White is not an authority on history.

Some, as you know, go even further, and claim that she is not an authority on doctrine or health reform. That was practically the position taken last summer,” at the 1919 Bible Conference. Whatever she wrote on any topic was fully divine and authoritative to Holmes. He closed his presentation by declaring that he stood “absolutely and uncompromisingly for the inspiration of Sister White’s writings. I draw no line between the so-called human and divine; *they are all Scripture to me.*”³⁵

Two weeks later Washburn published his open letter titled *The Startling Omega and Its True Genealogy*.³⁶ That tract continued Holmes’ argument. They not only had Daniells, Prescott, and others who had been frank in the 1919 discussions in their sights but also W. C. White, who had not attended but who had claimed that his mother was not an authority on history.

“In public labor,” she wrote in 1894, “do not make prominent, and quote that which Sister White has written, as authority to sustain your positions. . . . Bring your evidences, clear and plain, from the Word of God.”

Those two tracts were widely circulated at the 1922 General Conference session and were instrumental in unseating Daniells from the presidency, a position he had held since 1901. The times had changed and those church leaders who had spoken openly about issues related to inspiration at the 1919 conference found themselves in less influential jobs. The ground had shifted and the first post-Ellen White decade found Adventism with a new cadre of leaders who had not worked closely with Ellen White, but who had the advantage of being more in harmony with the spirit of the times.

In the polarized atmosphere of the 1920s there was no place for theological neutrality. Adventism, as was repeatedly pointed out in the graphics and other published presentations during the decade, was being forced to choose between modernism and fundamentalism. Since no Adventist at that time would elect liberalism, the only viable choice was the other extreme. The major casualty in that polarized era was the moderate and open approach to inspiration held by Ellen White and those who had worked most closely with her.³⁷

One result of that dynamic was Adventism's drift into verbalism, inerrancy, and related topics during the 1920s. That drift toward fundamentalist assumptions regarding inspiration was evident among many of the denomination's leaders. For example, F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald*, disclaimed any belief in verbal inspiration at the 1919 conference, but noted in 1928 that he held to the "verbal inspiration of the Bible and Ellen White."³⁸ Other indicators for the shift are found in the General Conference-sponsored textbook by B. L. House that claims that "the selection of the very words of Scripture in the original languages was overruled by the Holy Spirit"³⁹ and the "Valuable Quotations" section of *Ministry* in 1931, that gave its approval to the idea that the Bible as inspired by the Spirit, was "without a flaw or error" and was authoritative and without mistakes in its historical data and other fields of human knowledge which it touched.⁴⁰

While such positions were never voted as the official position of the denomination, they progressively dominated Adventist thinking in the following decades, although not everyone accepted them among either the laity or the clergy. But the balance of thinking on the topic had definitely shifted among the denomination's leaders. In that context, it is undoubtedly significant that

Walter Martin and Donald Grey Barnhouse, the two men who extended the hand of fellowship to Adventists in the 1950s, were leaders in American fundamentalism rather than middle of the road (on issues of inspiration) evangelicals. Instead of the Adventist/Evangelical Conferences they should be titled the Adventist/Fundamentalist Conferences.

Interestingly, one of the holdouts for the more open position was W. C. White (director of the White Estate), who was still arguing against verbal inspiration, using his mother as a historian, and related topics in the late twenties and early thirties.⁴¹ But by then W. C. had been largely isolated from leadership and no longer had the influence of earlier years. His location in Elmhaven, California, placed him nearly 3,000 miles from General Conference headquarters with its younger generation of leaders.

In summary, the decades after the death of Ellen White witnessed a decided shift in the understanding of the majority of Adventist leadership toward the assumptions of the 1920s fundamentalists. And even though they were not formally stated, those assumptions permeated Adventist thinking. The majority of Adventists had taken those assumptions on the inspiration of the Bible and applied them to the writings of Ellen White. The new understanding would be central to Adventism up through the 1960s. One result was that the denomination had set itself up for a rude awakening.

The End of the Wonderful World of Ellen White in the 1970s and Early 1980s

Cracks in the widely held position on Ellen White and her inspiration and authority began to appear in 1970 when a new generation of young professionally trained historians and other scholars began to ask more exacting questions regarding Adventism and its prophet. The initial venue for asking questions was *Spectrum* magazine, which had been birthed in 1969 as a quarterly, interdisciplinary journal that could deal with scholarly issues from a variety of perspectives. The autumn 1970 issue witnessed Roy Branson and Herold Weiss, both professors at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, calling for scholarly study of Ellen White's writings. That same number saw William S. Peterson, an English professor at Andrews University, publish a piece titled "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White's

Account of the French Revolution.”⁴² To put it mildly, Peterson’s conclusions initiated what Ben McArthur would later refer to as “the first great age of Adventist historical revisionism.”⁴³ While Peterson moved on to other projects, Donald McAdams, who had put Peterson onto the topic in the first place, began to devote considerable energy and skill in the early 1970s to further exploration of Ellen White’s use of historical sources in *The Great Controversy*. Through a three-phase, multi-year study of her use of historical sources in Chapter 14 on the English Reformation, Chapter 6 on John Huss, and a handwritten fragment of a draft for a half-chapter on Huss, McAdams arrived at some unsettling conclusions. “The historical portions of *The Great Controversy* that I have examined,” he wrote, “are selective abridgements and adaptations of historians. Ellen White was not just borrowing paragraphs here and there that she ran across in her reading, but in fact following the historians page after page, leaving out much material, but using their sequence, some of their ideas, and often their words.” That usage at times included their “historical errors.”⁴⁴

McAdams balanced his research findings with Ellen White’s own statements in the introduction to *The Great Controversy*. First, he pointed out, she had noted that “it is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing on coming events.” And, second, she freely told her readers that she had used the overviews and even the words of historians when their statements, as she put it, provided “a ready and forcible presentation of the subject.”⁴⁵ As a result, McAdams could write in 1980 that he believed “the evidence is compatible with Ellen White’s statements claiming inspiration regarding historical events and describing her use of Protestant historians.”⁴⁶ Her inspiration, Ben McArthur noted in summarizing McAdams’ view in 2008, “lies not in the

history she summarizes but in the religious meaning she imparts to it, the contest between God and Satan. The Holy Spirit provided her the ‘big picture’ rather than particular facts. If there had been disillusionment over the fact of her extensive literary borrowing,” McAdams pointed out, “it was because the church failed to take her introductory disclaimer at face value.”⁴⁷

McAdams never published his findings. Desiring to work with the White Estate and the leaders of the church, he shared his research with them and entered into a dialogue that extended through much of the 1970s. He eventually summarized the results of his work and that of others in a 1980 article on “Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s.”⁴⁸ Much more prob-

lematic than McAdams for the White Estate and the church was the approach of Ronald Numbers, the grandson of a General Conference president. While McAdams was at least friendly to the idea of inspiration, Numbers discounted the concept and adopted a naturalistic perspective. Beyond that, he decided to publish immediately. Harper and Row released

One possible explanatory factor behind the rather consistent pattern of those who have journeyed from one extreme to the other in regard to Ellen White’s writings is that their relationship to her was not merely intellectual but also emotional.

his *Prophetess of Health* in 1976. Numbers argued that Ellen White was not only a child of her times in regard to many of her ideas on health, but that she had drawn upon the ideas of health reformers of her day and often copied from them. The most damning finding for Numbers was that on the basis of textual comparison he had concluded that she had lied about her use of certain sources.⁴⁹ The Ellen G. White Estate responded to Numbers’ book with *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health*, also published in 1976. That volume presented a chapter-by-chapter evaluation, arguing that Numbers had left out important evidence and had at times misread his sources on significant points. The Critique also concerned itself with what it believed was an “air of cynicism” that pervaded the book.⁵⁰

The years following 1976 saw a continuing examination of Ellen White and her work. One endeavor along

that line was that of Walter Rea, an Adventist pastor. Rea's research had led him to the conclusion that Ellen White's borrowing in such books as *The Desire of Ages* and *Patriarchs and Prophets* was extensive but not admitted. In response to Rea's claim, Neal Wilson, president of the General Conference, appointed a well-qualified committee to meet with Rea and examine his evidence. While

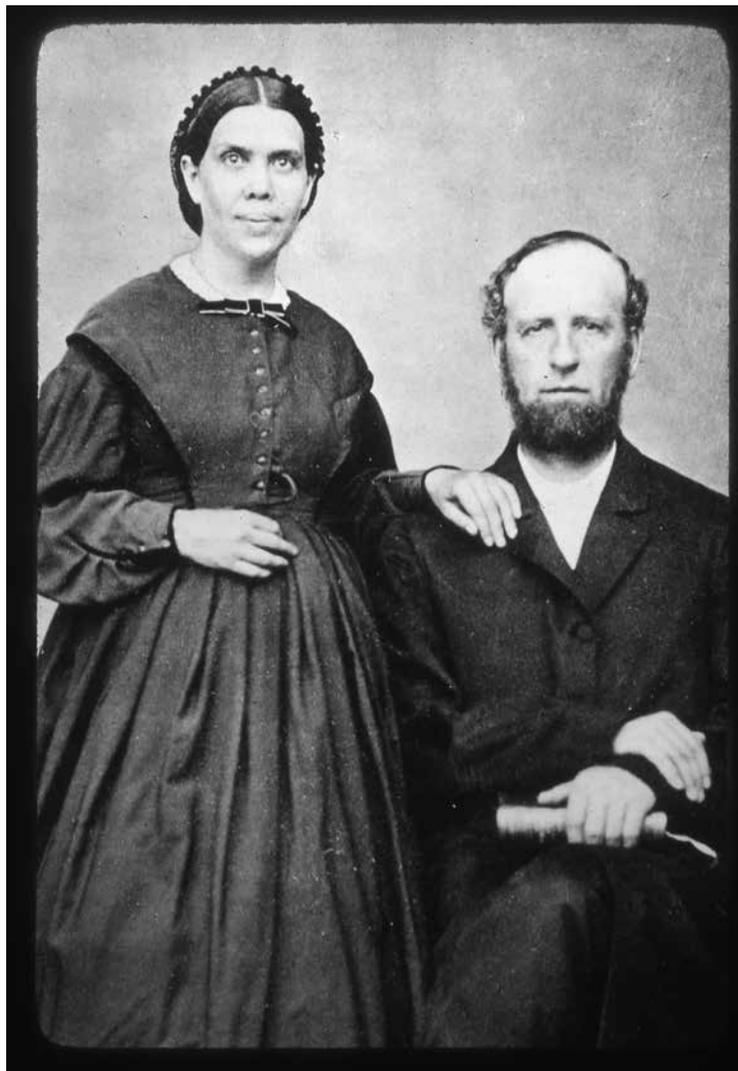
writings that had become problematic but also her integrity as a person.⁵¹

The combined effect of the books by Numbers and Rea, along with the *Spectrum* articles, was the intellectual equivalent of throwing a bomb into what had become since the 1920s the "settled understanding" of Ellen White and her gift. By 1982, the wonderful world of EL-

len White had been both challenged and shattered in the eyes of many thinking Adventists. Adventism had arrived at the end of an era. With the findings of the Walter Rea committee in place there was no possible room left to doubt that Ellen White's borrowing from historians was much more extensive than anyone had known. The denomination's understanding of her work would forever be changed. As McArthur noted in 1979, "once the Pandora's box of history has been opened, there can be no recalling the disturbing facts that will escape."⁵² There is only one option, McAdams noted a year later: "We have no choice but to be honest at heart, acknowledge the facts, and seek the truth."⁵³ And Eric Anderson's 1978 remarks were prescient when he penned that "far from being heresy, McAdams' views are likely to become the new orthodoxy."⁵⁴

Before moving on, it is significant to note that the major critics of Ellen White across time have tended to follow a pattern. Namely, they had begun their journey fully embracing the wonderful world of her inerrancy, exclusive dependence upon revelation in her writings, and "perfect" character, among other perspectives. But when they found their views threatened they reacted (perhaps overreacted is a better descriptor) and rejected both her and her writings with gusto. That was true of D. M. Canright in the late 1880s, A.

T. Jones and A. F. Ballenger in the early twentieth century, Numbers and Rea in the 1970s, and Dale Ratzlaff in the 1980s. A college classmate of Numbers, for example, reports that in his younger years he viewed Ellen White as the final word.⁵⁵ And Rea reports that he not only taught himself to type by copying *Messages to Young People*, but he spent a great deal of time collecting Ellen White quotations with the idea of "preparing an Adventist Commentary by



Artwork: Courtesy of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

some committee members found Rea's research lacking in scholarly precision, the committee as a whole was convinced that her borrowing from contemporary works was more widespread than previously believed. In 1982 Rea published his findings in *The White Lie*. His title reflects an extension and magnification of Number's accusation of her dishonesty. For Rea her whole corpus of writings was becoming a lie. For him and others it was not only her

compiling” all her “statements pertaining to each book of the Bible, each doctrine, and each Bible character.”⁵⁶ And then he concluded that they had been plagiarized. His faith in Ellen White and her writings had been shattered. For him the wonderful world was on the rocks. One possible explanatory factor behind the rather consistent pattern of those who have journeyed from one extreme to the other in regard to Ellen White’s writings is that their relationship to her was not merely intellectual but also emotional. As a result, it can be hypothesized that a sense of betrayal helped energize their protest and kept it alive.

There is an important lesson here. Namely, that claiming too much for Ellen White and her writings eventually leads to disaster. W. C. White saw that point clearly in 1911 in meeting S. N. Haskell’s overblown ideas.

Facing the Facts: From the End of the Wonderful World of Ellen White to the Construction of a More Adequate Understanding in the 1980s

A significant signal that Adventism was ready to take a major step forward in its understanding of Ellen White and her work was delivered to the church in March 1980 when General Conference president Neal Wilson published an article on his position concerning Ellen White in the *Adventist Review*. The 1970s

had been a difficult decade and the leaders of the denomination and the White Estate officials had very reluctantly come to accept the conclusions of the committee appointed to investigate the work of Walter Rea and the findings of other researchers. But the new White Estate director, Robert Olson, was in agreement with McAdams that the facts needed to be faced responsibly. Wilson, in his article, also owned up to that truth. He then went on to set forth and illustrate five points related to the prophetic gift.

1. Originality is not a test of inspiration. . . . 2. God inspires people, not words. . . . 3. The Holy Spirit helps the messenger to select his material

carefully. . . . 4. The Prophet’s use of existing materials does not necessarily mean that the prophet is dependent upon these sources. . . . 5. Whenever we recognize similarities we must also see the dissimilarities.⁵⁷

In response, McAdams noted that Wilson’s statement “is [the] most significant article to appear in the *Review* in this century. The president of the General Conference is openly and honestly acknowledging the facts about Ellen White’s use of sources and pointing the church toward a definition of inspiration that will be new to most Adventists and threatening to some.”⁵⁸ Wilson’s honesty also must have been a reinforcement to McAdams personally since he had spent much of a decade “diplomatically” seeking to convince the denomination’s leadership that the traditional views on Ellen White were untenable. At last, even the denomination’s president was willing

to admit that the time had come to investigate more thoroughly the work of Ellen White and the implications for the church’s understanding of inspiration.

One of the first moves toward a healthier and more accurate understanding of Ellen White and her gift also took place in 1980 with the publication of *Selected Messages*, Book Three, which

devoted 135 of its 465 pages to providing authoritative and enlightening documents that shed light on her ministry. Section two, “Principles of Inspiration,” had eight chapters that included material on such topics as the primacy of the Bible, how she received her visions, and how she presented and understood her divine messages. Section three, “The Preparation of the Ellen G. White Books,” highlighted her use of literary assistants along with chapters on how she worked in the development of such books as *The Desire of Ages*.⁵⁹

Those sections did much to begin the reeducation of the church. However, not least in importance in Book Three of *Selected Messages* were the three appendices from the pen of W. C. White, who had worked extremely close to his mother during the second half of her ministry. The most

extensive appendix is his 1911 presentation to the General Conference Autumn Council on the revised edition of *The Great Controversy* and a related letter to the publication committee. In those documents White noted that his mother never claimed to be an authority on history and that she received divine guidance in the selection of material from historians as she filled out *The Great Controversy* theme shown her in vision.⁶⁰

The other two appendices were letters that W. C. White penned to W. W. Eastman in 1912 and L. E. Froom in 1928 and 1934. Here we find White being extremely open and candid about his mother's use of sources from both Adventist and non-Adventist authors. In those letters he reiterated several of the themes he had set forth in his 1911 discussion of the revised *Great Controversy*, but he also expanded his discussion in helpful ways. For example, White wrote to Froom on January 8, 1928, that:

notwithstanding all the power that God had given her to present scenes in the lives of Christ and His apostles and His prophets and His reformers . . . , she always felt most keenly the results of her lack of school education. She admired the language in which other writers had presented to their readers the scenes which God had presented to her in vision, and she found it both a pleasure, and a convenience and an economy of time to use their language fully or in part in presenting those things which she knew through revelation, and which she wished to pass on to her readers.⁶¹

But White could be even more explicit. Thus, in talking about Adventist publications, he noted that at times "Mother found such perfect descriptions of events and presentations of facts and of doctrines written out in our denominational books, that she copied the words of these authorities."⁶²

Such straight talk was a start in helping people understand Ellen White and her writings. But it was only a beginning. Robert Olson, director of the Ellen G. White Estate from 1978 to 1990, followed up that beginning in March 1981 with his widely circulated *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White*. That little book, in its candid approach, continued the discussion begun by the third volume of *Selected Messages*. Olson's book might

have justly been titled *Frank Discussions about the Sanctuary and Ellen White*.

One Hundred and One Questions had sections on such topics as literary borrowing, copying, the use of literary assistants, the perfect-prophet image, inerrancy, and verbalism. But perhaps one of the most unexpected contributions dealt with Ellen White as a Bible commentator. Olson probably shook up more than one reader when he wrote that "Ellen White's writings are generally homiletical or evangelistic in nature and not strictly exegetical." He then illustrated how she used the same verse to make quite different points, accommodating the words to fit her presentations. Olson noted in the same section that "to give an individual complete interpretive control over the Bible would, in effect, elevate that person above the Bible. It would be a mistake to allow even the apostle Paul to exercise interpretive control over all other Bible writers. In such a case, Paul, and not the whole Bible, would be one's final authority."⁶³

So much for the divine, inspired commentary approach. I should note that the 1981 Robert Olson was not teaching the same things on the topic that he had when he was my teacher at Pacific Union College in the early 1960s. By the early eighties he had had to face the hard facts of the shortcomings of the wonderful world of Ellen White approach and those facts were transforming his outlook and presentations. He wasn't the only one. There was a significant segment of the church's scholars who were on the same journey of discovery and transformation.

One of the most important initiatives by the General Conference during the early 1980s was the hiring of Fred Veltman, whose doctoral degree was in the exacting area of textual analysis, to intensively study Ellen White's use of sources in *The Desire of Ages*. After the equivalent of five years of full-time study, Veltman concluded that Ellen White had borrowed extensively but that it was not blind borrowing. To the contrary, she "used the writings of others consciously and intentionally." Such borrowing indicates that she had "originality" and was not "slavishly dependent upon her sources." Ellen White's "independence," Veltman pointed out, "is . . . to be seen in her selectivity. The sources were her slaves, never her master." In short, while she did use sources more extensively than generally recognized, she crafted her finished product to fit the message she sought to get across to her readers.⁶⁴

Following another line of investigation, George Rice published *Luke, a Plagiarist?* in 1983. His starting point was that Adventism's understanding of Ellen White was vulnerable because it had a very inadequate view of inspiration, having focused its understanding nearly entirely on a model of inspiration in which prophets receive their information by revelation directly from heaven. To indicate the inadequacy of that position, Rice demonstrated from the gospel of Luke how the Bible writers used research and existing documents to produce their inspired books. That broader view of inspiration had obvious implications for the debate on Ellen White's inspiration and use of sources. As Rice put it,

the charge that Ellen White cannot fill the role of a spokesperson for God or that she could not possibly have received the gift of prophecy because she 'borrowed' is rooted in a misunderstanding of inspiration. Once the Lucan model is established and accepted, this model can then be allowed to explain the work of Ellen White.⁶⁵

Rice had effectively driven a wedge between the concepts of inspiration and revelation by demonstrating that not everything that is inspired by God comes through the experience of divine revelation. The freshness of that thought is indicated on the copyright page of the book in which the publisher sought to protect itself by defensively stating that,

the purpose of this book is to investigate a concept of inspiration not generally held by most Seventh-day Adventists. Although the publisher believes that this book will stimulate a constructive study of this subject, this book does not represent an official pronouncement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church nor does it necessarily reflect the editorial opinion of the Pacific Press Publishing Association.⁶⁶

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Rice's book brought a strong reaction from the fundamentalist administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and certain elements in the General Conference's Biblical Research Institute. But White Estate director Robert Olson saw its explanatory power and brought Rice on as an associate director even though up to that time he had not specialized in the fields of Ellen White's writings or Adventist studies.

The Rice book, with its iconoclastic demonstration of the separation of inspiration and revelation, which set forth revelation as only one possible source for inspired writings, shook up settled ideas on the topic. But his findings dovetailed theoretically with those of Veltman. Combined, they began to provide Adventism with the foundation to develop a more sophisticated understanding of revelation and inspiration.

More specifically related to Ellen White concerns than Rice's work was the publication of my *Myths in Adventism* in 1985. Unlike Olson and Rice, I wasn't especially concerned with defending Ellen White or developing an apologetic for her or her writings. I was merely trying to understand what I was reading and trying to teach. That was crucial to me because I sensed that the explanatory models of the time were inadequate, and where they were adequate they had not been sufficiently developed or illustrated from her own writings against the historical background in which she wrote and applied her counsels. The opening chapter, "The Myth of the Inflexible Prophet," undoubtedly got the most attention and cut into the most new territory. In a world in which the independent Ellen White compilation makers used her quotations as if they all had the same background, I sought to demonstrate on the basis of a hermeneutic based on her own interpretation of her writings that argued for the use of literary and historical contexts, common sense, her understanding of the distinction between the real world and the ideal world, and other principles, that there was not necessarily a single Ellen White position on a given topic. Rather than a

single position, one could find several quite different and even contradictory positions and counsels (based on radically different contexts) of her understanding on how to apply Christian principles on many topics. In essence, I was putting forth the hypothesis that to do justice to Ellen White and her writings the denomination would have to develop a much more sophisticated and sensitive hermeneutic. That chapter hit a live nerve in the Adventist world and was soon republished in abbreviated form in the *Adventist Review*.⁶⁷ The rest of the chapters confronted such myths as that of Ellen White being a hundred years ahead of her time and sought to rectify many serious misconceptions about Ellen White's counsel deeply rooted in the denomination's thinking and practice. One of the fallouts from the publication of *Myths* was a phone call from Olson with my first invitation to join the White Estate team at General Conference headquarters. (It was an invitation I chose not to accept.)

The late 1980s found me still struggling with trying to better understand Ellen White and the proper use of her writings. Perhaps the most significant of my research during those years was an examination of the use of authority at the 1888 General Conference session. Up to that time many aspects of the Minneapolis event had been explored, but no one had examined the struggle over authority in any depth yet. The available documentation was massive. And for me the most important finding was the fact that Ellen White refused to let her writings be used to interpret the meaning of Bible passages or to establish doctrine. I presented my findings in my daily lectures in Nairobi, Kenya, to the General Conference Annual Council in 1988, where they raised some eyebrows and generated some resistance. But they shouldn't have if we take the claims of Ellen White seriously. After all, she herself repeatedly and emphatically claimed that we must have Bible evidence for every doctrine and practice.⁶⁸ That had always been her position,⁶⁹ as well as that of her husband and the other pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was only later (probably in the 1880s) that some in the denomination began to rely on her for Bible interpretation and doctrinal extensions. Those approaches, although widely practiced in the Adventism of the 1920s to the 1960s, were in essence heresy rather than orthodoxy from the perspective of Adventism's founding generation and of Ellen White for her entire life.

At its clearheaded best, the denominational leadership had always recognized that Ellen White should not

be used as authority for such things as doctrine. But theory is one thing and practice another, especially when many leaders still had a belief that some of Adventism's early beliefs had in one way or another found their genesis in Ellen White's writings, a perspective definitely put to rest in the 1990s by Rolf Pöhler's *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching*, my *Search For Identity*, my biography of Joseph Bates, and Merlin Burt's PhD dissertation on the development of Adventist theology between 1844 and 1849. The facts of the case are that not one of Adventism's distinctive "pillar" doctrines was developed by anyone who ever became a Sabbatarian Adventist and that the concept of the centrality of the three angels' messages in apocalyptic mission was fleshed out by Bates.⁷⁰ But even with the findings spelled out and documented some of us have been aggressively criticized for not giving a larger role to Ellen White in the process. The sad fact is that Ellen White mythology not only dies hard, but it has a tendency to spontaneously resurrect.

A final initiative during the 1980s aimed at breaking up such concepts as Ellen White being 100 years ahead of her time was *The World of Ellen G. White*, published in 1987 under the editorship of Gary Land. That volume of essays did much to help Adventists see the historical context in which she lived and wrote and how her concerns and many of her solutions were those of her era.⁷¹

The works that I have mentioned were significant but are merely the tip of a very large iceberg of studies related to Ellen White. The eighties saw a multitude of articles, research papers, White Estate shelf documents, and even dissertations and theses on the topic.⁷² By the end of the 1980s most of the creative work on the recreation of Ellen White had been completed.⁷³

The 1990s and beyond saw a relaxation on the debate over critical issues related to Ellen White, even though Alden Thompson's *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (1991) stirred up a bit of a tempest in some circles.⁷⁴ Most of the books published after the eighties tended to consolidate information, expand on ideas put forth in the 1980s, and make the information more widely available. Major agents in that endeavor were Herbert Douglass's encyclopedic *Messenger of the Lord* (1998);⁷⁵ my own four small volumes on Ellen White, *Meeting Ellen White* (1996), *Reading Ellen White* (1997), *Ellen White's World* (1998), and *Walking with Ellen White* (1999);⁷⁶ and *The Ellen G. White*

Encyclopedia, edited by Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon and published in 2013.⁷⁷

The most significant exception to the consolidation and exposition pattern in the post-eighties decades was Don S. McMahon's *Acquired or Inspired? Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle* (2005). McMahon's path-breaking study divided Ellen White's counsels on health into what he called the "whats" and the "whys." He found her remarkably accurate on the specific counsel that she gave but only comparable with her contemporaries in the reasons for that counsel.⁷⁸ That conclusion, even though it has been criticized for inadequate methodology,⁷⁹ lines up well with what we can demonstrate about her visions as they relate to the use of historical sources and it fits well with the Adventist understanding of inspiration as set forth in the period after 1980. As an indication of the new attitudes related to Ellen White, Doug Morgan in reporting on the First International Conference on Ellen G. White and SDA History (funded by the General Conference on the recommendation of the White Estate), remarked that,

no one seemed unduly perturbed by McMahon's conclusion that only 66 percent of Ellen G. White's health and medical statements in her book *Ministry of Healing* would be deemed accurate by modern standards (considerable slippage from the 100 percent PAQ—"prophetic accuracy quotient"—touted some twenty-five years ago by Rene Noorbergen in *Prophet of Destiny*).⁸⁰

Needless to say, what we now know about Ellen White and her use of sources in history and almost certainly in the medical field has major ramifications for some of her statements on scientific issues, some which appear to be problematic. In fact, a couple of years ago when I was asked to have the annual George Saxon lecture on the interface between science and religion at Southwestern Adventist University, I had tentatively chosen as my

topic an analysis of selected Ellen White statements on science in relation to what we now know in regard to her use of history and, apparently, medical authorities. (I should note that I was unable to take the appointment. As a result, the paper was never developed.)

Two other important books are also pushing the frontiers of Ellen White studies in the early twenty-first century. The first is Jud Lake's *Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics* (2010).⁸¹ Lake has pioneered a new level of sophistication in Ellen White apologetics that utilizes many of the understandings developed since the 1970s. In the process the author not only uses the new perspectives to expose the faulty assumptions of many of Ellen White's critics, but also highlights the significance of the new understandings in the context of the historical and contemporary struggle to recapture a more adequate understanding of Ellen White.

The second book is Gilbert Valentine's *The Prophet and the Presidents* (2011). Valentine's treatment (following Jerry Moon's study of the relationship between W. C. White and his mother⁸²) points the way to a whole realm of new insights on how the gift of prophecy worked in the everyday world of Ellen White as a person inter-

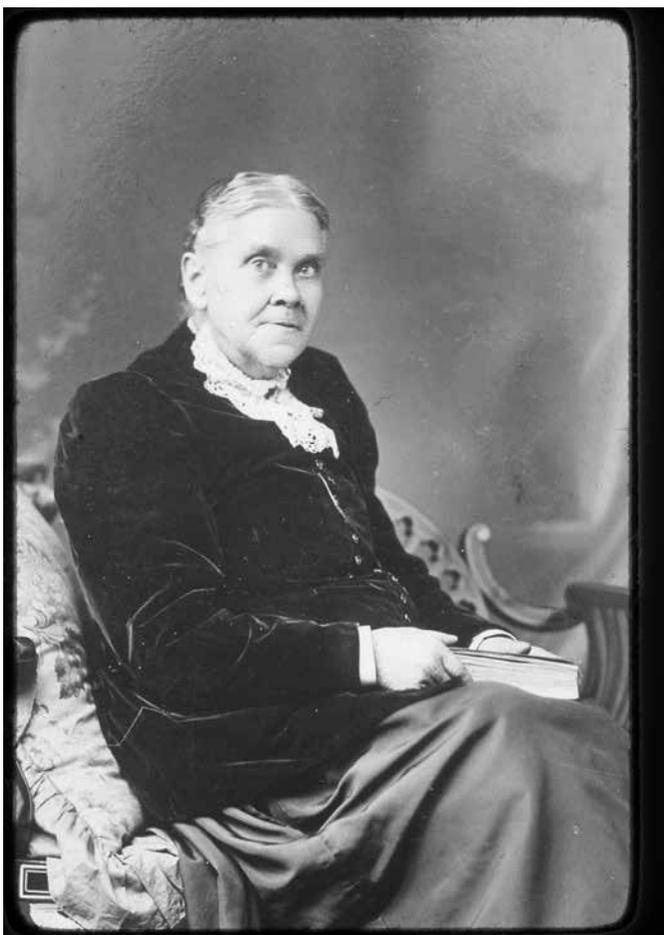
acting with individuals with the gift of administration. Here is a fruitful area for extended future research that has the potential to shed a great deal of light on the function of Ellen White in the church and the nature of her gift.

Two other recently published multi-authored volumes, *Understanding Ellen White*⁸³ and *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History*⁸⁴ (both 2015), continue to extend the new understandings of Ellen White, but the latter work has especially enriched the discussion through its examination of the gift of prophecy in the Bible and Christian history. *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, published by Oxford University Press in 2014,⁸⁵ finds its primary significance in repackaging views of Ellen White and her work for non-Adventist readers rather than in pushing into new territory on the nature of her work and inspiration.

Perhaps the best illustration of the integration of the new perspectives on Ellen White put forth in the 1970s

An important fact in Ellen White studies is that there are no non-believers. Everyone either has some belief positive toward her ministry or some belief negative toward it.

and 1980s is Andrews University Press's publication of a critical edition of Ellen White's *Steps to Christ*, with a historical introduction and notes by Denis Fortin (2017). He deals with such topics as how Marian Davis searched Ellen White's files for relevant material from her pen that could form the basis for the presentation, the controversy over the book's authorship, and the Methodist roots of



Artwork: Courtesy of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

its theological concepts.⁸⁶ As Jonathan Butler has pointed out, such a publication “for general Adventist consumption . . . would not have been possible in an earlier era.”⁸⁷

The findings of the recent decades would have been anathema in the times of the wonderful world of the 1920s through the 1960s. But the hard facts set forth by the critical researchers and writers of the seventies pushed those writing in the 1980s and beyond to take a second look at Ellen White's work, the denomination's understanding of inspiration, and the mythology that largely grew up around her after her death in 1915. Unfortunately, the depth of the

problems associated with the traditional approach and the revolutionary findings of the seventies, eighties, and beyond have all too often not registered with the average Adventist in the pew. As a result, viewing certain aggressive internet sites can throw them into disarray. The education of the Adventist public is an ongoing need, as are explorations into areas of Ellen White studies that still need to be looked at seriously.

Here we need a word of caution lest some might conclude that there is unity at last on Ellen White and her work. In 2004, Colin and Russell Standish (Colin had been a president of Columbia Union College and was the founding president of Hartland Institute) published *The Greatest of All the Prophets*. Not only did they argue that Ellen White was greater than the biblical prophets, but they went on to note the “disgraceful denial of faith in 1919.”⁸⁸ With the Standish brothers we have a return to the period (and theology) of the 1920s to the 1960s. For them, her writings and even the facts in the historical sources she used were inerrant. After all, “once charges are laid that inspired writings are errant they lose their authority.”⁸⁹ And thus, in nearly 400 pages, the past becomes the present.

As a result, one thing remains constant: Adventists have always been divided on Ellen White's work and the nature of her inspiration.

Possible Ways Forward in Ellen White Studies

Throughout this paper I have noted that discussions of Ellen White and her inspiration have often been contentious and that various Adventist factions have been at odds with one another on her significance, the nature of her inspiration, and her role in the church. That has not changed in 2018. And it will probably not change in the future. Beyond that, fully understanding the topic may be beyond our research techniques and theoretical models. But, as the above history has demonstrated, researchers on Ellen White who come from various perspectives can and do aid each other in arriving at better understandings of their complex and somewhat elusive topic.

What we have learned from past Ellen White studies must be thought through carefully since it should provide a foundation for future study. One helpful way forward has been hinted at by Jonathan Butler in his recently published

essay, "Seventh-day Adventist Historiography: A Work in Progress." Butler perceptively describes two distinct but related streams of Adventist research. One he labels as historians of Adventism and the other Adventist historians. The first tend to be, from his perspective, more academic while the second are more apologetic. But their apologetics is a new and more respectable sort that takes into consideration the uncomfortable facts uncovered in recent decades by historical research. In short, the new apologists know the facts but still believe. Both groups, he points out, "exclude the supernatural from their historical explanations," but he still finds it helpful to label one group as "scholars" or "academics" and the other as "apologists," as if believing is somehow opposed to scholarship (which it probably is in some cases). But I would argue that a believer may also function as a true scholar. And in some parts of his essay Butler appears to accept that conclusion. In fact, he several times notes that "there is no hard, unyielding line between" the two groups.⁹⁰ Some even fall into both camps in their writings. One aspect of Butler's taxonomic challenge is that his evaluative criteria are based on his personal philosophical presuppositions. As a result, his objectivity is to some extent in conflict with his subjective bias.

Perhaps the current Adventist historical enterprise might best be seen as a continuum along a naturalistic/religious axis rather than a dichotomy. Grant Wacker, a non-Adventist historian who teaches at Duke University, came to conclusions that are in harmony with that model after attending an academic symposium on Ellen White. "Some of the authors in this work," he wrote in his foreword to the published essays that came out of the conference, "identify with the Adventist tradition, some with other streams of the great Christian river, and some with no religious tradition at all. The reader will be hard-pressed to know which is which, since they all adhere to the most rigorous standards of critical yet appreciative historical inquiry."⁹¹ For that reason, as Butler points out, "there are remarkable instances of reciprocity between SDA scholars and apologists" and "both types of historians have learned from each other."⁹²

The sad fact is that Ellen White mythology not only dies hard, but it has a tendency to spontaneously resurrect.

With those remarks in mind, I would like to suggest that Eric Anderson was on track when he wrote that "a twenty-first century historian might profitably begin the study of a nineteenth-century visionary by noticing where the official apologists and the angry heretics agree."⁹³ Anderson was speaking to a specific field of research, but it seems to me that his suggestion can be profitably generalized to the idea that historians of Ellen White who come from differing perspectives might find it fruitful to make foundational their agreements rather than their differences. Then from a platform of mutual respect, but without complete agreement, they could move forward in facing new questions that need answers.

With a common platform in mind I would like to venture four suggestions. First, a healthy approach to Ellen White studies needs to recognize that both "bias for" and "bias against" are less than helpful. Both perspectives distort, and that is especially so in an emotionally charged field. An important fact in Ellen White studies is that there are no non-believers. Everyone either has some belief positive toward her ministry or some belief negative toward it. Furthermore, postmodernism has helped us realize that neutrality is not a possibility, nor is completely moving beyond one's belief bias. Probably the best we can do is to recognize our biases, how they affect our approach, and take corrective measures as honestly as possible in our explanations.

A second suggestion is that historians of all orientations in relation to Ellen White need to be able to see her with "new eyes." As in most fields of study, both her supporters and her detractors have developed patterns of viewing her, her claims, and her contributions. Such patterns are all the more damaging in that they tend to perpetuate, albeit often unconsciously, interpretations gleaned from "trusted" secondary and "selected" primary sources. As a result, often less-than-adequate understandings are built upon over time as the repeated understandings of both detractors and supporters become "tradition" rather than history. Such traditions eventually form the basis for loose generalizations, standard quotations, angle of vision

perspectives, and even “one-liners” which are passed from one investigator to another. Seeing Ellen White with new eyes includes not only reading her with contextual sophistication and extensively examining primary sources, but reading her with new questions and reading beyond the well-beaten paths that utilize certain selected documents that established the traditional interpretive perspectives in the first place.

A third suggestion that is closely related to seeing Ellen White with new eyes is reading her with an enlarged awareness of her own self-understanding of her work, her mission, and her inspiration. The alternative, of course, is to superimpose our own understanding of those topics on her and then evaluating her by that criteria. Such is the course of those who apply fundamentalist assumptions of inerrancy and verbalism upon her without investigating her views on the topic. Again, investigators need to take her statements on such topics as history or science within the context of whether she viewed her mission to be one of making authoritative statements in such fields or whether she saw such statements as asides to what she perceived as her mission.

Once scholars begin to investigate Ellen White more consistently through the lens of her own self-perceptions and purposes, rather than through the eyes of her supporters and detractors, a new generation of questions will arise. Even such seemingly obvious questions as her use of “I saw” or “I was shown” will need to be reexamined inductively for their full implications.

A fourth area of concern oriented toward a more adequate investigation of Ellen White is the need to take seriously what might be termed the “ragged edge” on the frontier between history and religion. By its very nature, genuine religion will always have an element that lies beyond historical investigation. That element includes, among other things, that “mystical something” that motivates individuals

and groups to follow the guidance of a charismatic personality. Such themes are beyond the reach of historical investigation.

On the other hand, many topics on the interface between religion and history are open to the historical method. In that realm, for example, is the remarkably objective historical data in the Bible that indicates major character flaws in such charismatic personalities as David, Abraham, Jonah, and Peter. Disregarding such data in the heart of the Judeo/Christian tradition, both Ellen White’s supporters and her detractors have trucked in perfectionistic assumptions in their evaluations of her person and work when the

personality profiles presented as historical fact in the Bible would have been more to the point. As with theories of inspiration, all too often fundamentalistic and perfectionistic ethical concepts have been assumed in even serious historical studies by both Ellen White’s detractors and supporters. Interestingly enough, as in several other areas of Ellen White studies, such misconceptions have generally been shared by both sides of the debate even though they line up with neither the biblical picture nor

with Ellen White’s own claims.

In short, while on the ragged edge of the frontier between history and religion there are definitely items not open to the historical method, there are other fruitful areas that can be examined historically. But those in the latter category have all too often been overlooked in the reach for traditional assumptions by all parties in Ellen White studies, thereby shifting arguments into directions that are not only inaccurate but often unhistorical. As a result, viewing Ellen White with “new eyes” must move beyond words and contexts to assumptions that are too often taken as fact without being thoroughly tested.

This paper has overviewed the shifting view of Ellen White over the past century. The remarkable fact

Again, investigators need to take her statements on such topics as history or science within the context of whether she viewed her mission to be one of making authoritative statements in such fields or whether she saw such statements as asides to what she perceived as her mission.

is that our present understanding of her inspiration is closer to that of Ellen White herself and her closest contemporaries than it was to the beliefs of most in the decades after her death. Historical research over the past fifty years has helped clarify that conclusion. And with “new eyes” future research will hopefully continue to clarify our understanding as researchers from various perspectives attempt to work together in exploring an important topic.

End Notes

1. F. M. Wilcox, “The Testimony of Jesus,” *Review and Herald* (June 9, 1946): 62.
2. See Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book One (Washington, DC: *Review and Herald*, 1958, 1980), 21.
3. Gladys King-Taylor, *The Literary Beauty of Ellen G. White’s Writings* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1953), 123.
4. M. L. Andreasen, “The Spirit of Prophecy,” chapel talk, Loma Linda, CA, (Nov. 30, 1948).
5. W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Oct. 31, 1912. Note that this letter was never sent. Rather it was revised by dropping out one paragraph (not the one cited) and adding a sentence and sent on Nov. 4.
6. “General Conference Proceedings,” *Review and Herald* (Nov. 27, 1883): 741; E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book Three, 96.
7. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book One, 21.
8. A. G. Daniells, “The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Teaching of Bible and History,” July 30, 1919, in *Spectrum*, (May 1979), 28. The most complete study we have on the 1919 meetings is Michael W. Campbell, “The 1919 Bible Conference and Its Significance for Seventh-day Adventist History and Theology” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2008).
9. W. W. Prescott, in “Inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy as Related to the Inspiration of the Bible,” 1919 Bible Conference minutes, (Aug. 1, 1919), 24, 25.
10. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book One, 16.
11. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950, vii).
12. E. G. White, Morning Talk, Oct. 24, 1888, MS 9, 1888. For a major discussion of the use of authority at the Minneapolis General Conference session, see George R. Knight, *Angry Saints* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 121–140 (100–115 in 1989 edition).
13. E. G. White, MS 9, 1888.
14. S. N. Haskell to W. W. Prescott, Nov. 15, 1907.
15. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book One, 164.
16. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 663–668. Quotation on p. 663.
17. E. G. White, “The Value of Bible Study,” *Review and Herald* (July 17, 1888): 449.
18. Daniells, “Use of the Spirit of Prophecy,” 30.
19. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1888), (h); a slightly modified version of the same statement is found in the 1911 edition on p. xii.
20. W. C. White, “*The Great Controversy*—1911 Edition,” October 30, 1911. The entire document has been reproduced in *Selected Messages*, Book Three, 433–440. The quoted passage is found on p. 438.
21. *Ibid.*, 437.
22. W. C. White to L. E. Froom, Jan. 8, 1928.
23. W. C. White to W. W. Eastman, Nov. 4, 1912.
24. Daniells, “Use of the Spirit of Prophecy,” 34.
25. *Ibid.*
26. See E. G. White, “Testimonials,” *Signs of the Times* (Feb. 22, 1883): 96; E. G. White, “Holiday Gifts,” *Review and Herald* (Dec. 26, 1882): 789.
27. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book Three, 29–30; cf. Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: *Review and Herald*, 1946), 256.
28. A. T. Jones, “The Third Angel’s Message—No. 15,” 1893 *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, 358.
29. S. N. Haskell to a conference president, Sept. 23, 1919. For a fuller discussion of Haskell’s position, see George R. Knight, “The Case of the Overlooked Postscript: A Footnote on Inspiration,” *Ministry* (August 1997): 9–11.
30. Daniells, “Use of the Spirit of Prophecy,” 36.
31. A. T. Jones, “The Gifts: Their Presence and Object,” *Home Missionary* [Extra] (Dec. 1894): 12 (italics in original).
32. Daniells, “Use of the Spirit of Prophecy,” 36.
33. Donald E. Mansell, “How the 1919 Bible Conference Transcript Was Found,” July 6, 1975; “Sequence of Materials in the 1919 Bible Conference Transcript and Papers,” n.d., xiii.
34. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford, 1980), 159; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 243. For other helpful works on this period of American church history see William Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (New York: Oxford, 1976); Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology*, 3 vols. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001–2006).
35. Claude E. Holmes, *Have We an Infallible “Spirit of Prophecy”?* (no publication data, 1920), 1, 11 (italics supplied).
36. J. S. Washburn, *The Startling Omega and Its True Genealogy* (no publication data, 1920).
37. For more on the polarizing effects of the 1920s in Adventism, see George R. Knight, *A Search For Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 2000), 128–138.
38. F. M. Wilcox, in “Inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy,” Aug. 1, 1919, 3; F. M. Wilcox to L. E. Froom, Aug. 5, 1928.
39. Benjamin L. House, *Analytical Studies in Bible Doctrines for Seventh-day Adventist Colleges* (Berrien Springs, MI: College Press for the General Conference Department of Education, 1926), 66.

40. "Valuable Quotations," *Ministry* (June 1931): 21.
41. W. C. White to L. E. Froom, Jan. 8, 1928; Dec. 13, 1934.
42. Roy Branson and Herold Weiss, "Ellen White: A Subject for Adventist Scholarship," *Spectrum* (Autumn 1970): 30–33; William S. Peterson, "A Textual and Historical Study of Ellen G. White's Account of the French Revolution," *Spectrum* (Autumn 1970): 57–68.
43. Benjamin McArthur, "Where Are the Historians Taking the Church?" *Spectrum* (Nov. 1979): 9.
44. Donald R. McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum* (March 1980): 27–41; Donald R. McAdams, "Ellen G. White and the Historians: A Study of the Treatment of John Huss in *Great Controversy* [sic], Chapter Six 'Huss and Jerome,'" unpub. MS, revised Oct. 1977, 19.
45. Eric Anderson, "Ellen White and Reformation Historians," *Spectrum* (July 1978): 24; E. G. White, *Great Controversy* (1911), xii.
46. McAdams, "Shifting Views," 34; cf. McAdams, "Ellen G. White and the Historians," 233.
47. Benjamin McArthur, "Point of the Spear: Adventist Liberalism and the Study of Ellen White in the 1970s," *Spectrum* (Spring 2008): 48.
48. See note 44.
49. Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).
50. Staff of the Ellen G. White Estate, *A Critique of the Book Prophetess of Health* (Takoma Park, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1976), 11.
51. Walter T. Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M&R Publications), 1982.
52. McArthur, "Where Are the Historians," 14.
53. McAdams, "Shifting Views," 40.
54. Anderson, "Ellen White and Reformation," 24.
55. Interview with Virginia Smith, January 2015.
56. Walter T. Rea, "Elder Walter T. Rea, Ph.D.," an autobiographical sketch, <https://www.nonegw.org/rea/bio.htm>. Accessed October 9, 2018.
57. Neal C. Wilson, "This I Believe about Ellen G. White," *Adventist Review* (March 20, 1980).
58. McAdams, "Shifting Views," 38. The published version of his remark has "a most significant article" rather than "the." But since "a" did not fit the context I asked McAdams if he meant "the" instead of "a." He answered in the affirmative, but noted that with the passage of time he doubts "that Wilson's statement was the most significant statement ever. But at the time, after all my negotiations with the White Estate, it seemed that way to me." Donald McAdams to George Knight, Nov. 11, 2018.
59. E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book Three, 27–124.
60. *Ibid.*, 433–444.
61. *Ibid.*, 445–465 (quotation on p. 460).
62. *Ibid.*, 447.
63. Robert W. Olson, *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981), 41–44.
64. Fred Veltman, "The Desire of Ages Project: The Conclusions," *Ministry* (Dec. 1990): 11–15.
65. George E. Rice, *Luke, a Plagiarist?* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1983), 110.
66. *Ibid.*, [4].
67. George R. Knight, *Myths in Adventism: An Interpretive Study of Ellen White, Education, and Related Issues* (Washington, DC: *Review and Herald*, 1985); George R. Knight, "The Myth of the Inflexible Prophet," *Adventist Review* (April 3, 1986): 14, 15.
68. See Knight, *Angry Saints*, 100–115 (100–115 in 1989 edition) for numerous claims by Ellen White on this point.
69. Some have suggested that the point regarding EGW's relation to the Bible in the resolution of theological differences breaks down in her treatment of A. F. Ballenger's problem over the sanctuary teaching in 1905. On that occasion she came across much more authoritatively than she did during the Galatians and "daily" conflicts. Thus, the Ballenger incident is an excellent test case. As a preliminary hypothesis, it seems to me that we find a fundamental difference between Ballenger's case and the other two. From EGW's perspective, Adventist scholars had already thoroughly studied from the Bible the point at issue with Ballenger, whereas the law in Galatians and the "daily" still needed more attention when disagreement arose over them. As a result, she related to Ballenger's situation differently than she did in the other cases. Such a hypothesis has yet to be tested, but it should prove to be an interesting and meaningful task for some scholar in the future. A beginning point for such testing is the evidence Robert Olson quotes from Ellen White on page 45 of *One Hundred and One Questions* to make just the opposite point from mine. He quotes her as saying that she felt "bidden to say in the name of the Lord that Elder Ballenger is following a false light" from the perspective of "established truth" regarding the sanctuary doctrine (*italics added*). It should be noted that EGW's seemingly variant treatment of Ballenger's situation should not be attributed to some historical development in her theological assertiveness, since the Galatians and "daily" controversies chronologically span the Ballenger incident.
70. See, for example, Knight, *Search For Identity*; Rolf J. Pöhler, *Continuity and Change in Adventist Teaching: A Case Study in Doctrinal Development* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000); Merlin D. Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844 to 1849," PhD diss., Andrews University, 2002; George R. Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 2004), 77–134.
71. Gary Land, ed., *The World of Ellen White* (Washington, DC: *Review and Herald*, 1987).
72. See, for example, the following extensive collections of documents. [Robert W. Olson, comp.], *Periodical Articles Concerning Inspiration, Ellen G. White, and Adventist History* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1986); Roger W. Coon, comp., *Anthology of Recently Published Articles on Selected Issues in Prophetic Guidance*, vol. 1:1980–1988; vol. 2:1989–1992 (no publication data).

73. One topic that should be noted, but does not fit into the flow of my presentation, is the Israel Dammon crisis that broke on the church in 1987 (see *Spectrum* [August 1987]: 29–50) and whose implications of Ellen White’s involvement with fanatical believers shook up many Adventists. But, as I demonstrated in *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993), Sabbatarian Adventism was birthed in the fanatical, shut-door, post-Millerite faction. While the open-door, Albany faction only had to define itself over against the fanatical shut-door “spiritualizers,” those who were becoming Sabbatarian Adventists had to *disentangle* themselves from the fanatics, a process that took a couple of years (see pp. 245–325). That insight is one reason, as Ben McArthur puts it, that I treat “explosive topics, such as the Israel Dammon episode in the immediate post-Disappointment months with a disarming matter-of-factness, as if these revelations should have been untroubling to begin with.” (Benjamin McArthur, “Historian and Provocateur,” in Gilbert M. Valentine and Woodrow Whidden, eds., *Adventist Maverick: A Celebration of George R. Knight’s Contribution to Adventist Thought* [Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2014], 18.) Of course, Ellen White’s being in close association with fanatical elements in the post-1844 period is also evident in many places in her autobiographical statements related to her early history. It seems to have been common knowledge to her early contemporaries who had passed through those difficult years.

74. Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 1991). For the most energetic response to Thompson, see Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson, eds., *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 1992).

75. Herbert E. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998).

76. George R. Knight, *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Life, Writings, and Major Themes* (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 1996); George R. Knight, *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 1997); George R. Knight, *Ellen White’s World: A Fascinating Look at the Times in Which She Lived* (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 1998); George R. Knight, *Walking with Ellen White: The Human Interest Story*, (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 1999).

77. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds. *The Ellen White Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, MD: *Review and Herald*, 2013).

78. Don S. McMahon, *Acquired or Inspired? Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle* (Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing, 2005); for a popularized version of McMahon’s book, see Leonard Brand and Don S. McMahon, *The Prophet and Her Critics* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005).

79. The criticism indicates need for a study utilizing a more adequate research design with tighter controls. However, McMahon’s conclusion definitely lines up with what we can already demonstrate about Ellen White’s use of sources in such areas as history, indicating that he is probably onto a valid track that needs further investigation to test his hypotheses.

80. Douglas Morgan, “A New Era of Ellen G. White Studies?” *Spectrum* (Autumn 2002): 59; Rene Noobergen, *Ellen G. White: Prophet of Destiny* (New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1974), 92–134.

81. Jud Lake, *Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010).

82. Gilbert M. Valentine, *The Prophet and the Presidents* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2011); Jerry Allen Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship Between the Prophet and Her Son* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993).

83. Merlin D. Burt, ed. *Understanding Ellen White: The Life and Work of the Most Influential Voice in Adventist History* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015).

84. Alberto R. Timm and Dwain N. Edmond, eds., *The Gift of Prophecy in Scripture and History* (Silver Spring, MD: *Review and Herald*, 2015).

85. Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet* (New York: Oxford, 2014).

86. Denis Fortin, “Historical Introduction,” in Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, 125th anniversary edition (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2017).

87. Jonathan M. Butler, “Seventh-day Adventist Historiography: A Work in Progress,” *Church History*, 87:1 (March 2018), 149–166. Quotation is on p. 165.

88. Russell R. Standish and Colin D. Standish, *The Greatest of All the Prophets* (Narbethong, Vic., Australia: Highwood Books, 2004), 3–5.

89. *Ibid.*, 138, 140; and if we think inerrancy is dead, Samuel K. Pipim is more than happy to put us straight with his affirmation that “all the claims that the Bible makes on any subject—theology, history, science, chronology, numbers, etc.—are absolutely trustworthy and dependable.” Of course, Pipim is speaking of the Bible, but in fundamentalist Adventism ideas on the Bible’s inspiration are carried over to Ellen White. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, “An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson’s Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible,” in Holbrook and Van Dolson, *Issues in Revelation*, 63, n. 3.

90. Butler, “SDA Historiography,” 150, 166, 152, 161.

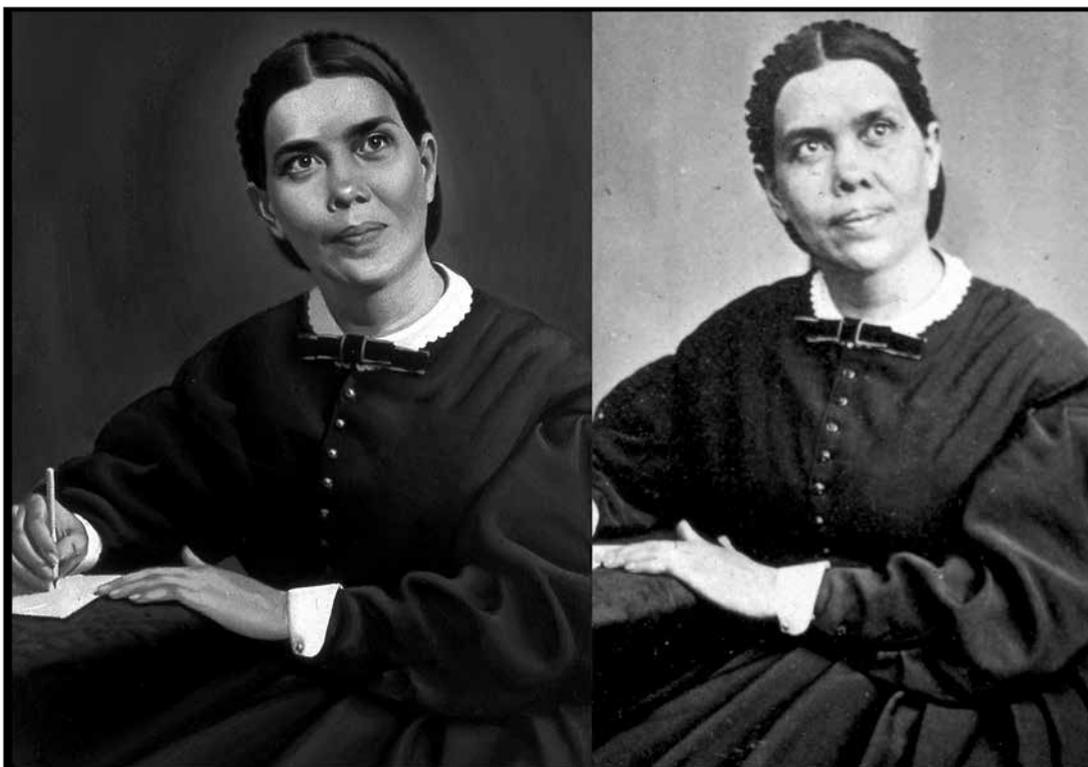
91. Grant Wacker, “Foreword,” in Aamodt, Land, and Numbers, *Ellen Harmon White*, xiv.

92. Butler, “SDA Historiography,” 152, 166.

93. Eric Anderson, “War, Slavery, and Race,” in Aamodt, Land, and Numbers, *Ellen Harmon White*, 262.



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Response *to* George R. Knight's

"Ellen White's Afterlife"

BY JONATHAN BUTLER

When you see George Knight's title, you know you are going to read his essay. Always the lively writer, he never chooses the leaden, deadly course of so much historical writing on Ellen White. He never turns an extraordinary woman into someone gray or dull. In reading this thoughtful, richly informative essay, my sense is that Knight has distilled here much of his career as a church historian. In two important ways, he ought to be complimented for his achievement with regard to Seventh-day Adventist history: he has gotten us thinking not

only about the nineteenth century but also the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; and he understands that Adventist history is far more than a biography of Ellen White. It requires many other players and plots to understand it, to understand her. I disagree with his essay in important ways, but there is much more to like in it than dislike.

Knight initially delivered it as a 2018 Utt Lecture at Pacific Union College. He began by recalling how White had been viewed during his own "green and golden" time at Angwin. The students in his audience might have

wondered if his lecture was more fiction than memoir. I can assure them, however, that his memory is impeccable. We may be far removed from the Adventism of the early 1960s, but we should not pretend that that quaint world never existed. Nor should we misunderstand how, over many decades, it came into existence, and why it rather abruptly disappeared. For those of us in North America, Europe, or Australia at least, it is now hard to imagine those college days Knight describes, when Arthur White could draw an SRO crowd, when religion courses required Ellen White's books for classroom texts, when the prophet provided the last word on history, science, or religion, and when almost no one equated her writings with plagiarism.

In reflecting on his evocative, long-term memory, it is worth noting the role that Knight played in distancing us from the Ellen White of the early sixties. This distinguished alumnus of PUC would, in time, join other academics in rendering obsolete the way his one-time religion professors had used Ellen White in class. Knight was not involved in the first wave of iconoclastic revisionists, including Ronald Numbers and Walter Rea, who did so much to dismantle the iconic, idealized, and inerrant White. That pristine view of her was in pieces before Knight celebrated his twentieth college reunion. Though missing the controversial first wave, Knight became, certainly, the most significant person in a second wave of Adventist historians who sought to salvage the prophet left in the wake of revisionism. Knight devoted himself to reintroducing Ellen White, as a more realistic and sustainable visionary, to a new generation of Seventh-day Adventists. He saw her as a prophet in whom Adventists could believe, even though she could no longer settle all their doctrinal questions or model for them whether to do the dishes on Sabbath.¹

I do not agree with one of his points (a minor one perhaps) that is occasionally made against some of the "first wave" historians. He writes of a supposed pattern among "the major critics of Ellen White" that separates them from other Adventists. Canright and Ballenger, Numbers and Rea basked in "the wonderful world of

Ellen White's inerrancy." When confronted with evidence to the contrary, however, they "rejected her and her writings with gusto." But here is my quarrel: the future arch-heretics of the church may have once believed in an unrealistic Ellen White, but so did virtually every other Adventist. The "wonderful world" that White's "major critics" embraced was the same world Adventists as a whole embraced, including a youthful George Knight. Arthur White and Walter Rea, Ronald Numbers and George Knight, at one time held an identical view of Ellen White—in fact, for the most part, the *church's* view of her. Nevertheless, they went their separate ways. Growing up with an Ellen White that all Adventists grew up with, therefore, does not account for why some became her "major critics."

When Knight turns to nineteenth-century Adventism—which really carries through 1919—he explores the richest and most thought-provoking vein of his argument.

He argues that, in the nineteenth century, Adventists were more open and "enlightened" on Ellen White's inspiration than Adventists would be in the twentieth century, citing W. C. White in particular, who enjoyed a closer proximity

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to the prophet and a deeper familiarity with how she worked than later Adventists. By contrast, twentieth-century Adventists were further removed from her humanity, reverently committing to memory passages from her gilt-edged books but with no memory of how she had produced them. Knight also makes the case that nineteenth-century Adventists were "divided over the proper use, authority, and nature of [Ellen White's] writings." Twentieth-century Adventists, on the other hand, were more monolithic in their acceptance of a fundamentalist view of her inspiration. According to Knight, then, had Adventists been truer to at least some of their nineteenth-century roots regarding a proper understanding of the prophet, they might have avoided their disillusionment when confronted by the new history of the 1970s and early '80s.

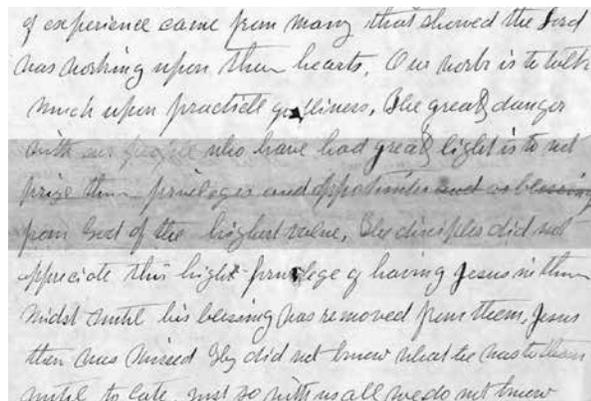
In general, I have come to a different conclusion about nineteenth- and twentieth-century Adventism with respect



Letter written by Ellen White (photo courtesy of Pacific Union College).

Ellen White Letter Found

A previously undocumented letter penned by Ellen G. White, co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has been discovered by Katharine Van Arsdale in the archives at Pacific Union College, where Van Arsdale is the official archivist. When shared with several historians, it was confirmed that the incomplete document was indeed in Ellen White’s handwriting. “Within 24 hours, the newly recovered letter was being analyzed, transcribed, and even discussed in classes across the country,” reported Eric Anderson, professor emeritus of history and director of PUC’s Walter C. Utt Center for Adventist History, which is collecting significant historical materials relating to the history of the college. Scholars were quick to notice the larger context of this letter, addressed to Adventist evangelist and missionary John Orr Corliss. White was discussing criticism of her life and writings among Seventh-day Adventists, and she wrote at a time when she faced several significant challenges, including a debate about whether her “testimonies” to church members could be corrected or revised. Scholars who confirmed the document include Ronald Graybill, retired professor, formerly of the White Estate, and author of several books about Ellen White; Kevin Morgan, pastor and Ellen White author; and Tim Poirier of the White Estate. News of the discovery and authentication was announced in early February, 2019.



Detail of letter written by Ellen White (photo courtesy of Pacific Union College).

to Ellen White. Where Knight notes the discontinuity between the two eras, I see the continuity. Unlike Knight, I am struck by an Adventist fundamentalism toward the prophet in *both* centuries. For me, there was no “golden age” when Adventists were more broad-minded or sophisticated in their view of White’s inspiration. There were misconceptions, distortions, and unrealistic claims from the very beginning of White’s ministry with respect to how God used her. In fact, I tend to indict the Whites themselves—James, Ellen, and W. C. White—for inflated views of the visionary, and not just rank-and-file followers who appear to have been misguided. No one made higher claims for her inspiration than Ellen White herself. At times guilty of a kind of magical realism, she made a number of personal statements on inspiration that could easily have encouraged a fundamentalist understanding of her.²

In the early nineteenth century, Mary Brunton was considered the superior novelist to Jane Austen, but most of us have never heard of Brunton, and we still read Austen. Why? One historian suggests that it was Austen’s family and friends who did wonders for her reputation.³ In Ellen White’s case, it is unlikely that she would have had any literary “afterlife” without her family—from James White to Willie White to Arthur White—but this came with demands made on Ellen White from an Adventist public. The Whites may have known more about what a prophet should be, but her Adventist followers had their own clear and insistent idea of what *they* wanted of a prophet. The Whites ignored these expectations at the peril of the prophet’s ministry. The controversy over her literary borrowing would provide a striking example of the way Adventist expectations of the prophet blinded them to the realities. Donald McAdams writes that much of the problem over plagiarism was “because the church failed to take her introductory disclaimer [in *The Great Controversy*] at face value.” It was the irony that ran through Adventism: White’s most literalistic, inerrant-believing supporters were the most tone-deaf to her own statements on inspiration.

Throughout her career White had to contend with the often willful demands of her most ardent supporters. With the first vision, a high bar was set *by* Ellen and *for* her on one sliver of writing on the “shut door.” Why did she have to be right to be a prophet? And why, when she appeared to some to be wrong, did James block her altogether from writing in the *Adventist Review*? In writing on health in the

1860s, why did White claim she had not read other health reformers (when she had) before writing out her visions? And why, in the 1880s, could she admit to reading books both before and after her visions and finding in them the language to write out what she had seen? Why could she settle disputes over foundational doctrines of the church in the late forties but refuse to address “the law in Galatians” in the late eighties or “the daily” in the first decade of the twentieth century?

Answers to these questions must take into account that dynamic and delicate balance between a prophet and her people. For the prophet to function—with honor in her own country—she must meet expectations, and even exceed them. In the early 1850s, Ellen White vacillated on whether a woman had called her neighbor a “witch” or “bitch,” and spawned Adventism’s first offshoot, The Messenger Party. In the early 1880s, she called for minor revisions in the *Testimonies* and her most ardent supporter and a personal friend, S. N. Haskell, bitterly opposed the changes. He believed that not just her words were inspired but her punctuation. Haskell became the prophet’s closest confidante—next to her son Willie anyway—and carried on the most voluminous correspondence with her of any contemporary. He even proposed marriage to her.⁴

Yet White and Haskell were supposedly at odds on the nature of her inspiration. In all likelihood, however, Haskell, not W. C. White or even Ellen White, best represented nineteenth-century Adventism’s understanding of inspiration. W. C. White warned Haskell of “injuring Mother’s work by claiming for it more than she claims for it, more than Father ever claimed for it”—or several other Adventist leaders.

But with regard to “injuring” White, that train had already left the station. The W. C. White letter is good evidence that the “enlightened” view had exerted little influence on Adventist contemporaries. In fact, White considered it too hot to handle for an Adventist public and wrote it for Haskell’s eyes only. W. W. Prescott wrote to W. C. White with similar candor but typed the letter himself to hide it from his secretary.⁵ The “enlightened” seem to have been too few and too low profile as

spokespersons for their viewpoint to have been considered a faction in the church. It is instructive to note that several of Knight’s more compelling quotes on White’s inspiration were never published, or were published years later, with the path-breaking *Selected Messages, Book One* (1958). Adventists had to wait until after the “first wave” historians jolted the church in the 1970s for an answer in *Selected Messages, Book Three* (1980). Nineteenth-century Adventists would have been oblivious to much of this material.⁶

Though the Whites were among the “enlightened,” we should not be too sanguine with respect to them. Politics mattered to the first family, but the political landscape could change. As her publisher, James White did what he could to conceal his wife’s literary blemishes with revised editions of her work. After his death, however, the Ad-

ventist public increasingly learned of the prophet’s work habits as a writer, which the “enlightened,” including the Whites, felt compelled to address. They did so in Ellen White’s seminal introduction to the 1888 edition of *The Great Contro-*

versy, an introduction that White’s inner circle probably had a hand in writing. The Whites and their closest colleagues were shifting the paradigm by which to understand Ellen White, but they conceded only as much as the current evidence demanded. More accommodations would be necessary after the 1911 edition of *The Great Controversy*. Ellen White, herself the pragmatist, refused to weigh in on “the law in Galatians” or “the daily,” though she had expressed herself on theology in the past. It just may have been that, if she took sides on either issue, she would alienate part of her base. And she cared more about her authority among Adventists as a whole than she did about any, single, divisive issue on doctrine. But, in the final analysis, she stayed out of “the daily” debate because it was too trivial: it was “not to be made a test question.” Her involvement would have elevated its importance.⁷

The 1919 Bible Conference could experience catharsis regarding Ellen White’s inspiration only because the prophet had died a few years earlier. The passing of a strong-willed parent allowed for candor among her

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children. It was fortunate, too, that W. C. White did not attend; he might have imposed too heavy a hand on the proceedings. But this conference was not “the apex in openness regarding Ellen White” that Knight says it was. On the contrary, it was held behind closed doors—how “open” can that be?—and minutes of the meeting were deep-sixed. The outspoken attendees also did not provide a window into nineteenth-century Adventism as it was, but as it was not. These were outliers that did not speak for their contemporaries. At any rate, why should A. G. Daniells be considered more representative of nineteenth-century Adventism than Claude Holmes, the *Review and Herald* linotype operator? Holmes, the “hard hat,” believed Daniells, the “clerical collar,” was undermining White’s authority. Which of the two men was more reflective of their era? Holmes circulated a tract at the 1922 General Conference session, outing Daniells as a closet liberal on White, and Daniells lost his presidency. Holmes had been “open” in the way Daniells had not been, and it cost Daniells dearly.⁸

Knight contends that, beginning in the 1920s, Adventism “morphed” into “the wonderful world of Ellen White” that he entered at PUC in the 1960s. A. G. Daniells and W. C. White had “morphed” into F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald* and B. L. House, author of a denominational textbook. Both Wilcox and House flaunted White’s verbal inspiration. Knight explains the shift in Seventh-day Adventism with the takeover of American evangelicalism by fundamentalism. I like what Knight does here. Adventists, who had historically defined themselves as at odds with American culture, had turned into cultural chameleons. They absorbed fundamentalist views of biblical inerrancy over against the modernists and “higher critics.” What became distinctively Adventist about this story was that, as Knight puts it, they adopted fundamentalist “assumptions about the Bible and applied them to the

writings of Ellen White.” Where I qualify his argument is that, in my view, Adventists brought their own, earlier version of “fundamentalism” with them into the twentieth century. From their nineteenth-century origins as a church, a proto-fundamentalist view of Ellen White was in their DNA.

In the 1970s and early ’80s, the “wonderful world” went spinning off its axis. Knight’s care and thoroughness in dealing with Adventism’s historical revolution in this era does not surprise me. In his historical work he, at times, takes on the Adventist revisionists, but he always takes them seriously. Knight acknowledges Benjamin McArthur’s point that these historians had opened

a “Pandora’s box.” He also agrees with Eric Anderson that historians in the 1970s had introduced a “new orthodoxy.” Nothing had prepared the church for this historical revolution—not muted statements from the “enlightened” leadership in the nineteenth century, not Ellen White’s progressive comments on inspiration, and not the 1919 Conference (even if the minutes had not been buried). The histori-

ans of the 1970s and early ’80s raised a historical consciousness within the church for the first time. This was an altogether new challenge. It brought Ellen White into focus in a way she had never been before.⁹

Adventists were not used to seeing their tradition—especially their prophet—through the eyes of professional historians. They knew hagiography and expose. But in a sense J. N. Loughborough, an archconservative, and D. M. Canright, an arch-heretic, were two sides of the same coin. They had more in common with each other than they had with historians such as Numbers or McAdams or Knight. With professional historians on the scene, new, historical questions were raised; new answers demanded. The ground had shifted under Adventist feet. The “first wave” was the tsunami. The “second wave” led to a rebuilding from the destruction. We now can expect a “third wave.” I like Knight’s comment on Ellen White: we “need to see her with new eyes.”

In the final analysis, she stayed out of “the daily” debate because it was too trivial: it was “not to be made a test question.” Her involvement would have elevated its importance.

Adventist historians from every place on the spectrum—from “liberal” to “conservative,” from academic to apologist, from icon-shattering to icon-building—will be in the “third wave.” But here I would offer a caveat: in reading their different perspectives, I think we should bury “bias” as a pejorative term. As a matter of fact, we too often call people “biased” only because they disagree with us. For the most part, however, so-called “bias” may be simply making an argument. And in the “third wave” we will hear arguments about Ellen White from a number of new perspectives. We will hear, too, from the non-Adventists who have begun to give White her due. Non-Adventists will see things about her from “thirty thousand feet” that Adventists have not seen at close range. But whatever wave historians or readers of history choose to ride—the first, second, or third wave—they should read Knight’s article on “Ellen White’s Afterlife.”

End Notes

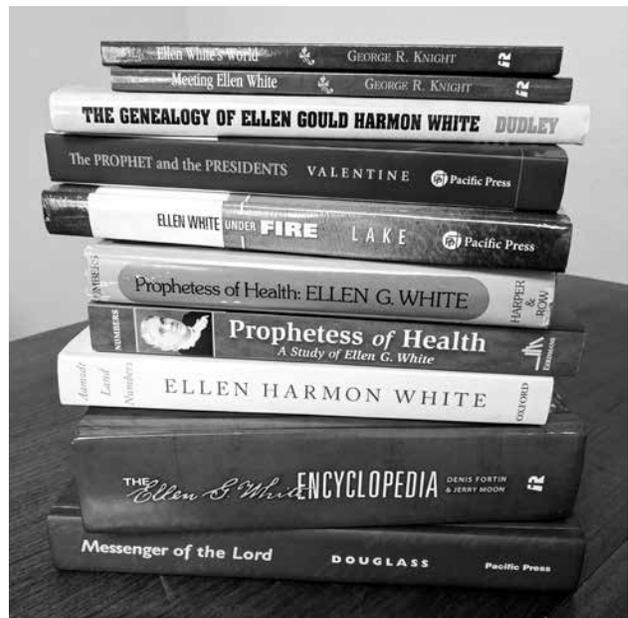
1. See my discussion of this historiographical development in, Jonathan M. Butler, “Seventh-Day Adventist Historiography: A Work in Progress,” *Church History* 87, No. 1 (March 2018): 149–166; in a study of Catholicism, Emily Clark writes, “Revisionism often preoccupies itself with what has been left out, and it usually rests on one of two strategies: examining the subject from the perspective of actors and evidence not considered in prior scholarship, or from the vantage point of a longer temporal perspective that uncovers developmental themes previously overlooked.” Both strategies occupy Adventist historians in the 1970s and early ’80s. The citation appears in Emily Clark, “Hail Mary Down By the Riverside,” in Catherine A. Brekus, *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 91–107, quote on 92.

2. Arthur L. White, “The Authority of Ellen G. White Writings,” <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/egww/EGWWc02>, (last accessed January 7, 2018); see also his *Ellen G. White: Messenger to the Remnant*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1969), 12–17.

3. H. J. Jackson, *Those Who Write for Immortality: Romantic Reputations and the Dream of Lasting Fame* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

4. On the Messenger Party, see Theodore N. Levterov, “Messenger Party,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013), 974–976; on Haskell’s views of inspiration and his relationship to White, see Gerald Wheeler, *S. N. Haskell: Adventist Pioneer, Evangelist, Missionary, and Editor* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2016), 186–203, 250–266.

5. W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, Oct. 31, 1912.; on Prescott’s typing of his own letter, see Gilbert M. Valentine, *W. W. Prescott:*



Forgotten Giant of Adventism’s Second Generation (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 264–265.

6. See, for examples, Knight’s notes 2 and 7: Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958, 1980), Book One, 21; this reference initially appeared as Ms. 24, 1886 and was not published until *ibid.*; Knight’s note 15: *ibid.*, 164, originally was Ms. 11, 1910. It did surface in White’s lifetime, but it is not clear how widely it was circulated; see Ellen G. White, “Our Attitude Toward Doctrinal Controversy,” in *A Call to the Watchman (Sanitarium, CA: pamphlet, 1910)*, 5–10. My thanks to Ronald Graybill for tracking down these references for me.

7. For James and Ellen White and how the shut-door was handled in print, see Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 56–57; 71–74; for an overview of the literary life of *The Great Controversy*, see Denis Fortin, “*The Great Controversy*,” in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds. Fortin and Moon, 847–850; on the 1911 revision of *The Great Controversy*, see Valentine, *W. W. Prescott* (2005), 258–265; on “the daily,” Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Book One, 164.

8. Benjamin McArthur, *A. G. Daniells: Shaper of Twentieth-Century Adventism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2015), 386–413.

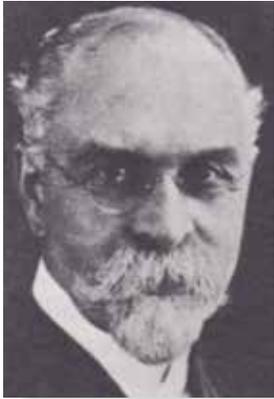
9. Donald R. McAdams, “Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s,” *Spectrum* 10, No. 2 (March 1980): 27–41; Benjamin McArthur, “Where Are the Historians Taking the Church?” *Spectrum* 10, No. 3 (November 1979): 9; Eric Anderson, “Ellen White and Reformation Historians,” *Spectrum* 9, No. 2 (July 1978): 24.



Since retirement from teaching, JONATHAN BUTLER has been researching and writing on Adventist history, and he and his wife Marianne spend as much time as possible with their grandchildren.

KEYWORDS: 1919 Bible Conference, Testimonies, nature of inspiration, infallibility, A. G. Daniels

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THE Bible Conference OF 1919

INTRODUCTION BY MOLLEURUS COUPERUS
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Nearly all Protestant churches have had at least one outstanding leader whose dedication to what he considered his divinely ordained work and message was apparent to all. In spite of the fact that these men made mistakes and erred, their grateful and admiring followers awarded them a place of unusual authority in their church, particularly in matters of biblical interpretation and doctrine. This was especially true of Luther and Calvin. Martin Luther, for instance, was called “an instrument of God,” “a prophet of the Almighty,” and an “apostle of freedom.” Luther also applied the title of prophet to himself occasionally. His prophecies were gathered together by Johannes Lapäus and published by him in 1578 under the title *True Prophecies of the Dear Prophet and Holy Man of God Dr. Martin Luther*. This book was republished in 1846. Hans Preuss in 1933 wrote a scholarly volume entitled *Martin Luther the Prophet*, in which he lists the prominent theologians who

called Luther a prophet, both before and after the Enlightenment. During the last century, Luther was more often called apostle or reformer. As time went on after Luther’s death, and scholars were able to study and compare the astounding size of Luther’s writings (his published works fill more than sixty volumes), a critical evaluation was possible of the nature and extent of his contribution to the Christian church. In all this, he has remained the Reformer, the great Man of God.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been blessed by the great devotion and leadership of many individuals, both during its early history and its later development. Among these, none has had a greater influence on this church than Ellen G. White, from shortly after the Disappointment of 1844 until the present, long after her death on July 16, 1915.

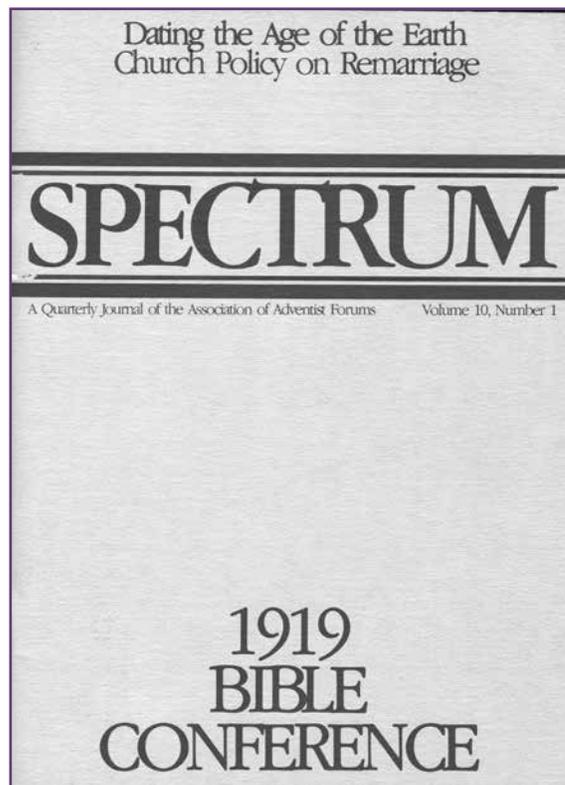
In spite of her limited formal education, Ellen (Harmon) White developed into a person of profound insight

and spiritual stature, a wise counselor and leader, a deep Bible student and commentator. All of these characteristics are reflected in the voluminous written material that came from her pen, which has continued to extend her influence and authority in her church until the present.

As early as December 1844, when she was only seventeen years of age, she had a vision in which she saw the Advent people on their journey to the Holy City. This was the first of many visions, dreams and messages which she communicated to the church, nearly all of which were related to the beliefs, work, and organization of her church, while others were for counsel to individual members. As Ellen White matured, she saw herself increasingly active in preaching, and traveled widely, including to Australia and Europe, to aid in the development of her church. She also became more involved in writing articles for various church periodicals and in publishing large books, even sets of books, such as the five-volume *Conflict of the Ages* series. To aid her in this demanding part of her work, she was able to secure the help of a number of very capable literary assistants and secretaries, one of whom, Marian Davis, worked with her for some twenty-five years.

Soon after her visions first appeared and were publicized, questions naturally arose concerning the nature of these visions, their authority, and a little later, their relationship to the Bible. This latter question has remained a subject for discussion and even controversy in the church ever since. Ellen's husband, James, became fully aware of this problem soon after her first visions, and discussed it at some length as early as April 21, 1851, in the *Review and Herald*. He stated:

Every Christian is, therefore, in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in "all good works." But if a portion of the church err from the truths of the Bible, and become



weak, and sickly, and the flock become scattered, so that it seems necessary for God to employ the gifts of the Spirit to correct, revive and heal the erring, we should let him work.

In a second article in the same issue, James White wrote:

God's Word is an everlasting rock. On that we can stand with confidence at all times. Though the Lord gives dreams, designed generally for the individuals who have them, to comfort, correct, or to instruct in extreme trials or dangers, yet to suppose that he designs to guide in general duties by dreams, is unscriptural, and very dangerous. The Word and Spirit are given to guide us.

Four years later, on October 16, 1855, he wrote again in the *Review and Herald* on the same subject:

There is a class of persons who are determined to have it that the *Review* and its conductors make the view of Mrs. White a Test of doctrine and Christian fellowship. What has the *Review* to do with Mrs.

W.'s views? The sentiments published in its columns are all drawn from the Holy Scriptures. No writer of the *Review* has ever referred to them as authority on any point. The *Review* for five years has not published one of them. Its motto has been, "The Bible and the Bible alone, the only rule of faith and duty."

As the years passed by, some in the church claimed verbal inspiration for the writings of Ellen White, a position rejected by James White and officially by the church. Others claimed infallibility, and many called her a prophet. Both of these she denied, but felt that her work was more than that of a prophet, calling herself a messenger. On infallibility, she stated: "In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible." (Selected Messages I: 37). In spite of these statements, from time to time some authors in the church have claimed various degrees of infallibility for her writings. Roderick Owen, in a reprint article in the *Review and Herald* of June 3, 1971, assigned infallible interpretation of Scripture to her. The official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has always been that our beliefs are solely based on Scripture, and that by Scripture all claims for religious truth must ultimately be tested. Believing that Ellen White was used by God to help guide the infant church as a spiritual leader does not imply that one can ascribe to her infallibility in her work, words, or writings. Her son, W. C. White, who worked closely with his mother for many years, and for the Ellen G. White Estate after her death, wrote regarding her statements on history: "Mother has never claimed to be authority on history" (W. C. White, in *The Great Controversy*, 1911 Edition, 4; quoted by Arthur L. White in *The Ellen G. White Writings*, 1973).

Regarding Mother's writings and their use as an authority on points of history and chronology Mother has never wished our brethren to treat them as authority regarding details of history or historical dates. . . . When *Controversy* was written, Mother never thought that the readers would take it as authority on historical dates or use it to settle controversy regarding details of history, and she does not now feel that it should be used in that way (Letter from W. C. White to

W. W. Eastman, Nov. 4, 1912; quoted in *The Ellen G. White Writings*, by Arthur L. White, 33, 34).

By what standards then should the writings of Ellen G. White be judged? First of all, according to her own words and those of James White: by Scripture. All other statements, historical, medical, scientific, like the statements of any other mortal, must be able to pass historical or scientific research—the test of truth, as I believe Ellen White would have it. Then her message, so greatly confined to her own church by the unwarranted attitude of those who advocated infallibility for her writings, would become acceptable also for devotional and Biblical study outside her own church, which has been accused for so many years of having "an addition to or above Scripture."

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 August 14, 1919, W. E. Howell lists twenty-two 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 fifty. The president of the General Conference at that time, Arthur G. Daniells, reported on the Bible Conference in the *Review and Herald* of August 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 (Columbia Union College); W. W. Prescott, formerly editor of the *Review and Herald* and then a field secretary of the General Conference (who had a major part in the revision of the book *The Great Controversy* in 1911); H. C. Lacey, religion teacher at the Foreign Mission Seminary; W. E. Howell, editor of the *Christian Educator*; W. G. Wirth, a religion teacher at Pacific Union College, and later at the College of

Medical Evangelists; M. C. Wilcox, book editor for the Pacific Press; A. O. Tait, editor of the *Signs of the Times*; C. M. Sorenson, history teacher at Emmanuel Missionary College; C. S. Longacre, secretary of the Religious Liberty Association; W. H. Wakeham, Bible teacher at Emmanuel Missionary College; J. N. Anderson, Bible teacher at the Washington Foreign Mission Seminary; C. L. Taylor, head of the Bible Department, Canadian Junior College; L. L. Caviness, associate editor of the *Review and Herald*; and T. M. French, head of the school of theology at Emmanuel Missionary College.

In his report of the Bible Conference, Elder Daniells emphasized the importance of continued and deeper study of the Scriptures by our church. He stated, "The one great object of this conference is to unite in definite, practical, spiritual study of the Word of God." He then quotes at length from Ellen G. White where she counsels the church to a diligent study of the Scriptures, and includes the following:

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. V, 706, 707).

Elder Daniells also reported the actions that were taken at the conference, and from this we quote:

We therefore express our appreciation of the following definite features which have marked the sessions of this Bible Conference:

5. For the incentive to more earnest Bible Study which the conference has aroused. . . . We recognize, however, that there are still many mines of truth in the Holy Scriptures, and that these will yield their treasure to the earnest, prayerful, humble seeker after right. . .

6. We believe that the blessings and benefits which result from Bible conferences such as we have enjoyed, should be perpetuated in the future. . . . We therefore earnestly request the General Conference Committee to arrange for another conference of this character in 1920. . .

Such a conference, however, was not held.

The record of the 1919 Bible Conference was lost until December 1974, when Dr. F. Donald Yost found two packages wrapped in paper at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Takoma Park. The packages contained some 2,400 pages of typewritten material, transcribed from steno-

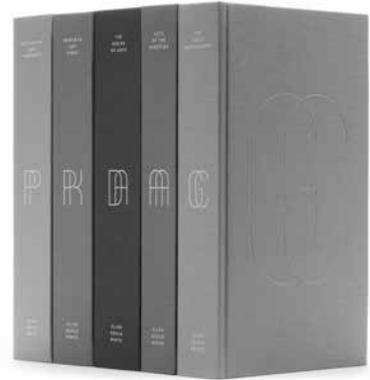
graphic notes taken at the Conference. It seems a tragedy that this material was not made available to Adventist teachers and ministers after the Bible Conference, and that the message which the participants in that Conference wanted to share with the church membership never was transmitted.

Following, we present the transcribed record of the meetings of the Bible Conference of 1919 on July 30 and August 1, which dealt especially with the Spirit of Prophecy. The discussions were open and frank, but reflect great sensitivity. There were other meetings in which this subject was discussed, but the meetings here reported were the longest and most comprehensive. In them, a number of individuals participated who had worked personally with Ellen White for many years. Because of their great historical significance, the transcripts are published complete and unedited, so that the participants of the two meetings may speak for themselves.

By what standards then should the writings of Ellen G. White be judged? First of all, according to her own words and those of James White: by Scripture.

The Use of the *Spirit of Prophecy* **IN OUR TEACHING** of *Bible and History*

July 30, 1919



W. E. Howell: Our topic for this hour, as arranged in the program, is “The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in our Teaching of Bible and History.” Elder Daniells is here with us this morning to fulfill his promise to our teachers that he would give us a talk along this line, and I am sure the opportunity of considering this question further will be greatly appreciated.

A. G. Daniells: I have been a little uncertain in my own mind as to just what line it would be best to follow. There is so much in this that it cannot be fully presented in one talk, and I would regret missing the mark and taking up that which would not be of most interest to you; and so I finally decided that I would prefer to have a round-table talk. I would prefer to have you question me and then I would try to answer such points as are of most interest to you. I may not be able to give another talk here, and you probably would not have the time, and so I would like to make this hour most profitable. I will present one or two points as briefly as I can to start with, and then I will just open the way for questions.

First of all, I want to reiterate what I stated in the talk I gave some evenings ago on this subject, that I do not want to say one word that will destroy confidence in this gift to this people. I do not want to create doubts. I do not want to in any way depreciate the value of the writings of the spirit of prophecy. I have no doubt in my own mind. I

do not know whether every man can say that or not, but I can say it with all honesty. I have had perplexities through the forty years I have been in the ministry. I have found things similar to that to which Peter referred in Paul’s writings,—hard to be understood. You know Peter said that, and I have had personal Testimonies come to me that I could not understand. That is a remarkable thing, isn’t it, for a man to get such a message as that? But that is what nearly all doubters hark back to when they get away from us,—they got a testimony they could not understand and believe. I could not understand then, but time has helped me to understand; and I have concluded that we do not see from the Lord’s standpoint, and we do not know as much as the Lord knows about ourselves and so when He reveals things to us that we do not understand, it is because He knows more about us and our tendency and dangers than we do, ourselves.

The first one I got that threw me into confusion charged me very strongly with sort of—well, I will put it in the worst form—a tendency to domineer over my brethren in administrative matters, not giving them the freedom of mind and thought that they were entitled to. I did not understand that. It did not seem so. I asked some of my good friends, and they said they never had felt it, and that threw me into worse trouble. Even some members of the Committee had never seen that. What

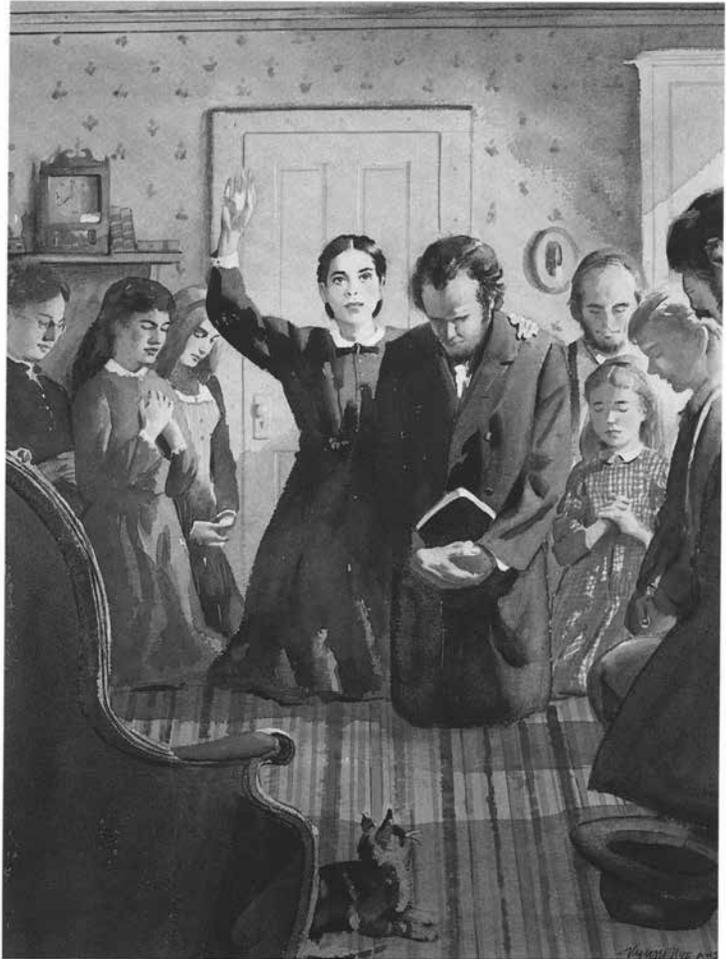
was I to do? They were not the right men for me to get my information from. I soon found that there were some men who believed that the message was right. Inside of a year or so I found a very strong tendency, under a bit of nervousness and weariness, to do that very thing; so I got the message out and reread it prayerfully, and acknowledged it to the Lord, and I am trying all the time to guard against any domineering spirit, for I think it is a most abominable thing for a man in office to begin to lord it over people who are not in office; but it is in human nature. You have heard the story of the Irishman who was promoted to the position of foreman of a section gang. The next morning he went out and said to one of the men:

“Timothy O’Brien, come here.”

When the man came, he said to him: “I discharge ye this morning, not because I have anything agin ye, but to show me authority.” [Laughter]

He had been put in office, and the very first thing he wanted to do was to show his authority. That is human nature, but it is not Christianity; and it is to be abominated and avoided by every one who gets office, whether president of the General Conference, or principal of a school, or head of a department in a school. All should avoid that and give every man his rights and freedom and liberty.

As I have said, I have met things that were hard to be understood, but time has helped me to understand them, and I can honestly say this morning that I go along in this movement without any doubts in my mind. When I take positions differing from other men, that is not proof that I am a doubter. I may be a doubter of their views or their interpretation, but that does not make me a doubter of the spirit of prophecy. I may differ with a man about his interpretation of the Bible, but that does not make me a doubter of the Bible. But there are men who just hold me right up as a doubter of the Testimonies because I take the position that the Testimonies are not verbally inspired, and that they have been worked up by the secretaries and put in proper grammatical shape. A few years ago a man came onto



The Gospel of Good Health, watercolor, by Vernon Nye. (Courtesy of the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc) This artwork appeared on the cover of *Spectrum* volume 42, issue 2, 2014.

the nominating committee and wanted me kept out of the presidency because I did not believe the Testimonies were verbally inspired. That was because I differed with him on theory and interpretation; but I am the one to say whether I doubt the Testimonies, am I not? [Voices: Yes, yes!] And so are you. I want to leave the impression that I am not trying in any way to put any doubts in your mind. And O, I would feel terribly to have this denomination lose its true, genuine, proper faith in this gift that God gave to this church in these messages that have come to us. I want that we shall stay by this clear through to the end. [Amens]

Now with reference to the evidences: I differ with some of the brethren who have put together proofs or evidences of the genuineness of this gift, in this respect, —I believe that the strongest proof is found in the fruits of this gift to the church, not in physical and outward demonstrations. For instance, I have heard some ministers preach, and have seen it in writing, that Sister White once carried a heavy

Bible—I believe they said it weighed forty pounds—on her outstretched hand, and looking up toward the heavens quoted texts and turned the leaves over and pointed to the texts, with her eyes toward the heavens. I do not know whether that was ever done or not. I am not sure. I did not see it, and I do not know that I ever talked with anybody that did see it. But, brethren, I do not count that sort of thing as a very great proof. I do not think that is the best kind of evidence. If I were a stranger in an audience, and heard a preacher enlarging on that, I would have my doubts. That is, I would want to know if he saw it. He would have to say, No, he never did. Then I would ask, “Did you ever see the man that did see it?” And he would have to answer, “No, I never did.”

Well, just how much of that is genuine, and how much has crawled into the story? —I do not know. But I do not think that is the kind of proof we want to use. It has been a long time since I have brought forward this sort of thing, —no breath in the body, and the eyes wide open. That may have accompanied the exercise of this gift in the early days, but it surely did not in the latter days, and yet I believe this gift was just as genuine and exercised just the same through these later years as in the early years.

C. P. Bollman: Isn't the same thing true of the Bible? Can't you size it up and believe it because of its fruit, what it does, and not because of the supernatural things related in it?

A. G. Daniells: Yes. For instance, I would not take the story of David killing a lion and a bear, or of Samson killing a lion, and herald that to unbelievers or strangers as proof that the Bible was inspired, especially about Samson. Here is the way I would want to teach the boys and girls: I would want to begin with the beginning of this movement. At that time here was a gift given to this person; and with that gift to that individual, at the same time, came this movement of the three-fold message.

They came right together in the same year. That gift was exercised steadily and powerfully in the development of this movement. The two were inseparably connected, and there was instruction given regarding this movement in all its phases through this gift, clear through for seventy years. Then, in my own mind, I look the phases over. We will take one on the Bible. What shall be the attitude of the people in this movement toward the Bible? We know that that should be our authority without a creed and without the higher criticism. This is the Book. The position we hold today is the right position, we believe, —to magnify this Book, to get our instruction from this Book, and to

preach this Book. The whole Plan of redemption, everything that is necessary to salvation, is in this Book, and we do not have to go to anything outside of the Book to be saved. That has been the attitude of the spirit of prophecy toward this book from the beginning, hasn't it? [Voices: Yes] And I suppose we can give credit to that gift for our attitude toward the Book as much as to any influence that anybody has exercised.

Now take the doctrines of the Bible. In all the other reformations that came up, the leaders were unable to rightly distinguish between all error and truth, —the Sabbath day, Baptism, the nature of man, etc., —and so they openly taught errors from this Book. But now, when we come to this movement, we find the wonderful power of discrimination on the part of the spirit of prophecy, and I do not know of a single truth in this Book that is set aside by the spirit of prophecy, nor a single biblical or theological error that came down through the dark ages that has been fostered by the spirit of prophecy and pressed upon the people that we have to discredit when we come to this Book. The doctrines of baptism, the law, the place and value and dignity of the Holy Spirit in the church, and all the other teachings that we have, have been magnified by this gift among us.

First of all, I want to reiterate what I stated in the talk I gave some evenings ago on this subject, that I do not want to say one word that will destroy confidence in this gift to this people. I do not want to create doubts. I do not want to in any way depreciate the value of the writings of the spirit of prophecy.

Take another line,—the activities of the church. Here is our attitude toward foreign missions or world evangelism. Who among us has ever exercised greater influence than this gift in behalf of world evangelism.

Then take the question of liberal, unselfish support of the work. When you go to those writings, you find them full of exhortations, and if we would live them out better than we do, our gifts would be greater, and our progress would be more rapid.

Then take our attitude on our service that we are to render to our fellowmen, Christian help work,—all those activities where a Christian should be a real blessing, an unselfish individual in the community to help people in their sorrows and misfortunes, their poverty and sickness, and every way that they need help. We find that the writings of the spirit of prophecy abound with exhortations to an unselfish life in living among our fellowmen.

Take the question of health and the medical missionary work, and all these activities, and take the service that should be put forth in behalf of the young. Where do you find in any movement that we read about where better instruction has been given as to the attention that should be given to the young people. Take the question of education: Why, brethren, none of our teachers ever have stood in advance of the counsel, that good wholesome instruction, that we find in the spirit of prophecy.

Those things I point to as really the convincing evidence of the origin of this gift, and the genuineness of it,—not to some ocular demonstrations that a few people have seen. I have no objections to persons speaking of those; but in close work with students I certainly would take the time to note down all these actual facts and hold them before the students, and show that from the beginning of this movement there has been inseparably and intimately and forcefully and aggressively connected with it this gift that has magnified everything good and has discounted, I think, everything bad. And if that is not evidence of the source of this gift among us, then I do not know what would be evidence.

W. E. Howell: I am sure the teachers would like to have some suggestions on the use of the spirit of prophecy and its writings in their teaching work.

A. G. Daniells: Well, give me a question that will be definite, in a particular way.

C. L. Taylor: I would like to ask you to discuss for us the exegetical value of the Testimonies. Of course I think it is generally understood by us that there are many texts to which she makes no reference. There are many texts that she explains, and there may be other explanations that are equally true that she does not touch. But my question is really this: May we accept the explanations of scripture that she gives? Are those dependable?

A. G. Daniells: I have always felt that they were. It may be that in some very critical matters there may be some difficulties; but I have used the writings for years in a way to clarify or elucidate the thought in the texts of scripture. Take *Desire of Ages* and *Patriarchs and Prophets*. In reading them through I have found many instances of good illumination.

Does that answer your question? Do you mean whether students should resort to the writings for their interpretation of the Bible, or to get additional light? That is to say, is it necessary to have these writings in order to understand the Bible? Must we go to her explanations to get our meaning of the Bible? Is that the question or is that involved in it?

C. L. Taylor: Not directly, but possibly indirectly. But I will give a more concrete example. We will suppose that a student comes for help on a certain scripture, and wants to know what it means. Is it proper for the teacher to explain that scripture, with perhaps other scriptures illuminating the text, and then bring in the spirit of prophecy also as additional light on the text? Or suppose two students differ on the meaning of a text, and they come to the teacher to find out what it means: Should the teacher explain the text and then use the Testimonies to support the position he takes? Or take still a third case: Suppose that two brethren, both of them believers in the Testimonies, and of course believers in the Bible primarily, have a difference of opinion on a certain text: Is it right for them in their study of that text to bring in the spirit of prophecy to aid in their understanding of it, or should they leave that out of the question entirely?

A. G. Daniells: On that first point, I think this, that we are to get our interpretation from this Book, primarily. I think that the Book explains itself, and I think we can understand the Book, fundamentally, through the Book, without resorting to the Testimonies to prove up on it.

W. E. Howell: The Spirit of prophecy says the Bible is its own expositor.

A. G. Daniells: Yes, but I have heard ministers say that the spirit of prophecy is the interpreter of the Bible. I heard it preached at the General Conference some years ago, when it was said that the only way we could understand the Bible was through the writings of the spirit of prophecy.

J. M. Anderson: And he also said “infallible interpreter.”

C. M. Sorenson: That expression has been canceled. That is not our position.

A. G. Daniells: It is not our position, and it is not right that the spirit of prophecy is the only safe interpreter of the Bible. That is a false doctrine, a false view. It will not stand. Why, my friends what would all the people have done from John’s day down to the present if there were no way to understand the Bible except through the writings of the spirit of prophecy! It is a terrible position to take! That is false, it is error. It is positively dangerous! What do those people do over in Romania? We have hundreds of Sabbath-keepers there who have not seen a book on the spirit of prophecy. What do those people in China do? Can’t they understand this Book only as we get the interpretation through the spirit of prophecy and then take it to them? That is heathenish!

L. L. Caviness: Do you understand that the early believers got their understanding from the Bible, or did it come through the spirit of prophecy?

A. G. Daniells: They got their knowledge of the Scriptures as they went along through the Scriptures themselves. It pains me to hear the way some people talk, that the spirit of prophecy led out and gave all the instruction, all the doctrines, to the pioneers, and they accepted them right along. That is not according to the writings themselves, *Early Writings*. We are told how they did; they searched these scriptures together and studied and prayed over them until they got together on them. Sister White says in her works that for a long time she could not understand, that her mind was locked over these things, and the brethren worked their way along. She did not bring to this movement the Sabbath truth. She opposed the Sabbath truth. It did not seem right to her when Brother Bates presented it to her. But she had help from the Lord and when that clear knowledge was given her in that way, she was a weak child, and could not understand theology, but

she had a clear outline given to her, and from that day to her death she never wavered a minute. But the Lord did not by revelation give to another all that He had given in this Book. He gave this Book, and He gave men brains and thinking power to study the Book.

I would not, in my class work, give out the idea at all to students that they cannot understand this Book only through the writings of Sister White. I would hold out to students, as I do to preachers, and in ministerial meetings, the necessity of getting our understanding of the Bible from the Bible itself, and using the spirit of prophecy to enlarge our view. I tell them not to be lazy about studying the Book, and not to rummage around first for something that has been written on a point that they can just swallow without study. I think that would be a very dangerous thing for our ministers to get into that habit. And there are some, I must confess, who will hunt around to find a statement in the Testimonies and spend no time in deep study of the Book. They do not have a taste for it, and if they can look around and find something that is already made out, they are glad to pick that up and go along without studying the Bible. The earnest study of the Bible is the security, the safety of a man. He must come to the book itself and get it by careful study, and then whatever he finds in the spirit of prophecy or any other writings that will help him and throw light and clarify his vision on it, — that is alright. Does that cover your point?

C. L. Taylor: It does to a certain extent; and yet when you take the case of those two brethren who accept the Bible and the Testimonies, but still have a difference of interpretation that they want help on, — is it right for them to use the Testimonies in their study of that text, as well as the Bible?

A. G. Daniells: I think it is right to take the whole trend of teaching and thought that is put through the Testimonies on that subject. If I am perplexed about a text, and in my study of the spirit of prophecy I find something that makes it clear, I take that. I think Brother Prescott illustrates that in this matter of Matthew 24, of which there is a clear outline in the spirit of prophecy.

W. W. Prescott: For two or three years I spent a lot of time in the study of the eighth chapter of Daniel, to get what I thought to be the proper interpretation of that chapter. I got up to the point one time where I felt that I must get that clearer, where I could use it, and I made it

the special subject of prayer. I was over in England, stopping at the home of a brother there. It came to me just like a voice, “Read what it says in *Patriarchs and Prophets* on that subject.” I turned right around to a book case back of me, and took up *Patriarchs and Prophets* and began to look through it. I came right to the chapter that dealt with the subject, and I found exactly the thing I wanted to clarify my mind on that subject. It greatly helped me. That, Brother Daniells, is my own personal experience over this matter that Brother Taylor raises.

In connection with what Brother Taylor has asked, I would like to suggest this, Whether a comment on the spirit of prophecy upon the Authorized Version establishes that version as the correct version against the Revised Version, where the reading is changed; and if one accepted the Revised Version, it would throw out the comment made in the spirit of prophecy? I have a definite case in mind.

A. G. Daniells: Just in addition to that other point: I had a similar experience when I was in Europe the last time, when I was greatly exercised about the finishing of this work. I felt so anxious about it, and I said, “Lord, what is the vital, important thing necessary to get this work finished?” I was at Friedensau, and in my room praying earnestly over that matter. And on my knees, I took this little book, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, and began to read. I had really got weary with prayer, and stopped to read a little, and the first thing I found was this: [Not verified with the book]

. . . receive the Spirit of Christ, you will grow and bring forth fruit. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc. This fruit can never perish. When the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle because the harvest is ripe. That is the finish of the work. Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim His own. It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel! Quickly the last great

harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.

I just stayed there on my knees and praised God for that gleam of light that came to me. It took that text in Mark, “When the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle because the harvest is come.” It shows just the steps to take. I have felt from that day to this that this denomination should be on its knees praying for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, that we might quickly finish the work.

So, Brother Taylor, I would feel that the view that would be made clear by the notes in the spirit of prophecy would be the safe view to take.

W. E. Howell: I had a little experience on that same point that came to me during this Conference, and it made an impression on my mind. I have always claimed a part of the fifth chapter of Hebrews for the teacher. I have resorted to it many times for help from a teacher’s viewpoint. Last week we were studying here the divine call to teach, and I resorted to this chapter for some thought, and in connection with it I read a comment in the spirit of prophecy. I think the Spirit of the Lord led me to it. It says this is for the teacher: “He who seeks to transform humanity must himself understand humanity.” I thought that was good for the teacher. “Only through sympathy, faith and love can men be reached and uplifted. Here Christ stands revealed as the Master-Teacher. Of all that ever dwelt on the earth, He alone has perfect understanding of the human soul.” Then comes this scripture from the fifth of Hebrews: “We have not a high priest — Master-Teacher, for the priests were teachers — that cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, one that hath not been in all points tempted like as we are.” That brought a flash of light on the fifth chapter of Hebrews I had never received before. Then I took that idea of the high-priest being a master-teacher, and I found the best outline of the qualifications of a teacher I could find in any one place in the Bible; and now I claim the whole of the fifth chapter for the teacher.

F. M. Wilcox: I have a paragraph here I would like to read. This is so completely in harmony with what Brother Daniells has expressed that I thought I would like to read it. James White, in the *Review* of 1851, wrote this and it was republished again four years later, as expressing what

he considered the denominational view with respect to the Testimonies back there:

“Gifts of the Gospel Church”

The gifts of the Spirit should all have their proper places. The Bible is an everlasting rock. It is our rule of faith and practice. In it the man of God is “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” If every member of the church of Christ was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, and searched the Holy Scriptures diligently and with much prayer for duty, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we think, they would be able to learn their whole duty in “all good works.” Thus “the man of God may be perfect.” But as the reverse exists, and ever has existed, God in much mercy has pitied the weakness of his people, and has set the gifts in the gospel church to correct our errors, and to lead us to his living Word. Paul says that they are for the “perfecting of the saints,” till we all come in the unity of the faith. The extreme necessity of the church in its imperfect state is God’s opportunity to manifest the Spirit.

Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position. The Word should be in front, the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in “all good works.” But if a portion of the church err from the

truths of the Bible, and become weak and sickly, and the flock become scattered, so that it seems necessary for God to employ the gifts of the Spirit to correct, revive, and heal the erring, we should let him work. Yea, more, we should pray for him to work, and plead earnestly that he would work by the Spirit’s power, and bring the scattered sheep to his fold. Praise the Lord, he will work. Amen. — (*Review and Herald*, April 21, 1851.)

We wrote the above article on the gifts of the gospel church four years since. It was published in the first volume of the *Review*. One object in republishing it is that our readers may see for themselves what our position has ever been on this subject, that they may be better prepared to dispose of the statements of those who seek to injure us. The position that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the rule of faith and duty, does not shut out the gifts which God set in the church. To reject them is shutting out that part of the Bible which presents them. We say, Let us have a whole Bible, and let that, and that alone, be our rule of faith and duty. Place the gifts where they belong, and all is harmony. — (*Review and Herald*, October 3, 1854.)

Personally, that has never shaken my faith, but there are men who have been greatly hurt by it, and I think it is because they claimed too much for these writings. Just as Brother White says, there is a danger in going away from the Book, and claiming too much.

W. W. Prescott: How should we use the writings of the spirit of prophecy as an authority by which to settle historical questions?

A. G. Daniells: Well, now, as I understand it, Sister White never claimed to be an authority on history, and never claimed to be a dogmatic teacher on theology. She never outlined a course of theology, like Mrs. Eddy’s book on teaching. She just gave out fragmentary statements, but left the pastors and evangelists and preachers to work out all these problems of scripture and of theology and of history. She never claimed to be an authority on history; and

as I have understood it, where the history that related to the interpretation of prophecy was clear and expressive, she wove it into her writings; but I have always understood that, as far as she was concerned, she was ready to correct in revision such statements as she thought should be corrected. I have never gone to her writings, and taken the history that I found in her writings, as the positive statement of history regarding the fulfillment of prophecy. I do not know how others may view that, but I have felt that I should deal with history in the same way that I am exhorted to deal with the Bible, — prove it all carefully and thoroughly, and then let her go on and make such revisions from time to time as seem best.

Just one more thought: Now you know something about that little book, *The Life of Paul*. You know the difficulty we got into about that. We could never claim inspiration in the whole thought and makeup of the book, because it has been thrown aside because it was badly put together. Credits were not given to the proper authorities, and some of that crept into *The Great Controversy*, — the lack of credits; and in the revision of that book those things were carefully run down and made right. Personally, that has never shaken my faith, but there are men who have been greatly hurt by it, and I think it is because they claimed too much for these writings. Just as Brother White says, there is a danger in going away from the Book, and claiming too much. Let it have its full weight, just as God has fixed it, and then I think we will stand without being shaken when some of these things do appear that we can not harmonize with our theory.

W. W. Prescott: There is another experience that you know of that applies to what Brother Taylor has brought up. Some of the brethren here remember very well a serious controversy over the interpretation of the eighth chapter of Daniel, and there were some of the brethren who ranged themselves against what was called the new view, and they took her writings to uphold their position. She wrote to those brethren and instructed them not to use her writings to settle that controversy. I think that ought to be remembered as being her own counsel when brethren that did claim to believe the Bible and the spirit of prophecy were divided over an interpretation, and it was a matter of public controversy.

J. N. Anderson: How far would you take that word from Sister White to be a general statement about her writings?

A. G. Daniells: I think it was especially on the case then, but I think we have to use the same judgment about using her writings in other cases.

C. A. Shull: Just how shall we use the Testimonies in the class room? What shall be our attitude toward them in the line of history, especially? Before I knew that there was any statement in the spirit of prophecy regarding the experience of John, I stated to the class that there was a tradition that John had been thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, and a student immediately produced that statement in the Testimonies that John was thrown into the boiling oil. Now, I want to know, was she given a divine revelation that John was thrown into a vat of boiling oil?

Now another question, on the taking of Babylon. Mrs. White in the spirit of prophecy mentions that Babylon was taken according to the historian, by the turning aside of the waters. Modern scholarship says it was not taken that way. What should be our attitude in regard to such things?

Mrs. Williams: We have that question to meet every year.

E. F. Albertsworth: I have been confronted in my classes by students who come with the Testimonies and endeavor to settle a question by quoting where she says, “I have been shown.” They said that of all things that must settle the matter. I have wanted to know what attitude we should take on a question of that kind.

C. P. Bollman: Wouldn't that latter question require a concrete example?

A. G. Daniells: Yes, I think it would.

E. F. Albertsworth: I do not recall the example; but some of the students would say that meant she had a direct revelation, and others would say that meant that she was shown by people around her.

A. G. Daniells: I do not think that is what she means when she says that. When she was shown, it was by the angel or the revelation that was made to her. I feel sure that was her meaning.

E. F. Albertsworth: I have found students who had doubts about that.

W. G. Wirth: Suppose we do have a conflict between the authorized and revised versions?

A. G. Daniells: That question was up before. You must not count me an authority, for I am just like you in the matter. I have to form my own opinions. I do not

think Sister White meant at all to establish the certainty of a translation. I do not think she had that in mind, or had anything to do with putting her seal of approval on the authorized version or on the revised version when she quoted that. She uses whichever version helps to bring out the thought she has most clearly. With reference to this historical matter, I cannot say anything more than I have said, that I never have understood that Sister White undertook to settle historical questions. I visited her once over this matter of the “daily,” and I took along with me that old chart, — as early a chart as we have access to, —

C. P. Bollman: The same chart that Elder Haskell sells?

A. G. Daniells: Yes, it was that same chart. I took that and laid it on her lap, and I took *Early Writings* and read it to her, and then I told her of the controversy. I spent a long time with her. It was one of her days when she was feeling cheery and rested, and so I explained it to her quite fully. I said, “Now here you say that you were shown that the view of the ‘daily’ that the brethren held was correct. Now,” I said, “there are two parts here in this ‘daily’ that you quote. One is this period of time, the 2,300 years, and the other is what the ‘daily’ itself was.”

I went over that with her, and every time, as quick as I would come to that time, she would say, “Why, I know what was shown me, that that period of 2,300 days was fixed, and that there would be no definite time after that. The brethren were right when they reached that 1844 date.”

Then I would leave that, and I would go on about this “daily.” “Why,” she said, “Brother Daniells, I do not know what that ‘daily’ is, whether it is paganism or Christ’s ministry. That was not the thing that was shown me.” And she would go into that twilight zone right away. Then when I would come back to the 2,300 years, she would straighten. right up and say, “That is the thing we never can move away from. I tell you, you never can move away from that 2,300-year period. It was shown to me that that was fixed.”

And I believe it was, brethren. You might just as well try to move me out of the world as to try to move me on that question, — not because she says it, but I believe it was clearly shown to her by the Lord. But on this other, when she says she was not shown what the “daily” was, I believe that, and I take *Early Writings* 100 percent on that question of the “daily,” fixing that period. That is the

thing she talks about, and I take the Bible with it, and I take the Bible as to what the “daily” itself is.

So when it comes to those historical questions about the taking of Babylon, I think this, brethren, we ought not to let every little statement in history that we find lead us away from the spirit of prophecy. You know historians contradict each other, don’t you? Of course your work is to get back, get back, get back to the fountain head, the original thing; and when you get back there, and get it perfectly clear, I do not believe that if Sister White were here to speak to you today, she would authorize you to take a historical fact, supposed to be a fact, that she had incorporated in the book, and put it up against an actual thing in history. We talked with her about that when *Great Controversy* was being revised, and I have letters in my file in the vault there where we were warned against using Sister White as a historian. She never claimed to be that. We were warned against setting up statements found in her writings against the various history that there is on a fact. That is where I stand. I do not have to meet it with students, and I do not have to explain myself in a congregation. I suppose I have it easier than you teachers do.

W. W. Prescott: On that very point you mention as to the capture of Babylon, one of the most recent editions of the Bible (?) takes the position of Herodotus against the _____, and he says: “Why should we discount the writings on parchment in favor of the writings on clay?”

A. G. Daniells: That is what I mean, —that we should not allow every historical statement that we find that contradicts the Testimonies to set us wild. If there are two authorities of equal value on that point, bring up the authority that is in harmony with what we have.

C. A. Shull: We teachers have a great responsibility on us to take the right attitude. If we say that a certain thing in the Testimonies is not correct, students are likely to carry away the impression that we do not have faith in the Testimonies.

A. G. Daniells: There are two ways to hurt students in this matter. One way is to discount the Testimonies and cast a little bit of question and doubt on them. I would never do that, brethren, in the school room. No matter how much I was perplexed, I would never cast a doubt in the mind of a student. I would take hours to explain matters to ground the student in it. Casting doubts and reflections is one way to hurt a student. Another way is

to take an extreme and unwarranted position. You can do that and pass it over; but when that student gets out and gets in contact with things, he may be shaken, and perhaps shaken clear out and away. I think we should be candid and honest and never put a claim forth that is not well founded simply to appear to believe. You will have to be careful in giving this instruction, because many of the students have heard from their parents things that are not so, and they hear from preachers things that are not so, and so their foundation is false.

I must refer again to the attitude of A. T. Jones. In his heyday you know he just drank the whole thing in, and he would hang a man on a word. I have seen him take just a word in the Testimonies and hang to it, and that would settle everything, — just a word. I was with him when he made a discovery, — or, if he didn't make it, he appeared to make it, — and that was that there were words in the Testimonies and writings of Sister White that God did not order her to put in there, that there were words which she did not put in by divine inspiration, the Lord picking the words, but that somebody had helped to fix that up. And so he took two Testimonies and compared them, and he got into great trouble. He went on with Dr. Kellogg, where he could just pick things to pieces.

F. M. Wilcox: Back in the '60s or '70s a General Conference in session passed this resolution, — they said, we recognize that the Testimonies have been prepared under great pressure and stress of circumstances, and that the wording is not always the happiest, and we recommend their republication with such changes as will bring them to a standard.

A. G. Daniells: I would like to get hold of that resolution. Now, brethren, I want to ask you honestly if there is a man here who has had doubt created in your mind from my attitude and the positions I have taken? [VOICES: No! No!] Or is there one of you that thinks I am shaky on the Testimonies? — I will not say that [. . .] thinks my position is not just right, for you might not agree with me, but from what I have said, is there a tendency to lead you to believe that I am shaky, and that some time I will help to get you away from the Testimonies? [Several decided noes were heard.]

C. L. Taylor: In your talk a few evenings ago I agreed 100 percent in everything you said. Today there is just one question in my mind.

A. G. Daniells: Let us have it.

C. L. Taylor: That is regarding those outward manifestations, those things of perhaps a miraculous nature. I

do not know whether you intend to carry the impression that you discredit those or that you simply would not teach them. If it is that you would not hold them up as proof that the work is inspired, I am heartily in agreement with that. On the other hand, if you take the position that those things are not to be relied on, that Elder Loughborough and others are mistaken about these things, I should have to disagree with you.

A. G. Daniells: No, I do not discount them nor disbelieve them; but they are not the kind of evidence I would use with students or with unbelievers.

C. L. Taylor: I agree with that.

A. G. Daniells: I do not question them, but I do not think they are the best kind of evidence to produce. For instance, I do not think the best kind of proof for me to give an audience on the Sabbath question or the nature of man or baptism, is to go and read Sister White's writings to them. I believe the best proof I can give is the Bible. Perhaps you will remember that it fell to me to preach Sister White's funeral sermon; and if you will remember, I took that occasion to give evidence of her high calling. I did not give a long list of fruits and miraculous evidences. I knew the matter would be published to the world in hundreds of papers, and I wanted to give them something that would be a high authority, and this is what I gave:

First, that she stood with the word of God from Genesis to Revelation in all its teaching.

Then, she stood with mankind in his highest endeavors to help mankind, — elaborating on those points. That is what I mean, Brother Taylor; but I do not discount those other things.

What I want to know is this, brethren: Does my position appear to be of such a character that you would be led to think I am shaky? [VOICES: No!] If you think it, just say it right out! I do not want to do that, but I have to be honest, — I cannot camouflage in a thing like this. I have stood through it about forty years unshaken, and I think it is a safe position; but if I were driven to take the position that some do on the Testimonies, I would be shaken. [VOICE: That's right!] I would not know where to stand, for I cannot say that white is black and black is white.

H. C. Lacey: To us there is no doubt that you believe the Testimonies, but will you mind my adding another personal note to it?

A. G. Daniells: No.

H. C. Lacey: It is this: Those who have not heard you, as we have here, and are taking the other side of the question, — some of them are deliberately saying that neither you nor Professor Prescott believe the Testimonies. For instance, I went out to Mt. Vernon and I met the graduating class there, and when the exercises were over, I had a private talk with three or four of those young people, and they told me that they certainly understood that our General Conference men down here — they did not mean me or Brother Sorenson — did not believe the Testimonies.

W. W. Prescott: You are not telling us news.

H. C. Lacey: We as teachers are in a terribly hard position. We have got nearly down to bedrock in the questions that have been asked here; but the students do get right down to bedrock on some of these things, and we need to get a little deeper here. There are people here at these meetings who do not dare to ask certain questions that have come up in their minds or in private talks. But you know that the teacher is in a very difficult position.

On that matter of the capture of Babylon, I have felt free to say that I thought the evidence was that Cyrus did not capture it that way, but we would hold the matter in abeyance and simply study it. Suppose now that further tablets would come to light, and other evidence would be brought in to prove indisputably that Cyrus did not capture Babylon that way, would it be right to say that if there is a revision of that book, — *Patriarchs and Prophets*, which endorses, in one casual sentence, that old view, — the revision would be brought into harmony with recently discovered facts?

A. G. Daniells: I think that is the position Sister White occupies. I think that is what she has done. I never understood that she put infallibility into the historical quotations.

H. C. Lacey: But there are some who do understand it.

W. W. Prescott: It is interesting to know that even a higher critic like George Adams Smith agrees with Herodotus (?) on that.

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

A. G. Daniells: That is what I mean by referring to secondary matters.

H. C. Lacey: In our estimate of the spirit of prophecy, isn’t its value to us more in the spiritual light it throws into our own hearts and lives than in the intellectual accuracy in historical and theological matters? Ought we not to take those writings as the voice of the Spirit of our hearts, instead of as the voice of the teacher to our heads? And isn’t the final proof of the spirit of prophecy its spiritual value rather than its

historical accuracy?

A. G. Daniells: Yes, I think so.

J. N. Anderson: Would you set about to explain things as you have this morning? Would you explain that you do not think the Testimonies are to be taken as final in the matter of historical data, etc., so as to justify a position?

A. G. Daniells: Who gives the teaching in the school on the spirit of prophecy? Is it the Bible teacher? How do you get that question before the students?

C. L. Taylor: Both Bible and history teachers catch it.

W. H. Wakeham: It comes up in every Bible class.

H. C. Lacey: Wouldn’t it be a splendid thing if a little pamphlet were written setting forth in plain, simple, straightforward style the facts as we have them, — simple, sacred facts, — so that we could put them into the hands of inquiring students?

Voice: Our enemies would publish it everywhere.

C. L. Benson: I think it would be a splendid thing if our brethren were a little conservative on these things. We had a man come to our Union and spend an hour and a half on the evidences of the spirit of prophecy through Sister White. The impression was conveyed that practically every word that she spoke, and every letter she wrote, whether personal or otherwise, was a divine inspiration. Those things make it awfully hard for our teachers and ministers.

W. G. Wirth: I want to second what Professor Lacey has brought out. I wish you general men would get out something for us, because we are the ones that suffer.

W. W. Prescott: To my certain knowledge, a most earnest appeal was made for that from her office to issue such a statement, and they would not do it.

C. P. Bollman: It wasn't made to her, though.

W. W. Prescott: No, but it was made to those who were handling her manuscripts.

A. G. Daniells: Some of those statements like what Brother Wilcox read here this morning have been up a number of times, and Brother White always took a good sensible position.

W. W. Prescott: Brother Wilcox had a letter from Sister White herself that he read.

A. G. Daniells: When these things were under pretty sharp controversy, W. C. White, for his mother, sent out things that we had in our vaults here that greatly modified this, and helped to smooth out these wrinkles and get a reasonable ground on which to stand. I do not know but what perhaps the General Conference Committee might appoint a committee to do this, and have reliable, responsible men that the people do not question at all take hold of that and bring out these facts. It does seem to me that in our schools there ought to be an agreement among the teachers. The history and Bible teachers and others that have to do with these things should get together and have their stories and their

teaching alike, if possible. The truth should be given to those students, and when you give the truth to them you will have them founded and established on this without trouble. But when these erroneous views are given them, they get a false idea and then there is danger when an honest man takes the true side and states his position.

W. E. Howell: It seems to me that the point is of very great importance. I have been somewhat perplexed on this matter. We have talked over things very freely and frankly here at the other meeting and at this, and I think the teachers here at [sic] are all satisfied as to the place that is to be given to the spirit of prophecy in its relation to their work. But these teachers, when they get back to their places of work, will have all kinds of questions put to them, and it has been a question with me as to how far a teacher ought to go with a class of young people or with an indiscriminate body to deal with and attempt to bring out the things that they have heard here and have received and believed for themselves. I think this is where the difficulty is going to be. We have only two

teachers here out of an entire faculty. Some other member of the faculty might not be cleared up on these things. There may be teachers who are endeavoring to teach science out of the spirit of prophecy; or another teacher who has not had the benefit of this discussion, may have some other viewpoint. And it really puts these teachers in a very hard situation. If there is anything that can be done by way of putting something in the hands of the teachers so that they could give the true representation in the matter, I think it would be a very great help.

W. W. Prescott: Can you explain how it is that two brethren can disagree on the inspiration of the Bible, one holding to the verbal inspiration and the other opposed to it, and yet no disturbance be created in the denomination whatever. That situation is right here before us. But if two brethren take the same attitude on the spirit of prophecy, one holding to verbal inspiration and the other discrediting it, he that does not hold to the verbal inspiration is discredited.

In our estimate of the spirit of prophecy, isn't its value to us more in the spiritual light it throws into our own hearts and lives than in the intellectual accuracy in historical and theological matters?

F. M. Wilcox: Do you believe that a man who doesn't believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible believes the Bible?

W. W. Prescott: I do not have any trouble over it at all. I have a different view myself. If a man does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, he is still in good standing; but if he says he does not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, he is discounted right away. I think it is an unhealthful situation. It puts the spirit of prophecy above the Bible.

W. G. Wirth: Really, that is my biggest problem. I shall certainly be discredited if I go back and give this view. I would like to see some published statement given out by those who lead this work so that if that thing should come up there would be some authority back of it, because I am in for a lot of trouble on that thing. I would like to see something done, because that education is going right on, and our students are being sent out with the idea that the Testimonies are verbally inspired, and woe be to the man out where I am that does not line up to that.

Now as to health reform: Frequently a student will come to me and quote what Sister White says about butter. But we serve butter on our tables right along. And they will bring up about meat, how under no consideration is that to be eaten. And I know that that is unreasonable, and there are times when it is necessary to eat meat. What shall we do about that? I would like a little light on some of those details, as to whether we ought to take them at full value.

A. G. Daniells: I am willing to answer part of that, for I have had it about a thousand times. Take this question of health reform. It is well known from the writings themselves and from personal contact with Sister White, and from common sense, that in traveling and in knowledge of different parts of the world, that the instruction set forth in the Testimonies was never intended to be one great wholesale blanket regulation for peoples' eating and drinking, and it applies to various individuals according

to their physical condition and according to the situation in which they find themselves. I have always explained it that way to our ministers, in ministers' meetings. We had a ministers' meeting over in Scandinavia, and we had one man there from the "land of the midnight sun," up in Hammerfest where you never grow a banana or an apple or a peach, and hardly even a green thing. It is snow and cold there nearly all the time, and the people live to a large extent on fish and various animal foods that they get there. We had sent a nurse from Christiania up there as a missionary. He had the strict idea of the diet according to the Testimonies, and he would not touch a fish or a bit of reindeer, nor any kind of animal food, and he was getting poor; because missionaries that are sent out do not have much money, and they cannot import fresh fruits; and it was in the days when even canned goods were not shipped

much. The fellow nearly starved to death. He came down to attend that meeting, and he was nearly as white as your dress [speaking to Sister Williams]. He had hardly any blood in his body. I talked to him, and I said, "Brother Olson, what is the matter with you? We will have to bring you away from up there if you do not get better. You have no red blood corpuscles in your blood." I talked with him a while, and finally asked him, "What do you live on?"

"Well," he said, "I live a good deal on the north wind."

I said, "You look like it, sure enough."

We went on talking, and I found out that the man wasn't eating much but potatoes and starchy foods, — just a limited dietary. I went at him with all the terror I could inspire for such foolishness.

Voice: Did you make any impression?

A. G. Daniells: Yes, I did. And I got other brethren to join me. We told that man he would be buried up there if he tried to live that way. We talked with him straight about it.

When I got back to this country, I talked with Sister White about it, and she said, "Why don't the people use

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common sense? Why don't they know that we are to be governed by the places we are located?" You will find in a little testimony a caution thrown out, modifying the extreme statements that were made.

F. M. Wilcox: Sister White says in a copy of the *Instructor* that there are some classes that she would not say should not eat some meat.

A. G. Daniells: There are very conscientious men and ministers who are very much afraid they will eat something they ought not to. On that very point Paul says that the kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness and peace; and we are working and trying to get through to the kingdom just as much on the ground of works by eating or not eating as by any other thing in this world. You never can put down vegetarianism as the way to heaven. I have been over in India where they are mighty strict about their eating, but they do not get righteousness that way.

C. L. Taylor: It is true of all works, isn't it?

A. G. Daniells: Certainly. You take men who have never allowed a piece of animal food to pass their lips, and some of them are the most tyrannical, brutal men; and when we try to reach them with the gospel, we have to tell them that is not the way to God, that they will have to come and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and have His righteousness imputed to them on confession, forgiveness, and all of that. We have people among us that are just as much in danger of trying to establish this righteousness by works in the matter of the dietary as the world has seen in anything. You know from what Sister White brought out on the matter of righteousness that it was not her purpose to put down eating and drinking as the way to heaven. It has its place. It is important, and I would not want to see this denomination swing away over to the position of other denominations; but I do not like to hear of teaching that would lead this people to fall back on eating and drinking for righteousness, for Paul said that is not the

way. I do not think proper caution was used in putting out some of these things, and I have told Sister White so.

Mrs. Williams: You mean in publishing them?

A. G. Daniells: Yes, when they were written. I told Sister White that it seems to me that if conditions in the arctic regions and in the heart of China and other places had been taken into account, some of those things would have been modified. "Why," she said, "yes, if the people are not going to use their judgment, then of course we will have to fix it for them." It seemed so sensible to me. Sister White was never a fanatic, she was never an extremist. She was a level-headed woman. She was well-balanced. I found that so during a period of forty years of association with her. When we were down in Texas, and old Brother White was breaking down, that woman just got the most

beautiful venison every day to eat, and my wife cooked it; and he would sit down and eat some of that and say, "O, Ellen, that is just the thing!" She did not hold him up and make him live on a diet of starch! I always found her well-balanced. There are some people who are extremists, who are fanatical; but I do not think we should allow those people to fix the platform and guide this denomination. I do not propose to do it, for one. And yet I believe that

I talked with Sister White about it, and she said, "Why don't the people use common sense? Why don't they know that we are to be governed by the places we are located?" You will find in a little testimony a caution thrown out, modifying the extreme statements that were made.

we should use all the caution and all the care that is set out for the maintenance of health. And brethren, I have tried to do it, but I have not lived all my life on the strictest dietary set down there. I have had to go all over this world, and as you know, I have had to be exposed to all the disease germs. I have had to live on a very spare dietary in places in my travel, and I have lived on wheels, and under great pressure, and it was prophesied when I went into this in 1901 that a decade would finish me, and I would either be a broken-down old man on the shelf or in the grave. That is the way my friends talked, and they sympathized with me, and regretted that I ever took this position; but I said to myself, "By the grace of God, I will live in every



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possible way just right as far as I know it, to conserve my strength.” This is my nineteenth year, and I am not broken down, and I am not on the shelf or in the grave. I am strong and well. I am weary, but I can get rested. I have tried to be honest and to be true to my sense of what was the right thing to do, and it has kept me well and strong. That is the basis on which I propose to work. I do not propose to have any extremist lay down the law to me as to what I shall eat up in the heart of China. I propose to use my sense as to what I ought to eat in those places where you cannot get a green thing, hardly.

Mrs. Williams: In the interior of Africa, we had to cook everything we ate, so as to kill the germs.

A. G. Daniells: Why, yes, in China you must sterilize your hands and your knife, and if you eat an apple, it must be sterilized after it is peeled, and even then it is not always

safe. I do not think we have to take an extreme position on the question of the diet for all classes. We are not all alike. What is good for one man is not good for another. I have seen Elder Irwin sit down and eat two or three raw apples at night just before going to bed; but one apple at night would upset me so that my tongue would be covered with fur and my head all swelled up. I would not eat one if you would give me five dollars. I count that health reform, to reject that which I know injures me and take that which I know strengthens me and maintains me in the strongest physical trim for service and hard work. That is my health reform. Raw apples are good for people that have the right digestion for them; but if a person hasn't that sort of digestion, he must lay down the law, No raw apples for him.

That is the way a lot of things got into the Testimonies. They were many of them written for individuals in

various states of health, and then they were hurried into the Testimonies without proper modification. That is not to say that they are false things, but it is to say that they do not apply to every individual the world over alike. And you cannot put a health-reform regime or rule down for the whole world alike, because of the different physical conditions that maintain. That is what I tell in ministers' meetings and I do not think I destroy the force of the message at all, only to the extremist.

Brother Waldorf: I have had no trouble for over twenty years with the spirit of prophecy or with the Bible. The more I have studied both the more firmly I have become convinced on this platform. I have read the whole of higher criticism right through, and the other side of it. There are 50,000 different readings in the Bible. There are many mistakes that were made in transcribing. Now in the matter of historical complication, I take the Bible and the spirit of prophecy exactly alike.

A. G. Daniells: Here is one illustration of a mistake in the Bible: In Samuel it says a man lifted up his hand against 800 men whom he slew; then in Chronicles this same thing is spoken of, and it says that he lifted up his hand against 300 men, whom he slew.

Waldorf: I have never held up the spirit of prophecy as being infallible. But students come to me from different teachers, having different views. One comes and says Professor Lacey taught me this way, and another comes from Professor Johnson who taught him some other way. There are lots of them coming to the medical college that way from different teachers. They do not know whether every word of the spirit of prophecy is inspired or not. I teach them this way: That when this message was first started, God brought this gift of prophecy into the church, and through this gift God has approved of the major doctrines that we hold right down from 1844. I for one hold that the gift of the spirit of prophecy was given to us in order to get the mold, lest we should trust human reasoning and modern scholarship, for I believe that modern scholarship has gone bankrupt when it comes to Greek and Hebrew. As for meat eating, I haven't touched meat for twenty-one years; but I buy meat for my wife. I often go into a butcher shop and get the very best they have in order to keep her in life. I never will use the Testimonies as a sledge hammer on my brother.

A. G. Daniells: I will tell you one thing; a great victory will be gained if we get a liberal spirit so that we will treat brethren who differ with us on the interpretation of the Testimonies in the same Christian way we treat them when they differ on the interpretation of the Bible. That will be a good deal gained, and it is worth gaining, I want to tell you, for I have been under criticism ever since the controversy started in Battle Creek. Isn't it a strange thing that when I and some of my associates fought that heresy year after year, and we got message after message from the spirit of prophecy — some of them very comforting and uplifting messages — and all that time we were counted as heretics on the spirit of prophecy? How do you account for that? Why didn't the spirit of prophecy get after us? I claim that I know as well as any man whether I believe in the spirit of prophecy or not. I do not ask people to accept my views, but I would like the confidence of brothers where we differ in interpretation. If we can engender that spirit, it will be a great help; and I believe we have to teach it right in our schools.

Suppose students come to you with questions about the Bible that you do not know what to do with, — or do you always know? I would like to go to a teacher for a year that would tell me everything in here that puzzles me! What do you do when students come to you with such questions?

W. H. Wakeham: I tell them I do not know, and I do not lose their confidence, either.

A. G. Daniells: Well, when they come to you with something in the spirit of prophecy that is puzzling, why not say, as Peter did, that there are some things hard to be understood. I do not think that destroys the confidence of the people. But we have got the idea that we have got to just assume full and complete knowledge of everything about the spirit of prophecy and take an extreme position in order to be loyal and to be true to it.

W. E. Howell: I just want to remark two things. One is on the question Professor Prescott raised on our previous meeting as to why people take these different attitudes toward a man on the Bible and on the Testimonies. I am not philosopher enough to explain an attitude of that sort, but I do think that the cause of it lies primarily in the making of extreme and radical positions. I think that is where the root of the difficulty lies, especially with

reference to the spirit of prophecy. Brother Daniells and Brother Prescott and others have come in here with us and have talked very frankly with us, and I am sure every man here will say that they have not covered up anything. They have not withheld from you anything that you have asked for that they could give you in reference to this matter. I do not doubt that it is your experience as it is mine, when I go out from Washington, to hear it said that Brother Daniells or Brother Prescott does not believe the spirit of prophecy.

A. G. Daniells: Brother Spicer, too.

W. E. Howell: Yes, and Brother Spicer. I feel confident of this, that as you go out from this council you can be a great help in setting people straight on these things, and I believe it is our privilege to do it, brethren, to help the people on these points. Many of them are sincere and honest in that position, from what they have heard. I think it is our duty to help such persons all we can as we meet them.

C. L. Benson: Is this subject going to be dropped here? From what Brother Daniells has said, I know what it is going to mean to some of our schools and to our General Conference men. I feel it would be unfair to us as teachers to go back and make any statement. Letters have already come in, asking about the general men with reference to interpreting the spirit of prophecy. I do not think it is fair for us to go out and try to state the position of our General Conference men. On the other hand, I know the feeling and doctrine as taught in our conferences, and they are the Bible teachers of the people; and if our Bible and history teachers take these liberal positions on the spirit of prophecy, our schools are going to be at variance entirely with the field. Our people are beginning to wonder about the condition our schools are in. They say they read in the *Review* of this spirit of paganism,

and they say those articles surely would not have been published in the *Review* if these conditions did not exist in our own schools? Why, what would they be putting it in the *Review* for if that were not the case? That is a fact, many of our people take the position that those articles were written because of conditions existing in our own schools. I think we ought to get down to a solution of this thing if we can, and start some kind of a campaign of education. Out in the field we have stressed the importance of the spirit of prophecy more than the Bible, and many of our men are doing it right along. They tell of the wonderful phenomena,

and many times they get their entire sermon from the spirit of prophecy instead of the Bible. If a break comes between our schools and the field, we are in a serious place.

T. M. French: I believe it would help us a great deal if some general statement were issued, and if some of this matter that has been brought up could be given, showing that we are not shifting our position, that we are viewing the spirit of prophecy as it has been

viewed all along. I believe it would help to settle the situation in our conferences, and would be a great help both to the conferences and to the schools. I am sure from what has been read here of letters and resolutions of the past that we have not shifted our position, but the matter is just up again; and if we could get out statements as to our attitude all along, and restate the matter, I believe it would do much good.

W. E. Howell: The next topic we have is a consideration of how to teach the spirit of prophecy in our schools. In our recent general educational convention we provided for a semester's work in the curriculum in this subject. I think we ought to take ten minutes' intermission, and then take up this topic, which will give opportunity for further questions along this line.

That is the way a lot of things got into the Testimonies. They were many of them written for individuals in various states of health, and then they were hurried into the Testimonies without proper modification. That is not to say that they are false things, but it is to say that they do not apply to every individual the world over alike.

INSPIRATION OF

The Spirit OF Prophecy

AS RELATED TO

The Inspiration of the Bible

August 1, 1919

W. E. Howell, Chairman: The topic for this hour, as arranged for on Wednesday, is a continuation, in a measure, of our consideration of the spirit of prophecy, and the subject of inspiration connected with that, as related to the inspiration of the Bible. This hour is not intended to be a formal discourse, occupying the whole period, but Brother Daniells will lead in the topic, and then he has expressed a wish that it might be a kind of round-table in which we will study things together.

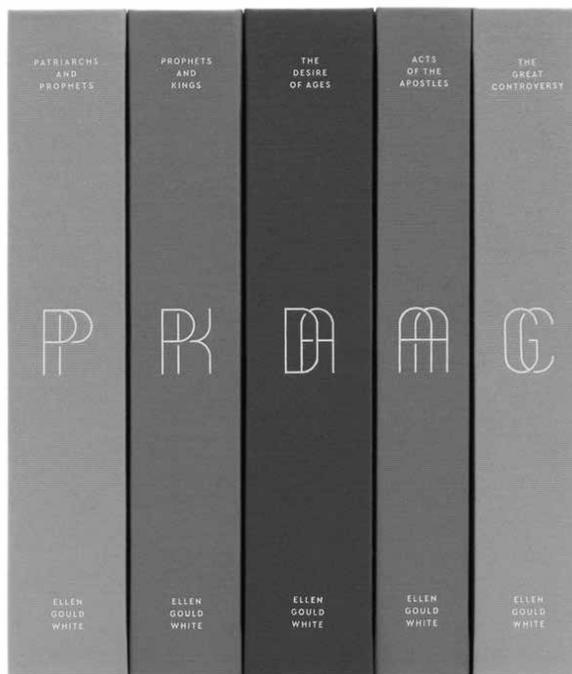
A. G. Daniells: Brother Chairman, I think there has been a misunderstanding among us. I protested against taking such a heavy topic the other day, under the circumstances, and I dismissed it from my mind, and have been thinking along another line, that of pastoral training, and a further discussion of the question we had before us. I would not feel free, under the circumstances, to give a talk on the subject that I understand was looked for.

As you know, there are two views held by eminent men regarding the verbal inspiration of the Bible. You read their views in the books they have put out. One man,

— scholarly, devout, earnest, a full believer in the Bible in every sense of the word, — believes that it was a revelation of truth to the writers, and they were allowed to state that truth as best they could. Another man — equally scholarly and pious and earnest in his faith — believes that it was

a word-for-word inspiration or revelation, that the actual words were given, — that every word in the original, as it was written by the prophets down from Moses to Malachi, was given to them by the Lord. These men differ, and differ honestly and sincerely; and they have their followers among us, right here at the conference, both of them; and I see nothing to be gained by a man in my position, with my knowledge of these things, attempting to prove up on this. I do not wish to do it. We would all remain of the same opinion, I think, as we are now; so I want to beg you to allow me

to dismiss that part of it, and either go directly into the other question of pastoral training or open the way for further questions and discussions of the matter we had before us. I feel more at home in that, for all these years since the Battle Creek controversy began, I have been face to face with this question of the Testimonies. I have met



The *Conflict Beautiful* is a complete redesign of one of Ellen G. White's most beloved collections, the *Conflict of the Ages* by design studio Types & Symbols.

all the doubters, the chief ones, and have dealt with it in ministerial institutes, and have talked it over and over until I am thoroughly familiar with it, whether I am straight or not. I do not know that there is a crook or a kink in it that I have not heard brought up by these men that have fallen away from us. I would be willing to hear further questions and further discussion, if it is the wish of the convention.

W. E. Howell: I am sure I do not want Brother Daniells to feel that he is disappointing us in any real sense this morning; and if I understand the wishes of the teachers, it has not been that he should discuss so much the rather technical question of the verbal or truth-revealed inspiration of the Bible, but rather that he will give us some further instruction along the line of the inspiration of the spirit of prophecy and its relation to that of the Bible. I have nothing further to press along that line, but as teachers have expressed themselves to me, I have felt that it might be well to consider some aspects of that question a little further, particularly the use of unpublished writings, letters, talks, etc., in the light of what was referred to here the other day. Sister White herself said that if we wanted to know what the spirit of prophecy said on a thing, we should read her published writings. That is one question I think the teachers have in mind, Brother Daniells.

F. M. Wilcox: I have enjoyed these discussions very much. I enjoyed the evening of last week when the question of the spirit of prophecy was considered. I enjoyed very much the talk Elder Daniells gave on the question, and I think the view he took of the question very fully agrees with my own view. I have known for long years the way in which Sister White's works were brought together and her books compiled. I have never believed in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies. I must say, however, that last Wednesday evening and also since then, some remarks have been made without proper safeguarding, and I should question the effect of those statements and positions out in the field. I know that there is considerable talk around Takoma Park over positions that have been

taken here, and there will be that same situation out in the field. As Brother Wakeham suggested the other day, I think we have to deal with a very delicate question, and I would hate terribly to see an influence sweep over the field and into any of our schools that the Testimonies were discounted. There is great danger of a reaction, and I do feel concerned.

I have heard questions raised here that have left the impression on my mind that if the same questions are raised in our classes when we get back to our schools, we are going to have serious difficulty. I believe there are a great many questions that we should hold back, and not discuss. I am not a teacher in a school, although I did

teach the Bible thirteen years in a nurses' training school, where I had a large number of young people; but I cannot conceive that it is necessary for us to answer every question that is put to us by students or others, or be driven into a place where we will take a position that will lessen faith. I think the Testimonies of the Spirit of

I think the Testimonies of the Spirit of God are a great asset to this denomination, and I think if we destroy faith in them, we are going to destroy faith in the very foundation of our work.

God are a great asset to this denomination, and I think if we destroy faith in them, we are going to destroy faith in the very foundation of our work. I must say that I do view with a great deal of concern the influence that will go out from this meeting, and from questions that I have seen raised here. And unless these questions can be dealt with most diplomatically, I think we are going to have serious trouble. I surely hope the Lord will give us wisdom so that we shall know what to say and do in meeting these things in the future.

C. L. Benson: I have felt very much concerned along the same line; and the question that has raised itself in my own mind goes a little further than has been brought up here; but it seems to me it is almost a logical step. That is this: 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? That question is in my mind, and I am confident that it is in the minds of others.

Waldorf: That is in my mind. That is why I brought out that illustration on the blackboard this morning, — those three rivers, history, spirit of prophecy, and the Bible.

J. N. Anderson: I thought when we dismissed the subject the other day the main question was how we as teachers should deal with this question when we stand before our students. I think we have come to quite a unanimous opinion about this matter among ourselves here, and we stand pretty well together, I should say, as to what position the Testimonies occupy, — their authority and their relation to the Bible, and so on, — but the question in my mind, and in the mind of some others, too, I think, is, what shall we as teachers do when we stand before our classes and some historical question comes up, such as we have spoken of here, where we have decided that Sister White's writings are not final? We say there are many historical facts that we believe scholarship must decide, that Sister White never claimed to be final on the historical matters that appear in her writings. Are we safe to tell that to our students? Or shall we hold it in abeyance? And can we hold something in the back of our head that we are absolutely sure about, and that most of the brethren stand with us on? — can we hold those things back and be true to ourselves? And furthermore, are we safe in doing it? Is it well to let our people in general go on holding to the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies? When we do that, aren't we preparing for a crisis that will be very serious some day? It seems to me that the best thing for us to do is to cautiously and very carefully educate our people to see just where we really should stand to be consistent protestants, to be consistent with the Testimonies themselves, and to be consistent with what we know we must do, as intelligent men, as we have decided in these meetings.

Of course these are not such big questions, because I do not teach along this line. Still, they do sometimes arise in my classes. But personally I am not concerned about

it. I am concerned about the faith of the young men and women that come into our schools. They are to be our leaders, and I think these are the days when they should be given the very best foundation we can give them. We should give them the most sincere and honest beliefs that we have in our own hearts. I speak with some feeling because it does come close to my convictions that something should be done here in this place, — here is where it can be done — to safeguard our people, to educate them and to bring them back and cause them to stand upon the only foundation that can ever be secure as we advance and progress.

C. L. Taylor: With regard to the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, I would say that I have heard more about it here in one day than ever before in my life. I think we have made a great big mountain of difficulty to go out and fight against. I do not believe that our people generally believe in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies. I think that the general idea of our people is that the Testimonies are the writings of a sister who received light from God. As to verbal inspiration, I think they have a very ill-defined idea. I think they believe that in some way God gave her light, and she wrote it down, and they do not know what verbal inspiration means.

But I do see a great deal in the question Professor Benson raised, and that is if we must lay aside what Sister White has said interpreting history, or what we might call the philosophy of history, as unreliable, and also lay aside as unreliable expositions of scripture, the only natural conclusion for me, and probably for a great many others, would be that the same authorship is unreliable regarding organization, regarding pantheism, and every other subject that she ever treated on; — that she may have told the truth, but we had better get all the historical data we can to see whether she told the truth or not. That is something I would like to hear discussed. I do not believe we shall get to the foundation of the question unless we answer Professor Benson's question.

A. G. Daniells: Shall we consider some points as settled, and pass on? Take the matter of verbal inspiration. I think it is very much as Brother Taylor says, that among the most of our people there is no question. It is not agitated. They do not understand it, and they do not understand the technical features of the inspiration of the Bible, either. And the power of the Bible and its grip on

the human race does not depend on a technical point as to their belief in it, whether it is verbally inspired or truth-inspired. The men who hold directly opposite positions have the same faith in the Bible. I will not allow a man who believes in the verbal inspiration of the Bible to depreciate my faith in the Bible because I do not hold with him, — I will not consent to that a moment. I know my own faith in it, I know that I have enough faith in it to get forgiveness of my sins and companionship with my Lord and the hope of heaven. I know that, and a man that holds a different view need not try to depreciate my faith because I do not hold the same view that he does. I do not depreciate another man's faith or standing with God at all because he holds a different view. I think we could argue about the inspiration of the Bible — I was going to say till doomsday — till the end, and not come to the same view, but all have the same confidence in it, and have the same experience, and all get to the same place at last.

But now with reference to the Testimonies: 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.

F. M. Wilcox: Because we know how the Testimonies were brought together, and we do not know anything about the Bible.

A. G. Daniells: Yes, that is one point. We do know, and it is no kind of use for anybody to stand up and talk about the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, because everybody who has ever seen the work done knows better, and we might as well dismiss it.

M. E. Kern: I am not so sure that some of the brethren are right in saying that we are all agreed on this question. I came in here the other day for the first time to attend the Conference, and I would hear the same man in the

same talk say that we could not depend on this historical data that was given in the spirit of prophecy, and then assert his absolute confidence in the spirit of prophecy and in the Testimonies. And then a little further along there would be something else that he would not agree with. For instance, the positive testimony against butter was mentioned, and he explained that there are exceptions to that. Later he would again say, "I have absolute confidence in the inspiration of the spirit of prophecy." The question is, What is the nature of inspiration? How can we feel, and believe and know that there is an inconsistency there, — something that is not right, — and yet believe that the spirit of prophecy is inspired? Do you get the question?

A. G. Daniells: Yes, I get your question alright!

M. E. Kern: That is the difficulty we have in explaining this to young people. We may have confidence ourselves, but it is hard to make others believe it if we express this more liberal view. I can see how some might take advantage of this liberal view and go out and eat meat every meal, and say that part of the Testimonies is not reliable.

Question: Can't he do

the same thing if he believes in the verbal inspiration?

M. E. Kern: Not quite so consistently. If he believed every word was inspired, he could not consistently sit down and eat meat.

A. G. Daniells: But I have seen them do it.

M. E. Kern: But not conscientiously. But now take a man who delves into the Scriptures, and he reads the Hebrew and the Greek, and he goes out and tells the people, If you understood the Greek, you would not get that meaning from the Bible, or If Sister White had understood the Greek, she would not have said that. Such a man can take a lot of license from this liberal view. Now, the question is running in my mind this way: In the very nature of the case, isn't there a human element in inspiration, because God had to speak through human instruments? And can we, either in the Bible or the Testimonies

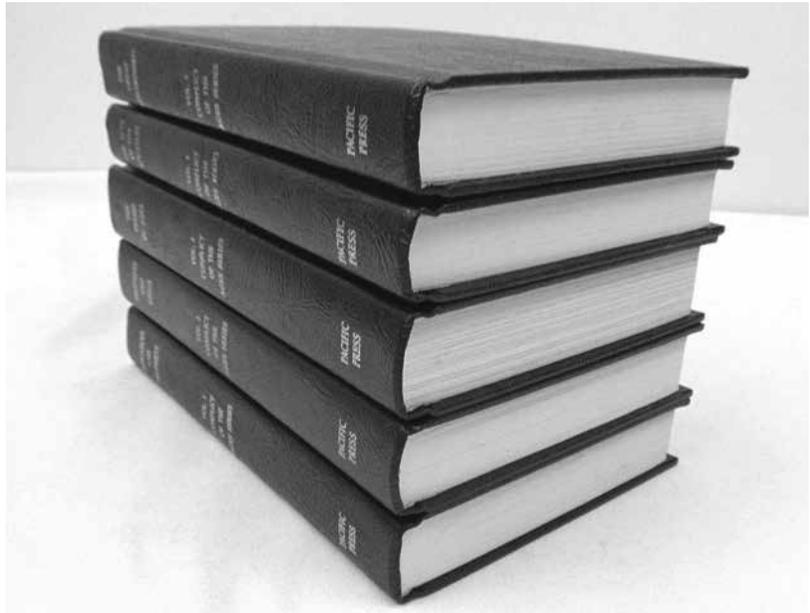
I know that I have enough faith in it to get forgiveness of my sins and companionship with my Lord and the hope of heaven. I know that, and a man that holds a different view need not try to depreciate my faith because I do not hold the same view that he does.

play upon a word and lay down the law and bind a man's conscience on a word: instead of the general view of the whole scope of interpretation? I do not believe a man can believe in the general inspiration of the spirit of prophecy and still not believe that vegetarianism is the thing for mankind. I can understand how that testimony was written for individuals, and there are exceptions to it, and how Sister White in her human weakness could make a mistake in stating a truth, and still not destroy the inspiration of the spirit of prophecy; but the question is how to present these matters to the people. Brother Taylor may see no difficulty, but I see a lot of difficulty, not only in dealing with our students, but with our people in general.

A. G. Daniells: On the question of verbal inspiration?

M. E. Kern: Brother Benson's question is to the point. We had a council here a few weeks ago, and we laid down pretty straight some principles of education, and also some technicalities of education, and we based our conclusions on the authority of the spirit of prophecy, as it was written. Now we come to those historical questions, and we say, "Well, Sister White was mistaken about that, and that needs to be revised." The individual who did not quite see the points that we made at the educational council may say, "Well, possibly Sister White is wrong about the influence of universities," and it is hard to convince him that she was right, perhaps. I want, somehow, to get on a consistent basis myself.

Many years ago I was in a meeting where Dr. Kellogg and others were considering a business matter. Dr. Kellogg there took a position exactly contrary to something Sister White had said. When asked how he explained what she had said, he replied that she had been influenced to say it. He was running down the Testimonies there. A short time after that I read one of his articles in the paper, in which he was laying down the law on the basis of the Testimonies. That made me lose my confidence in Dr. Kellogg. On one point that he did not agree with, he said she had been influenced. Then he took this other thing that pleased him and he said it was from the Lord. Perhaps he



A classic design of Ellen G. White's *Conflict of the Ages* series.

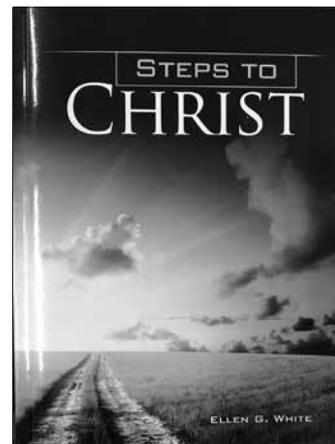
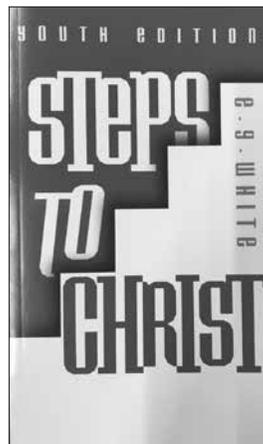
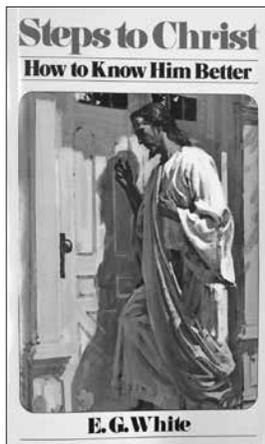
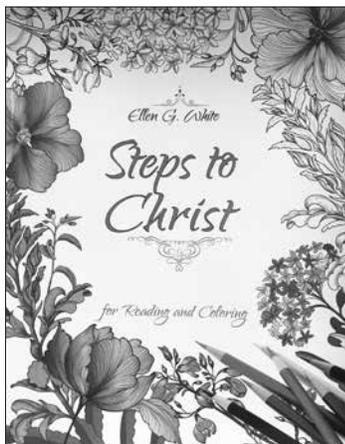
thought one was from the Lord and the other was not. But we certainly do have difficulty in showing the people which is human and which is divinely inspired.

G. B. Thompson: Wouldn't that be true of the Bible?

M. E. Kern: That is why I propose that we discuss the nature of inspiration. I have a sort of feeling that Sister White was a prophet just as Jeremiah was, and that in time her work will show up like Jeremiah's. I wonder if Jeremiah, in his day, did not do a lot of talking and perhaps some writing which was, as Paul said, on his own authority. I wonder if, in those days, the people did not have difficulty in differentiating between what was from the Lord and what was not. But the people make it more difficult now because all of Sister White's articles and books are with us, and her letters, too, and many think that every word she has ever said or written is from the Lord. We have had sanitariums built on account of letters she has written from a depot somewhere. And undertakings involving great financial investments have been started because of a letter from her. There is no question but what many young people, and also ministers, have that idea, and it is a real problem with me. I wish we could get down to bedrock. I do not think we are there yet.

W. W. Prescott: I would like to ask if you think that, after his writings had been published a series of years, Jeremiah changed them because he was convinced that there were historical errors in them?

M. E. Kern: I cannot answer that.



A sampling of the many published editions of Ellen G. White's *Steps to Christ*.

W. H. Wakeham: There is a real difficulty, and we will have it to meet. We may say that the people do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies. Perhaps technically they do not know what it means. But that is not the question at all. They have accepted the Testimonies all over the country, and believe that every identical word that Sister White has written was to be received as infallible truth. We have that thing to meet when we get back, and it will be brought up in our classes just as sure as we stand here, because it has come to me over and over again in every class I have taught. It not only comes out in classes, but in the churches. I know we have a very delicate task before us if we meet the situation and do it in the way the Lord wants it done. I am praying very earnestly for help as I go back to meet some of the things I know I am going to meet.

W. E. Howell: Surely we are getting our difficulties aired well this morning, and that is perfectly proper; but we have only ten minutes left of the period in which to give some attention to the solution of those difficulties. We have invited men of much larger experience than we are to come in and help us and give us their counsel. It seems to me we ought to give them some time.

G. B. Thompson: It seems to me that if we are going to preach the Testimonies and establish confidence in them, it does not depend on whether they are verbally inspired or not. I think we are in this fix because of a wrong education that our people have had. [Voice: That is true.] If we had always taught the truth on this question, we would not have any trouble or shock in the denomination now. But the shock is because we have not taught the truth, and have put the Testimonies on a plane where she says they do not stand. We have claimed more for them than she did. My thought is this, that the evidence of the

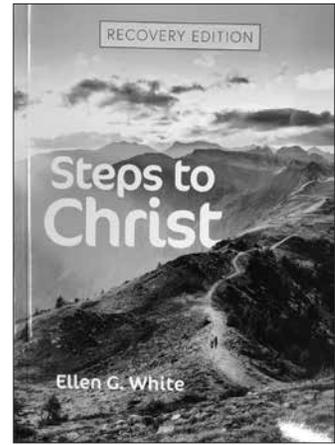
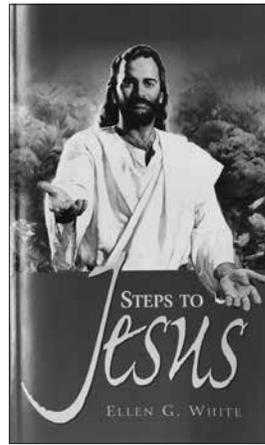
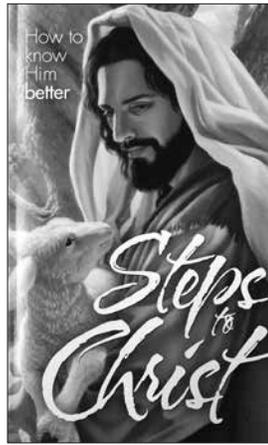
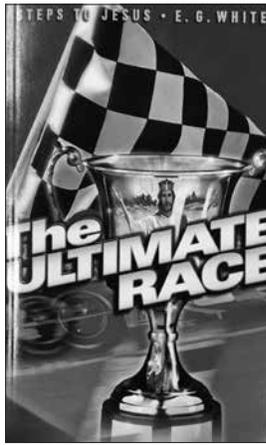
inspiration of the Testimonies is not in their verbal inspiration, but in their influence and power in the denomination. Now to illustrate: Brother Daniells and I were in Battle Creek at a special crisis, and word came to us that some special Testimonies were on the way to us from Sister White, and for us to stay there until they came. When they came we found they were to be read to the people. They were of a very serious character. They had been written a year before and filed away. Brother Daniells and I prayed about it, and then we sent out the word to the people that a meeting was to be held at a certain time. When the time came, about 3,000 people came into the Tabernacle, and they filled it up, even away back up into the "peanut gallery." There were unbelievers and skeptics there, and all classes. Brother Daniells stood up there and read that matter to them, and I tell you there was a power went with it that gripped that whole congregation. And after the meeting was over, people came to us and told us that the Testimony described a meeting they had held the night before. I was convinced that there was more than ordinary power in that document. It was not whether it was verbally inspired or not, but it carried the power of the Spirit of God with it.

I think if we could get at it from that line, we would get along better. They are not verbally inspired, — we know that, — and what is the use of teaching that they are?

M. E. Kern: I would like to suggest that this question of verbal inspiration does not settle the difficulty.

C. M. Sorenson: Does Sister White use the word "inspiration" concerning her own writings, or is that merely a theory we have worked up ourselves? I ask for information? I have never seen that in her writings.

A. G. Daniells: I hardly know where to begin or what



to say. I think I must repeat this, that our difficulty lies in two points, especially. One is on infallibility and the other is on verbal inspiration. I think Brother James White foresaw difficulties along this line away back at the beginning. He knew that he took Sister White's Testimonies and helped to write them out and make them clear and grammatical and plain. He knew that he was doing that right along. And he knew that the secretaries they employed took them and put them into grammatical condition, transposed sentences, completed sentences, and used words that Sister White did not herself write in her original copy. He saw that, and yet he saw some brethren who did not know this, and who had great confidence in the Testimonies, just believing and teaching that these words were given to Sister White as well as the thought. And he tried to correct that idea. You will find those statements in the *Review and Herald*, like the one Brother Wilcox read the other day. If that explanation had been accepted and passed on down, we would have been free from a great many perplexities that we have now.

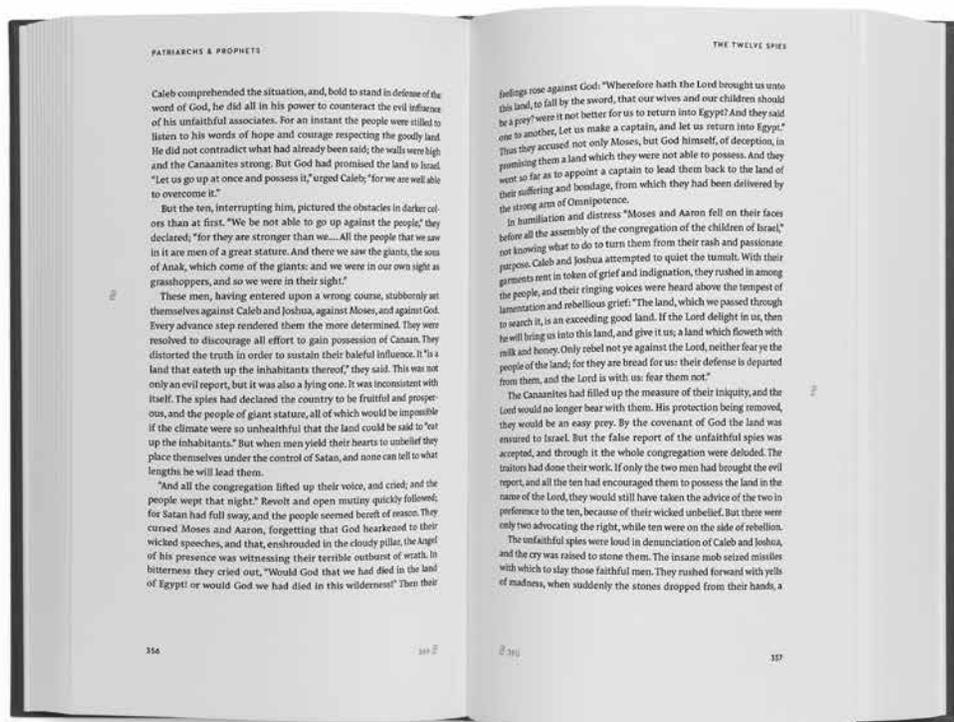
F. M. Wilcox: Articles were published in those early *Reviews* disclaiming that.

A. G. Daniells: Yes, but you know there are some brethren who go in all over. 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; and I suppose some people would feel that if they did not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, they could not have confidence in it, and take it as the great Book that they now see it to be. Some men are technical, and can hardly understand it in any other way.

Some other men are not so technical in logic, but they have great faith and great confidence, and so they can go through on another line of thought. 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.

Now, as I have studied it these years since I was thrown into the controversy at Battle Creek, I have endeavored to ascertain the truth and then be true to the truth. I do not know how to do except that way. It will never help me, or help the people, to make a false claim to evade some trouble. I know we have difficulties here, but let us dispose of some of the main things first. Brethren, are we going to evade difficulties or help out the difficulties by taking a false position? [Voices: No!] Well, then let us take an honest, true position, and reach our end somehow, because I never will put up a false claim to evade something that will come up a little later on. That is not honest and it is not Christian, and so I take my stand there.

In Australia I saw *The Desire of Ages* being made up, and I saw the rewriting of chapters, some of them written over and over and over again. I saw that, and when I talked with Sister Davis about it, I tell you I had to square up to this thing and begin to settle things about the spirit of prophecy. If these false positions had never been taken, the thing would be much plainer than it is today. What was charged as plagiarism would all have been simplified, and I believe men would have been saved to the cause if from the start we had understood this thing as it should have been. With those false views held, we face difficulties in straightening up. We will not meet those difficulties by resorting to a false claim. We could meet them just for today by saying, "Brethren, I believe in the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies; I believe in the



Interior of *Conflict Beautiful*, a redesign of one of Ellen G. White's most beloved collections, the *Conflict of the Ages* by design studio, Types & Symbols.

infallibility of the one through whom they came, and everything that is written there I will take and I will stand on that against all corners." If we did that, I would just take everything from A to Z, exactly as it was written, without making any explanations to any one; and I would not eat butter or salt or eggs if I believed that the Lord gave the words in those Testimonies to Sister White for the whole body of people in this world. But I do not believe it.

M. E. Kern: You couldn't and keep your conscience clear.

A. G. Daniells: No, I couldn't; but I do not believe that; and I can enter upon an explanation of health reform that I think is consistent, and that she endeavored to bring in, in later years, when she saw people making a bad use of that. I have eaten pounds of butter at her table myself, and dozens of eggs. I could not explain that in her own family if I believed that she believed those were the Lord's own words to the world. But there are people who believe that and do not eat eggs or butter. I do not know that they use salt. I know plenty of people in the early days did not use salt, and it was in our church. I am sure that many children suffered from it. There is no use of our claiming anything more on the verbal inspiration of

the Testimonies, because she never claimed it, and James White never claimed it, and W. C. White never claimed it; and all the persons who helped to prepare those Testimonies knew they were not verbally inspired. I will say no more along that line.

D. A. Parsons: She not only did not claim it, but she denied it.

A. G. Daniells: Yes, she tried to correct the people. Now on infallibility. I suppose Sister White used Paul's text, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," as much as any other scripture. She used to repeat that often, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," with the idea that she was a poor, feeble woman, a *Messenger of the Lord* trying to do her duty and meet the mind of God in this work. When you take the position that she was not infallible, and that her writings were not verbally inspired, isn't there a chance for the manifestation of the human? If there isn't, then what is infallibility? And should we be surprised when we know that the instrument was fallible, and that the general truths, as she says, were revealed, then aren't we prepared to see mistakes?

M. E. Kern: She was an author and not merely a pen.

A. G. Daniells: Yes; and now take that *Life of Paul*,

— I suppose you all know about it and knew what claims were put up against her, charges made of plagiarism, even by the authors of the book, Conybeare and Howson, and were liable to make the denomination trouble because there was so much of their book put into *The Life of Paul* without any credit or quotation marks. Some people of strict logic might fly the track on that ground, but I am not built that way. I found it out, and I read it with Brother Palmer when he found it, and we got Conybeare and Howson, and we got Wylie's *History of the Reformation*, and we read word for word, page after page, and no quotations, no credit, and really I did not know the difference until I began to compare them. I supposed it was Sister White's own work. The poor sister said, "Why, I didn't know about quotations and credits. My secretary should have looked after that, and the publishing house should have looked after it."

She did not claim that that was all revealed to her and written word for word under the inspiration of the Lord. There I saw the manifestation of the human in these writings. Of course I could have said this, and I did say it, that I wished a different course had been taken in the compilation of the books. If proper care had been exercised, it would have saved a lot of people from being thrown off the track.

Mrs. Williams: The secretary would know that she ought not to quote a thing without using quotation marks.

A. G. Daniells: You would think so. I do not know who the secretary was. The book was set aside, and I have never learned who had a hand in fixing that up. It may be that some do know.

B. L. House: May I ask one question about that book? Did Sister White write any of it?

A. G. Daniells: O, yes!

E. L. House: But there are some things that are not in Conybeare and Howson that are not in the new book, either. Why are those striking statements not embodied in the new book?

A. G. Daniells: I cannot tell you. But if her writings were verbally inspired, why should she revise them?

B. L. House: My difficulty is not with the verbal inspiration. My difficulty is here: You take the nine volumes of the Testimonies, and as I understand it, Sister White wrote the original matter from which they were made up, except that they were corrected so far as grammar, capitalization and punctuation are concerned. But such book,

as *Sketches of The Life of Paul*, *Desire of Ages*, and *Great Controversy*, were composed differently, it seems to me, even by her secretaries than the nine volumes of the Testimonies. Is there not a difference? I have felt that the Testimonies were not produced like those other books.

A. G. Daniells: I do not know how much revision she might have made in those personal Testimonies before she put them out.

B. L. House: Did anyone else ever write anything that is found in the nine volumes of the Testimonies?

A. G. Daniells: No, I do not know that there are any quotations in the Testimonies.

B. L. House: Isn't there a difference, then, between the nine volumes of the Testimonies and those other books for which her secretaries were authorized to collect valuable quotations from other books?

A. G. Daniells: You admit that she had the right to revise her work?

B. L. House: O, Yes.

A. G. Daniells: Then your question is, Why did she leave out of the revision some striking things that she wrote that it seems should have been put in?

B. L. House: Yes.

M. E. Kern: In the first volume of the spirit of prophecy there are some details given, if I am not mistaken, as to the height of Adam. It seems to me that when she went to prepare *Patriarchs and Prophets* for the public, even though that had been shown her, it did not seem wise to put that before the public.

A. G. Daniells: And she also left out of our books for the public that scene of Satan playing the game of life.

B. L. House: In that old edition of *Sketches of The Life of Paul*, she is very clear about the ceremonial law. That is not in the new book, and I wondered why that was left out.

D. A. Parsons: I have an answer to that. I was in California when the book was compiled, and I took the old edition and talked with Brother Will White about this very question. He said the whole book, with the exception of that chapter, had been compiled for some time, and they had held it up until they could arrange that chapter in such a way as to prevent controversy arising. They did not desire the book to be used to settle any controversy, and therefore they eliminated most of these statements on the ceremonial law just to prevent a renewal of *The Great Controversy* over the ceremonial law in Galatians.

B. L. House: It is not a repudiation of what was written by her in the first volume, is it?

D. A. Parsons: No, not at all; but they just put enough in to satisfy the inquiring mind, but eliminated those striking statements to prevent a renewal of the controversy.

F. M. Wilcox: I would like to ask, Brother Daniells, if it could be accepted as a sort of rule that Sister White might be mistaken in details, but in the general policy and instruction she was an authority? For instance, I hear a man saying, I cannot accept Sister White on this, when perhaps she has devoted pages to the discussion of it. A man said he could not accept what Sister White said about royalties on books, and yet she devotes pages to that subject, and emphasizes it again and again; and it is the same with policies for our schools and publishing houses and sanitariums. 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. Either the Lord has spoken through her or He has not spoken through her; and if it is a matter of deciding in my own judgment whether He has or has not, then I regard her books the same

as every other book published. I think it is one thing for a man to stultify his conscience, and it is another thing to stultify his judgment. It is one thing for me to lay aside my conscience, and it is another thing for me to change my judgment over some views that I hold.

A. G. Daniells: I think Brother Benson's question on historical and theological matters has not been dealt with yet, and I do not know that I am able to give any light. Perhaps some of you may know to what extent Sister White has revised some of her statements and references or quotations from historical writings. Have you ever gone through and made a list of them?

W. W. Prescott: I gave nearly an hour to that the other day, taking the old edition of *Great Controversy* and reading it and then reading the revised edition. But that did not cover all the ground.

A. G. Daniells: We did not create that difficulty, did

we? We General Conference men did not create it, for we did not make the revision. We did not take any part in it. We had nothing whatever to do with it. It was all done under her supervision. If there is a difficulty there, she created it, did she not?

F. M. Wilcox: She assumed the whole responsibility for it.

M. F. Kern: But we have to meet it.

A. G. Daniells: Well, now, which statement shall we take, the original or the revised?

B. L. House: My real difficulty is just here: Sister White did not write either the old edition or the revised, as I understand it.

A. G. Daniells: What do you mean by saying that she did not write either edition?

I think it is one thing for a man to stultify his conscience, and it is another thing to stultify his judgment. It is one thing for me to lay aside my conscience, and it is another thing for me to change my judgment over some views that I hold.

B. L. House: As I understand it, Elder J. N. Anderson prepared those historical quotations for the old edition, and Brother Robinson and Brother Crisler, Professor Prescott and others furnished the quotations for the new edition. Did she write the historical quotations in there?

A. G. Daniells: No.

B. L. House: Then

there is a difference between the Testimonies and those books.

W. W. Prescott: Changes have been made in what was not historical extract at all.

A. G. Daniells: Shall we not confine ourselves just now to this question of Brother Benson's and lead our way up to the real difficulty, and then deal with it? Do you have a clear conception of the way the difficulty arose? — that in making the first edition of *Great Controversy* those who helped her prepare the copy were allowed to bring forward historical quotations that seemed to fit the case. She may have asked, "Now, what good history do you have for that?" I do not know just how she brought it in, but she never would allow us to claim anything for her as a historian. She did not put herself up as a corrector of history, — not only did not do that, but protested against it. Just how they dealt in bringing the history along, I could not say,

but I suspect that she referred to this as she went along, and then allowed them to gather the very best historical statements they could and submit them to her, and she approved of them.

C. L. Benson: This is my query, and it underlies all of her writings: How did she determine upon the philosophy of history? If she endorsed our interpretation of history, without any details, do we dare to set that aside? I understand she never studied medical science; but she has laid down certain fundamental principles; and that she has done the same with education and organization.

A. G. Daniells: Sister White never has written anything on the philosophy of history.

C. L. Benson: No, but she has endorsed our 2,300-day proposition, from 538 to 1798.

A. G. Daniells: You understand she did that by placing that in her writings?

C. L. Benson: Yes.

A. G. Daniells: Yes, I suppose she did.

C. A. Shull: I think the book *Education* contains something along the line of the philosophy of history.

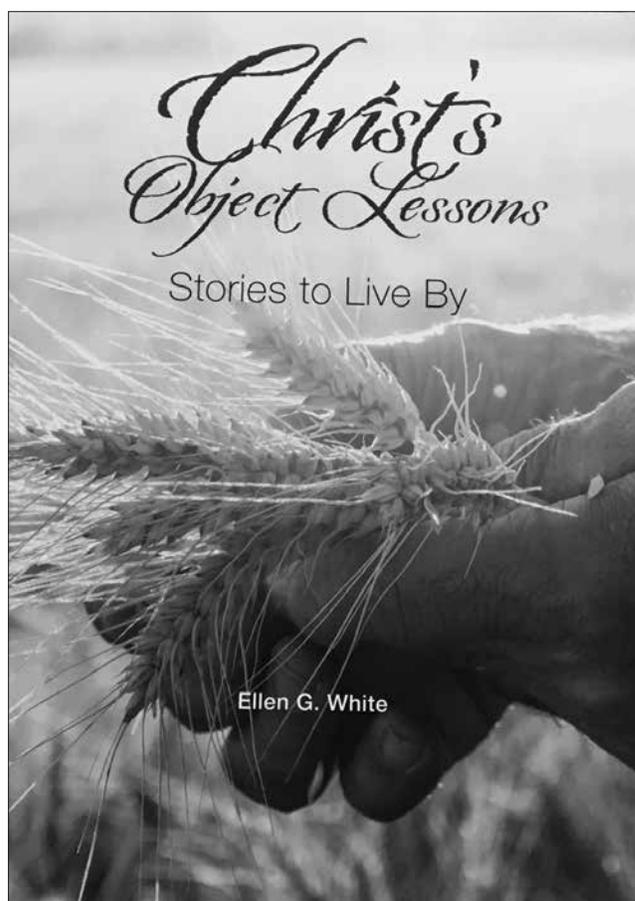
W. E. Howell: Yes, she outlines general principles.

C. M. Sorenson: Nobody has ever questioned Sister White's philosophy of history so far as I know, — and I presume I have heard most of the questions raised about it — along the line of the hand of God in human affairs and the way the hand of God has been manifested. The only question anybody has raised has been about minor details. Take this question as to whether 533 has some significance taken in connection with 538. She never set 533, but if there is a significance attached to it in human affairs, it certainly would not shut us out from using it, and that would not affect the 1,260 years. Some people say antichrist is yet to come, and is to last for three and one-half literal years. If you change those positions, you will change the philosophy.

W. W. Prescott: Do I understand Brother Benson's view is that such a statement as that in "*Great Controversy*," that the 1,260 years began in 538 and ended in 1798, settles the matter infallibly?

C. L. Benson: No, only on the preaching of doctrines in general. If she endorses the prophetic part of our interpretation, irrespective of details, then she endorses it.

W. W. Prescott: Then that settles it as being a part of that philosophy.



C. L. Benson: Yes, in this way: I do not see how we can do anything else but set up our individual judgment if we say we will discount that, because we have something else that we think is better evidence. It is the same with education and the medical science.

W. W. Prescott: You are touching exactly the experience through which I went, personally, because you all know that I contributed something toward the revision of *Great Controversy*. I furnished considerable material bearing upon that question.

A. G. Daniells: By request.

W. W. Prescott: Yes, I was asked to do it, and at first I said, "No, I will not do it. I know what it means." But I was urged into it. When I had gone over it with W. C. White, then I said, "Here is my difficulty. I have gone over this and suggested changes that ought to be made in order to correct statements. These changes have been accepted. My personal difficulty will be to retain faith on those things that I cannot deal with on that basis." But I did not throw up the spirit of prophecy, and have not yet; but I have had to adjust my view

of things. I will say to you, as a matter of fact, that the relation of those writings to this movement and to our work, is clearer and more consistent in my mind than it was then. But still you know what I am charged with. I have gone through the personal experience myself over that very thing that you speak of. If we correct it here and correct it there, how are we going to stand with it in the other places?

F. M. Wilcox: Those things do not involve the general philosophy of the book.

W. W. Prescott: No, but they did involve quite large details. For instance, before *Great Controversy* was revised, I was unorthodox on a certain point, but after it was revised, I was perfectly orthodox.

C. M. Sorenson: On what point?

W. W. Prescott: My interpretation was, (and I taught it for years in *The Protestant Magazine*) that Babylon stood for the great apostasy against God, which headed up in the papacy, but which included all minor forms, and that before we come to the end, they would all come under one. That was not the teaching of *Great Controversy*. *Great Controversy* said that Babylon could not mean the romish church, and I had made it mean that largely and primarily. After the book was revised, although the whole argument remained the same, it said that it could not mean the Roman Church alone, just that one word added.

F. M. Wilcox: That helped you out.

W. W. Prescott: Yes, but I told W. C. White I did not think anybody had any right to do that. And I did not believe anybody had any right to use it against me before or afterward. I simply went right on with my teaching.

J. W. Anderson: Would you not claim other portions of the book as on the same basis?

W. W. Prescott: No, I would refuse to do that. I had to deal with A. R. Henry over that question. He was determined to crush those men that took a wrong course

concerning him. I spent hours with that man trying to help him. We were intimate in our work, and I used to go to his house and spend hours with him. He brought up this question about the authority of the spirit of prophecy and wanted me to draw the line between what was authoritative and what was not. I said, "Brother Henry, I will not attempt to do it, and I advise you not to do it. There is an authority in that gift here, and we must recognize it."

I have tried to maintain personal confidence in this gift in the church, and I use it and use it. I have gotten great help from those books, but I will tell you frankly that I held to that position on the question of Babylon for years when I knew it was exactly contrary to *Great Controversy*, but I went on, and in due time I became orthodox. I did not enjoy that experience at all, and I hope you will not have to go through it. It means something.

C. L. Benson: That is the pivotal point. You had something that enabled you to take that position. What was it?

W. W. Prescott: I cannot lay down any rule for anybody. What settled me to take that position was the Bible, not any secular authority.

J. N. Anderson: Your own findings must be your authority for believing and not believing.

W. W. Prescott: You can upset everything by applying that as a general principle.

C. P. Bollman: Could you tell, in just a few words, how the Bible helped you?

W. W. Prescott: That would involve the whole question of the beast.

Voice: To your knowledge, has Sister White ever made a difference between her nine volumes and her other books?

W. W. Prescott: I have never talked with her about it. In my mind, there is a difference between the works she largely prepared herself and what was prepared by others for sale to the public.

You would have shaken a bit, and you are beginning to shake now, and some of you do not know where you are going to land. These questions show it. But that is not to say there is not a foundation. It is to say that you have not gone through the toils yet and got your feet on solid ground.

A. G. Daniells: You might as well state that a little fuller, the difference in the way they were produced.

W. W. Prescott: If I should speak my mind frankly, I should say that I have felt for years that great mistakes were made in handling her writings for commercial purposes.

C. M. Sorenson: By whom?

W. W. Prescott: I do not want to charge anybody. But I do think great mistakes were made in that way. That is why I have made a distinction as I have. When I talked with W. C. White about it (and I do not know that he is an infallible authority), he told me frankly that when they got out *Great Controversy*, if they did not find in her writings anything on certain chapters to make the historical connections, they took other books, like Daniel and the Revelation, and used portions of them; and sometimes her secretaries, and sometimes she herself, would prepare a chapter that would fill the gap.

C. A. Shull: I would like to ask if Brother Prescott wishes to be understood that his attitude is that wherever his own judgment comes in conflict with any statement in the spirit of prophecy, he will follow his judgment rather than the spirit of prophecy?

W. W. Prescott: No, I do not want anybody to get that understanding. That is the very understanding that I do not want anybody to get.

C. A. Shull: Then that was an exceptional case?

W. W. Prescott: Yes, I was forced to that from my study of the Bible. When I made up my mind to that, I did not parade it before the people and say, "Here is a mistake in *Great Controversy*, and if you study the Bible you will find it to be so." I did not attack the spirit of prophecy. My attitude has been to avoid anything like opposition to the gift in this church, but I avoid such a misuse of it as to set aside the Bible. I do not want anybody to think for a moment that I set up my judgment against the spirit of prophecy.

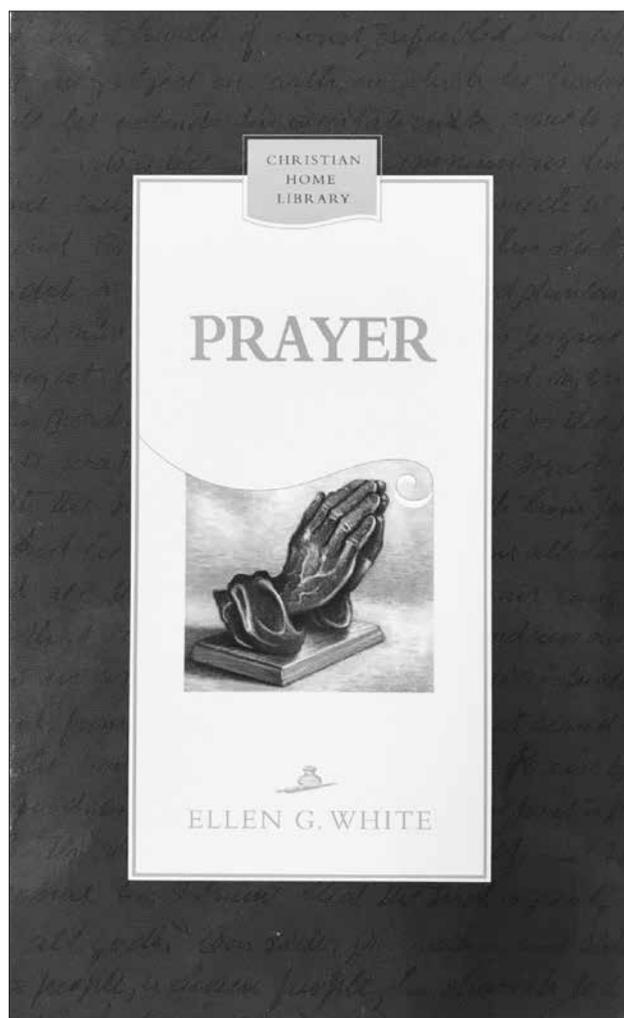
A. G. Daniells: Let us remember that, brethren, and not say a word that will misrepresent Brother Prescott.

B. L. House: Did Sister White herself write that statement that the term Babylon could not apply to the Catholic Church, or was that copied from some other author?

W. W. Prescott: That was in the written statement.

B. L. House: Has she ever changed any of the nine volumes of the Testimonies?

W. W. Prescott: *Great Controversy* is the only book I know of that has been revised.



C. M. Sorenson: Hasn't *Early Writings* been revised? I understand some omissions have been made in the later editions.

W. W. Prescott: Perhaps some things have been left out, but I do not think the writing itself has been revised.

A. G. Daniells: You know there is a statement that the pope changed the Sabbath, and another one, that the papacy was abolished. What do you do with those?

B. L. House: There is no trouble with that.

A. G. Daniells: Why not? The pope did not change the Sabbath?

H. L. House: But the pope stands for the papacy.

A. G. Daniells: There are people that just believe there was a certain pope that changed the Sabbath, because of the way they follow the words. She never meant to say that a certain pope changed the Sabbath; but do you know, I have had that brought up to me a hundred times in ministers' meetings.

B. L. House: I have never had any trouble on that.

A. G. Daniells: But you are only one. There are about 2,000 others. I have had to work with men just gradually and carefully and all the time keep from giving out the idea that I was a doubter of the Testimonies.

I know it is reported around that some of us men here at Washington, in charge of the general administrative work, are very shaky and unbelieving, but I want to tell you that I know better. I know that my associates have confidence right down on the solid platform of this whole question; and I know that if many of you had gone at this thing and experienced what we have, you would have passed through an experience that would have given you solid ground. You would have shaken a bit, and you are beginning to shake now, and some of you do not know where you are going to land. These questions show it. But that is not to say there is not a foundation. It is to say that you have not gone through the toils yet and got your feet on solid ground.

I want to make this suggestion, because with all these questions we cannot follow one line of thought logically: We must use good sense in dealing with this whole question, brethren. Do not be careless with your words. Do not be careless in reporting or representing men's views. I have had this thing to deal with for years and years, as you know, in every ministers' meeting; and I have been called into college classes over and over again, and have had to say things that those ministers and students never heard before about this; and I have prayed for wisdom and for the Spirit of the Lord to direct them and to give faith and to cover up those things that would leave doubt. And I have never had it come back on me that a careful, cautious statement made in the fear of God has upset a single person. It may have done it, but it has never come back to me. You take our ministers: This brother [meaning Brother Waldorf] knows how much this was brought up in our ministers' meetings over in Australia, and we dealt with it plainly. We did not try to pull the wool over the people's eyes, and I believe you will find the Australian preachers and churches as firm believers in the spirit of prophecy and in Sister White's call by the Lord as you will find any place on the face of the earth. Take New Zealand: I brought them up there, and I think it is well known that there is not a place in the world where the people stand truer to this gift than they do there.

I do not believe it is necessary to dissemble a bit, but I do believe, brethren, that we have got to use wisdom that God alone can give us in dealing with this until matters gradually work over. We have made a wonderful change in nineteen years, Brother Prescott. Fifteen years ago we could not have talked what we are talking here today. It would not have been safe. This matter has come along gradually, and yet people are not losing their confidence in the gift. Last year we sold 5,000 sets of the Testimonies, and they cost eight or nine dollars a set. In one year our brethren and sisters, under the influence of the General Conference, and the union conference and local conference men and our preachers, — under their influence, without any compulsion, our brethren came along and spent forty or fifty thousand dollars for the Testimonies. What would you consider that an indication of?

Voice: Confidence.

A. G. Daniells: Yes, confidence, and a friendly attitude. They did not buy them as critics to tear them to pieces. We must be judged by our fruits. I want to tell you that the clearer view we get on the exact facts in the case, the stronger the position of our people will be in the whole thing.

Now, Brother Benson, I see the whole line running through there that you referred to. We cannot correct that in a day. We must use great judgment and caution. I hope you Bible teachers will be exceedingly careful. I was called up here twice to speak on the spirit of prophecy to the Bible and pastoral training classes. They brought up this question of history. I simply said, "Now, boys, Sister White never claimed to be a historian nor a corrector of history. She used the best she knew for the matter she was writing on." I have never heard from a teacher that those boys buzzed around them and said, "Brother Daniells does not believe Sister White's writings are reliable." I believe the Lord will help us to take care of this if we will be careful and use good sense. I think that is all I can say in this sort of discussion.

Some of the illustrations in this section were sourced for this issue of *Spectrum* by Ron Graybill, Adventist historian.

In-Depth



WORDS
that
WOUND

THE TRAUMA OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

BY DR KATIA REINERT | GCHM ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

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Adventists Say No to Violence

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PEELING BACK THE LAYERS OF A COMPLICATED HISTORY

BY ALEX AAMODT

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Adventists Say No to Violence

PEELING BACK THE LAYERS OF A COMPLICATED HISTORY

BY ALEX AAMODT

The research study offered a chance to finally see the true extent of domestic violence within Seventh-day Adventist communities, but Dr. René Drumm worried it might not happen at all. Drumm had seen domestic violence in multiple professional roles—first as a social worker running a shelter for abused women, then later as a sociologist. In 2001, Drumm and her team at Andrews University received a \$35,000 grant from the Winifred Stevens Foundation for a large-scale study to determine domestic violence rates within an Adventist population. Conventional thinking in domestic violence studies had theorized that conservative religious beliefs would make women more vulnerable to violence, but there had been little real data to test the idea. Drumm's study could be of great interest not only to Adventists but also the greater scientific community.

Yet a large study needed approval from church leadership, and there was a frightening possibility for those in charge: that the results would show a higher rate of violence in Adventists than the general United States population. The grant money came with the stipulation to work in the foundation's region of the Northwest United States,

and Drumm scheduled a meeting for the researchers to plead their case to the North Pacific Union Conference.

NPUC leaders were amicable to the purpose of the research, but they were also concerned what it could mean for the church's image. Drumm anticipated this battle, and for the day of the meeting asked to have women present in support whom the majority-male NPUC leadership trusted. It was just after Drumm finished her official presentation that one of these women leaned forward and spoke.

"This is an important thing to do," she said. "I've been there."

There was a shift in the mood of the room. Drumm heard audible gasps and sighs. "There was, in a nice way, sympathy," she remembered.

The NPUC voted yes.

Over the next several years, churches were chosen at random throughout Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Even after an official endorsement by the NPUC, only half of selected churches participated. At most that did, a family life professional made a short presentation, then asked all adults to stay after. Men were

moved to one side of the room, women to the other. Surveys were passed out with a long list of questions. In total, forty-nine churches and 1,431 individuals participated. The efforts to ensure the safety of all the participants was extensive, for if someone was being abused, their abuser might be sitting there in the same room.¹

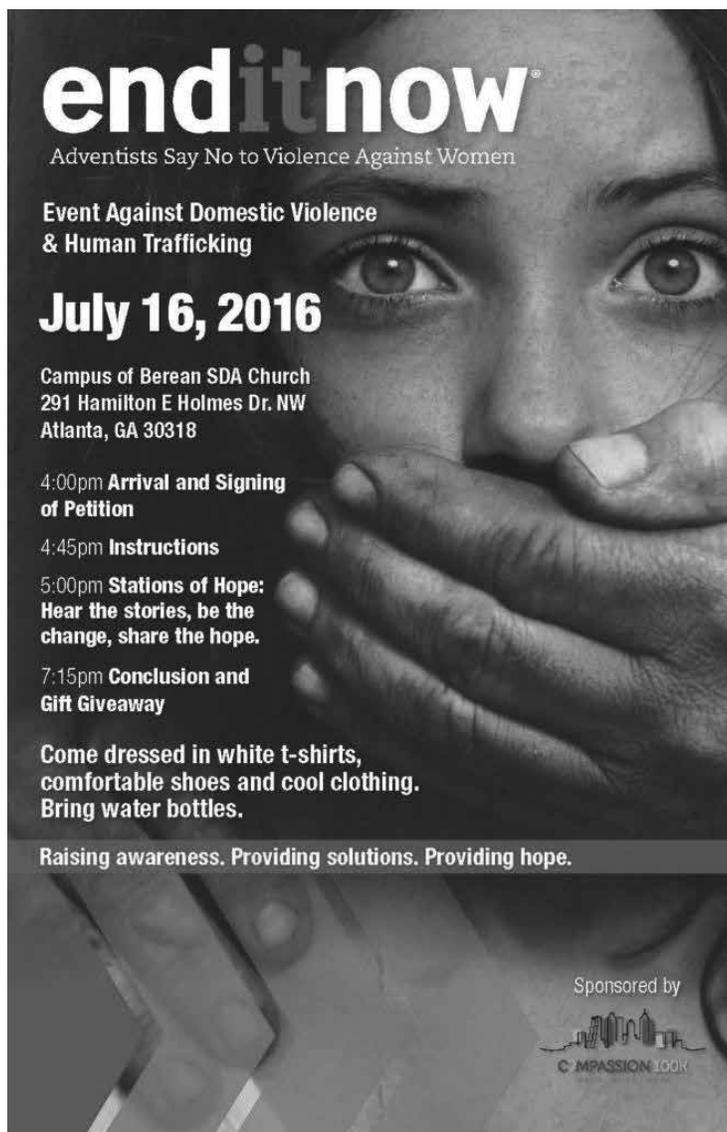
A woman sat in her pew one Sabbath and carefully read the questions on the survey. Karla was thankful her husband moved to the other side of the hushed sanctuary, but she still shielded the paper as she wrote, afraid that someone might see. For all this time, she had never told her friends at church or even her parents; she had suffered more than twenty years of abuse and had yet to tell a single soul.

There were some surprises when Drumm and her team published the data in 2006. Rates of domestic violence in the study were nearly equal to the general population of the United States. Sixty-five percent of individuals had experienced controlling or demeaning behavior by an intimate partner, 46 percent had seen common couple violence, 29 percent had been sexually victimized, and 10 percent had endured severe physical abuse. Although both men and women were victimized, women were at much higher rates.

The study was rigorous, but not without limitations, as it only looked at one region of the country; it also did not ask about the relationship of the abuser to the church.

“That was an open invitation for people who wanted to criticize [the study],” Drumm remembered, “To say the abusers are nonbelievers, and so, therefore, it doesn’t really count.”

To flesh out the data, Drumm and her colleagues fashioned a qualitative study, conducting in-depth interviews with forty women survivors. They did not have to still identify as Adventist, only to have been church members when the abuse took



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**Event Against Domestic Violence
& Human Trafficking**

July 16, 2016

**Campus of Berean SDA Church
291 Hamilton E Holmes Dr. NW
Atlanta, GA 30318**

4:00pm **Arrival and Signing
of Petition**

4:45pm **Instructions**

5:00pm **Stations of Hope:
Hear the stories, be the
change, share the hope.**

7:15pm **Conclusion and
Gift Giveaway**

**Come dressed in white t-shirts,
comfortable shoes and cool clothing.
Bring water bottles.**

Raising awareness. Providing solutions. Providing hope.

Sponsored by

C:MPASSION 100K

place. Published in 2009, qualitative results dispelled attempts to minimize the first findings, for 90 percent of the women had an abuser also in the church. Some even had abusers who were church leaders.

The second study also looked at why abuse rates were not higher, as theory had originally suggested.² Those higher predictions centered around “belief-based barriers”—teachings such as the sanctity of marriage and submissive gender roles—that could contribute to violence. These belief-barriers appeared for some of the women in the study, but so did a competing phenomenon, as some reported how the church had helped them through their trauma and helped them get assistance. For some women, religion contributed to their entrapment, but for others it helped them survive.



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HEALTH CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



In the face of the worry going into the research, perhaps the results allowed a sigh of relief for some church leaders. But there was also a disturbing reality to the findings, for almost certainly, millions of Adventists—most often women—were suffering from domestic violence around the world. The near decade of research by Drumm and her coauthors did not set out to create Adventist data—their work applied to faith groups more broadly—but by using Adventists as the research demographic, they created a trove of information that offered a glimpse into the complicated and turbulent reality of domestic violence within Seventh-day Adventist church membership.³ Those numbers begged the question, *what might the church do in response?*

The church had taken some steps to combat domestic violence in the past. It was a core mission when the modern General Conference Women’s Ministries department was created in 1990. The church also released official statements, one in 1995 titled “Abuse and Family Violence,” and one in 1996 titled “Family Violence,” that identified “verbal, physical, emotional, sexual, or active or passive neglect,” as examples of abuse.

At Annual Council in 2001, an abuse emphasis day was voted onto the yearly church calendar. Heather-Dawn Small had just joined Women’s Ministries when the vote took place, and she helped develop the first materials when the day was observed the following year.

“We felt that there needed to be an awareness of this issue,” Small said, “Because at that time, we still had the majority of people say, ‘This is not a church issue. This is something that’s out there in the community.’”

Small would become Director of Women’s Ministries in 2005, and she continued to promote the emphasis day, focusing on different types of abuse each year, though domestic violence was a recurring topic.

“Of course, domestic violence pops up every few years, because that’s the number one place

where we find [abuse],” Small said. Still, while recognition of the emphasis day grew, adoption throughout churches was far from universal.

“Those years, we were just doing everything we could for women to have this day,” Small said.

It is hard to say exactly when—memories tend to dim over the course of a decade—but at some point, late in 2008 or early in 2009, Charles Sandefur began to have conversations about a new type of project at the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. Sandefur had been President of ADRA since 2002, but he began to think the agency could be more effective.

“We can’t just raise money to do all these expensive projects,” Sandefur remembered of the thinking at that time. “We need to move to advocacy. You can put NGOs into two buckets: those who do advocacy, and those who are implementing NGOs. They are not mutually exclusive, but ADRA had been almost universally ... an implementing NGO.”

Not everyone at ADRA thought there should be an expansion into advocacy, but many of Sandefur’s deputies agreed with his vision; but what form should such advocacy take? One issue rose to the top as an effective synthesis of ADRA’s preexisting humanitarian projects and overarching mission: violence against women and children; stopping domestic abuse. Those were issues everyone could rally behind, Sandefur thought, and ones that aligned with so much central to Adventism.

But while ADRA had experience and resources for conducting global projects, its duty as an aid organization was to anyone in need, regardless of religious faith. ADRA could connect with the global community, but to accomplish what Sandefur and his team began to envision, ADRA would need the might of the church’s influence to mobilize Adventist members.

It was time to talk to Women’s Ministries.

Heather-Dawn Small was excited when Charles Sandefur came to her on the third floor of the General

Conference building with the prospect of a joint advocacy initiative. Although Women’s Ministries had continued to work on projects raising awareness and combating domestic violence during her seven years at the department, too often it felt like not everyone saw it as an urgent priority—from leadership all the way to the local congregations.

Sandefur found Small effusive in her eagerness to come on board, and they agreed to reach out to other departments. Soon they met with Carla Baker, NAD Women’s Ministries Director. She, too, was enthusiastic about collaborating, and as the three talked, it became clear that they all had slightly different agendas that perhaps could coalesce in a wider ranging project than first imagined. Carla Baker already had a strong interest in combating abuse perpetrated by church leaders, and she

wanted to make that part of the new project as well.

As the discussions continued, more people were brought in to start working on the details. “We had a small steering committee to help guide the campaign along.”

Julio Muñoz, then ADRA Bureau Chief for Marketing and Development, remembered. Rajmund Dabrowski, General Conference Communication Director, also began to attend meetings the group held periodically.

A banner campaign would be the first step, they decided, an awareness initiative that would push a worldwide petition. The goal would be one million signatures to take to the United Nations and present to the Secretary General—a way of making a public statement that Adventists were united as individuals, and as a church, in stopping violence against women.

Before they could start developing resources, they needed a name for the project. “To be advocacy, we said we wanted a verb,” Sandefur remembered. There was no shortage of ideas, but after several weeks, Sandefur and Muñoz brought something they thought could stick: End It Now. The other committee members liked the name, and it was refined—written lowercase to sound less strident; written as one word to be more distinctive:

enditnow: Adventists Say No to Violence
Against Women

For some women, religion contributed to their entrapment, but for others it helped them survive.

The question of funding remained. Since enditnow would be a new initiative, ADRA turned to outside sources, and the Versacare foundation awarded a \$225,000 grant specifically for the project.⁴ While the majority of ADRA's normal funds were earmarked for projects, the agency also had unassigned general funds, some of which also went toward enditnow.⁵ The committee members began planning for a launch at the 2009 Annual Council that was fast approaching, when they could present in front of church leaders from around the world.

The schedule was tight when the annual meetings began in October of that year, but the steering committee members were ready to maximize the ten minutes they were given. Muñoz and his team played a short introductory video, then Sandefur and Small took the stage, standing in front of a large enditnow banner.

"It's a global crisis, and as a church we need to be involved and be aware," Small said. They asked the present delegates to sign the banner to officially kick off the signature campaign, and General Conference President Jan Paulsen came on stage to provide the very first signature.

"I hope and I pray, and I will do my part so that this will make an impact, and that the position that we take as a people, giving the highest value to women, will become widely known and supported," Paulsen said.⁶

Division presidents, union presidents, and other delegates signed the banner. It was exactly the sort of enthusiastic launch that the enditnow committee members had hoped for.

Throughout the rest of 2009 and the beginning of 2010, ADRA and Women's Ministries promoted enditnow, providing an online petition and enditnow-branded

advertising that individuals from all over the world could use to gather signatures in their area.

"It was really a grassroots campaign, which is what we wanted," Muñoz said. "We would provide some of the resources available online so they could download forms and posters to print themselves. But it was for church members to make the campaign their own."

"We had created these kits, and they were coming from all around the world, people signing and sending them in to headquarters," Sandefur remembered. The signatures began to pile up, and the once far-off goal of one million started to appear closer.

In the meantime, Charles Sandefur was already part of a group of leaders from faith-based NGOs who met on occasion at the United Nations. At one of their meetings shortly after the launch, he explained enditnow and the thousands of signatures and worldwide participation the campaign already had received.

"They were just stunned. They had no idea that a community like Adventists had that much global reach," Sandefur remembered. "Within two hours, they had me in to see Ban-Ki Moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations. I only spent three to five minutes...but they wanted to explain [enditnow] to him, and I had some pictures of the signatures we already had."

Sandefur left the impromptu meeting excited about Ban-Ki Moon's enthusiasm. They had only just begun the path to a million signatures, but soon there would be an opportunity to continue the launch on an even larger stage—the quinquennial General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia.

The goal would be one million signatures to take to the United Nations and present to the Secretary General—a way of making a public statement that Adventists were united as individuals, and as a church, in stopping violence against women.

The 2010 session began on June 23, and ADRA's booth had large banners with the enditnow logo for visitors to sign and join the petition, and there were banners elsewhere throughout the Georgia Dome as well. Women's Ministries also promoted enditnow.

"We gave out flyers, bookmarks, cards, and all sorts of things," Heather-Dawn Small recalled.

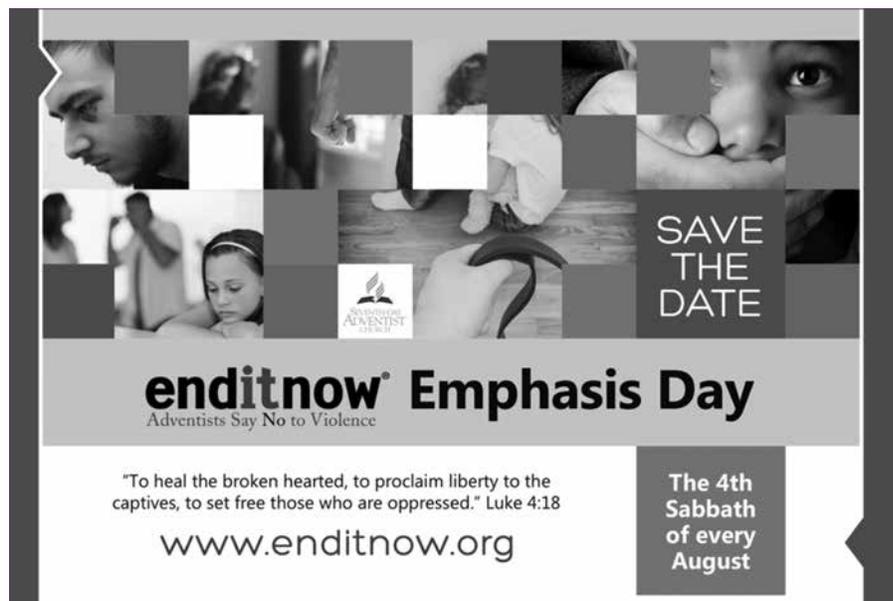
They all hoped that those attending the session would return to their home countries and churches inspired by enditnow, causing more people to join the movement. It seemed like this happened after the 2009 Annual Council, and now the exposure was even greater.

On the first Sabbath evening of the world business session, Sandefur presented enditnow on the main stage, bringing one of the large banners already covered in signatures. Ted N. C. Wilson had just been elected the new General Conference President, and he came up to prominently add his own.

For the members of the enditnow committee, this was a victory for the initiative's future. All signs pointed to the momentum continuing to build, and it appeared the new General Conference leadership would continue to be supportive. Another official statement was also voted at the start of the 2010 Session titled "Ending Violence Against Women and Girls." "[T]he Adventist Church says, 'Let's end it now,'" the statement read. Perhaps even by that winter the petition would be ready to take to the United Nations, Sandefur thought.

It was true that the 2010 General Conference Session portended changes for enditnow, but they would not be those that the committee members imagined.

Turmoil engulfed ADRA as 2010 came to a close. On October 12, Ted Wilson convened a special ADRA board meeting. Sandefur was fired, and immediately replaced by Dr. Rudi Maier. Reporting by *Spectrum* later



revealed that Maier was heard claiming Wilson offered him the job just after the GC Session in July.⁷ The abrupt change in ADRA leadership would have implications for a number of programs—including enditnow.

It soon became clear that Maier was not interested in continuing the initiative. According to a source familiar with the program and speaking on condition of anonymity, Maier was invited to attend enditnow steering committee meetings after taking over the ADRA presidency.

"I don't believe [Maier] attended the first couple of steering committees. There were financial decisions to be made, so I think he eventually went one time to the meeting, and it was uncomfortable and led to a couple of really testy exchanges," the source said.

According to another source familiar with the program and speaking on condition of anonymity, Women's Ministries approached Maier directly, meeting with him to talk about continuing enditnow.

"He said no, we're not interested in it," the source said. The partnership between ADRA and Women's Ministries was over.⁸

Rudi Maier did not respond to emails and messages asking for comment on this story.

On February 12, 2011, seventeen ADRA staff were fired under the pretense of financial restructuring—a day dubbed "Black Tuesday" at the agency. More senior staff and executives would resign in the months after.

By spring, Muñoz was left as the main proponent for enditnow at ADRA, and for a time he tried to continue work on the initiative; but without support from new leadership, it started to fall by the wayside.

“It just kind of dwindled, I guess. I don’t know how else to say it,” Muñoz recalled.

Ken Flemmer, Vice President of International Programs from 2010–2013, said that he was not involved with enditnow or a decision to discontinue it during his time working for Maier.

“I really had nothing to do with that,” he said.

Flemmer did remember hearing conversations questioning the utility of a signature gathering campaign.

At the end of 2011, Muñoz also left ADRA.

It remains unclear how intentionally enditnow was discontinued. The initiative had been pushed by Charles Sandefur and those who aligned with his vision; changes might be expected under different leadership.

Yet multiple reports from sources familiar with the situation suggest hostility to the program itself, not only in ADRA but in new leadership throughout the church.

“I think it was not just on the ADRA side,” another source familiar with enditnow said. “It was also on the General Conference. It was a combination of Rudi Maier on the ADRA side, and Ted Wilson on the General Conference side not wanting the program to continue.”

General Conference Executive Leadership did not respond to a formal request for comment on this story.

After the General Conference session in 2010, reporting is unable to confirm any instance of Ted Wilson or General Conference Executive Leadership publicly addressing enditnow for the next seven years.

By the start of 2012, there did not appear to be any enditnow activities happening at ADRA, and the Versacare Foundation became concerned that not all the grant money had been spent. As reported by *Spectrum* in 2012, Versacare president Robert Coy requested an account of the funds, eventually receiving a report showing \$86,000 of the original \$225,000 remained untouched.⁹ The funds were returned to Versacare.

When asked for this story about the precedent of Versacare money being returned, Sandefur, current Versacare board chair, noted that it is a fairly regular occurrence to have grantees return money to the foundation.

“That’s not unusual. It happens.”

When contacted for comment, Robert Coy, now Vice President of Versacare, said through a spokesperson that he did not have a specific recollection of that grant money or the circumstances under which it was returned.

While returned grant money might not have been an exceptional occurrence for Versacare, according to sources it was unusual for ADRA.

“I cannot remember ADRA returning funds because it was reluctant to fulfill the programmatic activities,” said one source familiar with the program. “That was very unusual and unfortunate.”

“It’s unusual for ADRA. The idea is to spend the money,” said another.

Those involved with enditnow wonder what could have been. In the months after the initiative launched, there were reports of marches and signature gathering efforts worldwide.

“There’s no question in my mind that if the program would have continued on the trajectory it was on... that we would have gotten the million signatures,” Julio Muñoz said.

While there were always some voices that questioned a signature gathering campaign, it was never the end goal for enditnow organizers but only a beginning. To Charles Sandefur, championing ending violence against women had the potential to become a core theme of Adventist identity, another feature in the church’s public witness.

“We do it on religious liberty, we do it on temperance. We’ve done it institutionally through health and not smoking. We wanted this to be another one,” he said.

One source familiar with enditnow thought there would have been more tangible programs had the initiative continued.

“I believe that there would have been far more women’s projects going and funded through ADRA had the

Pastors are the gatekeepers of the churches, and so if we want to reach the most people, we need to educate the pastors.

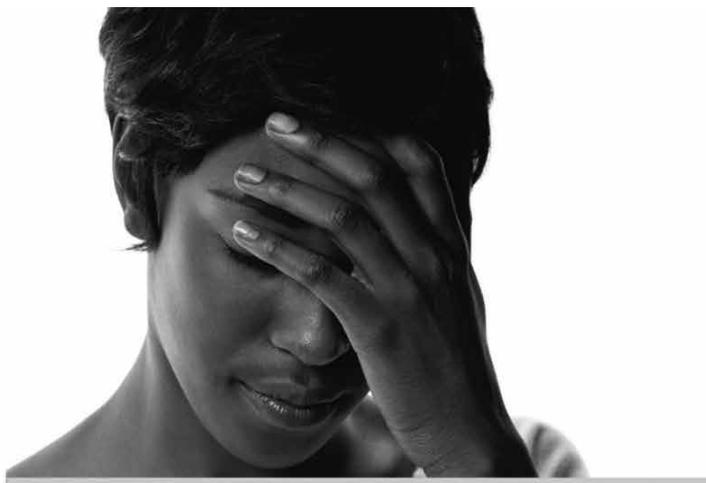
partnership [with Women's Ministries] continued," the source said.

Was there an inflection point close at hand in 2009 and 2010? The pieces were there: a movement with a global eye and a grassroots touch. At the same time, a fortuitous wealth of scientific research illuminated the specific problems of domestic violence within Adventism. Given more time, would the dots of mission, policy, advocacy, and research have been connected?

Reports continued to trickle in of enditnow events happening around the world. In 2011, the Jamaican Union Conference held what newspapers called a "mass rally." That year, the NAD held an enditnow summit geared toward pastors. In 2013, Adventists partnered with government officials in a number of South American countries, resulting in thousands of people taking to the streets in coordinated rallies and marches that were covered by major news outlets. In 2014, the NAD held another enditnow summit and, in 2015, ADRA transitioned its "Seven Campaign" on child abuse to be a part of enditnow.

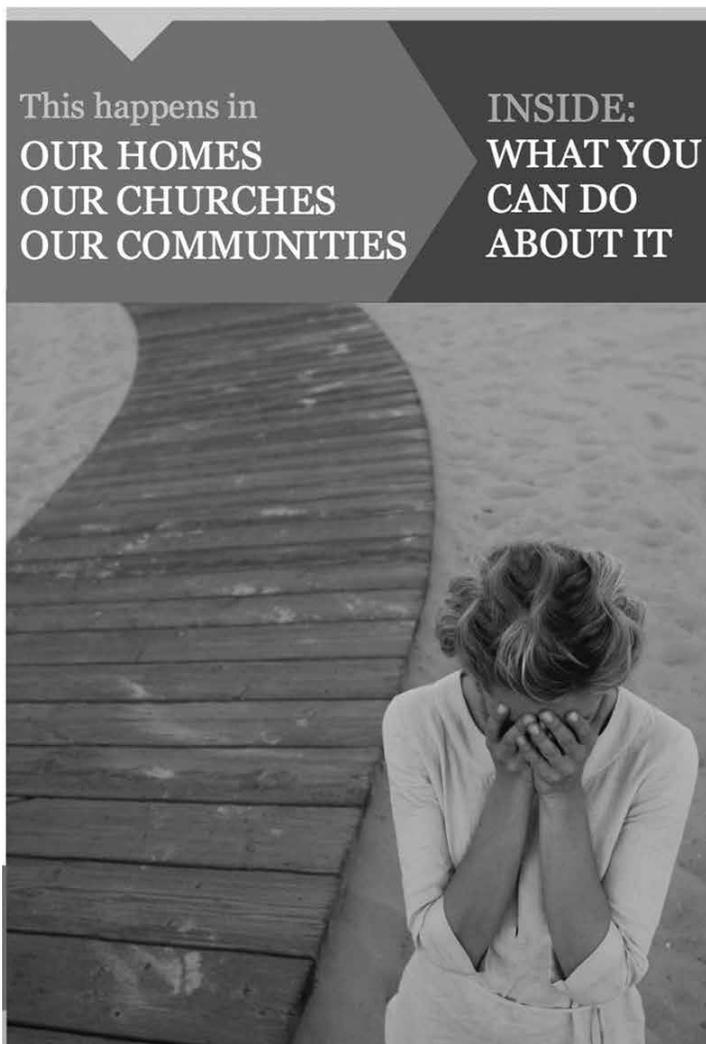
After watching the committee disband, Carla Baker decided focusing on pastors would be an effective way to continue enditnow in the NAD. "Pastors are the gatekeepers of the churches, and so if we want to reach the most people, we need to educate the pastors," she said.

Erica Jones became Assistant Director of NAD Women's Ministries in 2016 and saw an opportunity to do more in that vein. "I think the enditnow campaign had lost steam," Jones explained. "There wasn't one person saying, 'Hey, we've got to keep on with this.'... We needed somebody to take hold and re-energize it." Julio Muñoz also joined the NAD as Associate Director of Communication, and with strong advocates in the NAD, enditnow received a renewed energy. In 2017, rather than use the same



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format as past summits on abuse, the NAD live-streamed a series of speakers online—still targeted toward pastors—over two days. The online summit was watched by thousands worldwide.

In 2017, General Conference Executive Leadership broke its silence on enditnow. Ted Wilson, and his wife, Nancy, released separate video statements addressing enditnow. The Wilsons spoke against a full gamut of abuse,

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AGAINST THE VIOLENCE
TARGETED AT OUR WOMEN AND
CHILDREN**

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7100 | Saturday, 26th August | 3 pm**

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including child abuse, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation, and domestic violence.¹⁰

Among sources familiar with enditnow who were asked for their thoughts on the statements, reactions were mixed.

“That’s good,” said one source. “One of the roles of senior leadership is showing that they support what is happening.”

“It’s too little, too late,” said another.

“I think it’s good, but in terms of providing global leadership and global support for the program from the General Conference, that has not been there,” said a former ADRA official familiar with enditnow.

Dr. René Drumm continued to do related academic work after publishing the 2009 qualitative study. Since the research had shown Adventist women often sought help from the church, in 2017, Drumm and coauthors published a study that gave pastors a half-day domestic violence training and tested the results.

“We learned that there was a lot of good learning that took place,” Drumm said. Six- and twelve-month follow-ups showed some of the new knowledge was retained, while some was also lost.¹¹

“Our training on domestic violence can’t just be a one-shot deal,” Drumm said.

This latest study was another step toward having actionable material that the church could use if it wished to, and Drumm was no longer content to sit on the sideline, watching what she saw as an inadequate response. There were people who were passionate and there were resources—from pastor training to church policies to written publications—already in existence. Even though Drumm did not work for the church, she intended to turn nearly two decades of research into real and palpable change.

Along with former Andrews colleagues, Drumm—now working at the University of Southern Mississippi—planned a conference. “The purpose of the meeting was to bring together church leaders,” Drumm said, “To see if it is possible to do more than have a committee meeting, and to take actions that the church entities could endorse. Just basic agreement on things we can work together on.”

Attendees flew to Hawaii for two days of meetings in March 2018. There were representatives from Adventist universities and multiple NAD departments. Raquel Arrais, Assistant Director of Women’s Ministries, and Abner De Los Santos, General Vice President of the world church, also attended. The talk was direct; there were certain truths that all had to agree with before moving forward. Abuse is a problem in the Adventist Church. What needs to be done in terms of policy? What needs to be done in terms of resources?

After so many years wishing to see the progress her research called for, Drumm sat at a table united in purpose with both academics and church officials.

“It was amazing,” she said. “I was not disappointed.”

The 2018 NAD live-stream summit took place on September 24 and 25.

Speakers presented diverse topics, targeted at pastors but often relevant to a wider audience, addressing domestic violence but also pastor abuse and child sexual abuse. The first day was in Spanish, the second in English, and both days included presentations by abuse survivors.¹²

Throughout the years of work, Drumm always recognized the need to speak about domestic violence in terms that transcend numbers and statistics.

“I think that we need to keep looking for ways to really reach the hearts of pastors, not just their minds,” she said.

“One of the women who attended [the Hawaii] conference was a victim herself, an abuse survivor,” Erica Jones remembered. “She shared her story with us, and I don’t think there was a dry eye in the room. It really gave meaning and purpose, that this is about people.”

We spoke just once before, on the phone, briefly. I had been given only a name and a phone number. Talk to Karla.¹³ She is one amazing survivor.

On an early fall day, I traveled to her hometown and drove to the address she had provided. The colors of the maple, oak, and birch trees must have only just begun to turn in earnest, I thought, as the midday sun still warmed the air with a measure of the heat of summer, and I was beguiled into wearing short sleeves. Pulling up to her address, I saw a tidy yard on a quiet street. I had passed two Adventist churches on the way.

But of course, nothing about the drive had been remarkable, none of the turns surprising, the colors of the leaves just what I expected—for this had been my hometown, too.

When I began researching on enditnow and the Adventist Church’s handling of domestic violence, I expected to navigate various levels of church governance, wade through labyrinths of committees, parse official statements; yet I never thought I would end up back in my childhood hometown, the place where I had gone to church and school, where I had lived a generally blessed childhood.

And yet, perhaps there is no more fitting a way to understand domestic violence than to peel back the tranquil veneer of a place that you thought you knew, only to see the undergirding of pain and horror that existed all along.

Karla appeared on the porch, greeting me warmly as we entered her immaculate living room. Sitting down on the couch, that remnant summer light streamed through the window and onto my shoulders, also alighting on the tiny specks of dust that hovered in the still air. She told me her story.

I got married. Great guy.

No problems. Then he started becoming abusive, and he got into pornography, to make a long story short. About five years into our marriage, we had a daughter who was born with down syndrome. At the hospital, when we found out, he closed the door and told me, “You have a choice. If we were in a house burning down and you could only save one person, the baby or me, who would it be?”

And I said, “I wouldn’t choose. I would take both of you.” And he kept saying this over and over. “Then he started choking me, saying, “We can always have another child. You would choose me.” I feared for my baby’s life if I took her home, so I put her up for adoption. And at that point, a part of me died.

Perhaps there is no more fitting a way to understand domestic violence than to peel back the tranquil veneer of a place that you thought you knew, only to see the undergirding of pain and horror that existed all along.

Abuse starts slowly, and you get used to it. You learn to do things that make them happy, that don't make them mad.

Eventually Karla and her husband had two more children, but while they built what looked to outside observers to be the perfect family, the abuse only intensified.

The pornography got worse and the sexual abuse became worse. Through the years, he would tie me up and rape me. That was almost an everyday thing. I got to the point where I wanted to die. I could not keep living the way I was. Nobody at church knew—nobody knew. My husband was friends with all the pastors. He was a deacon. We would go to church and everybody thought we were just the perfect little family, but nobody knew what was happening behind closed doors.

One day on her way to work, Karla decided she would drive into a telephone pole and end the suffering. She had stepped on the accelerator with resolution when the radio started sounding louder and louder in her ears. A song was playing, "Choose life that you may live," the lyrics said.

She pulled the car over.

A few days later, a friend saw Karla rubbing her wrists. Only a few hours before, she had been bound by leather straps in her home, and her wrists still throbbed. Somehow, in that moment, it all came pouring out. She told her friend everything—the abuse, the rape, the suicide attempt.

"I had never told anybody."

The friend helped Karla make an appointment with a counselor.

"Through that, I was able to start telling somebody my deep, dark secret. I was ashamed. I felt so dirty, and I felt like nobody would believe me."

Karla went to the counselor in secret and always left her cellphone on, for her husband might call at any time and demand to know her location. The counselor convinced Karla to go to a women's shelter, run by Adventists, that was located out of town. To get permission from her husband, Karla told him it was a center for depression. When she arrived, she slept for two days straight; it was the first time she had been able to go to sleep without fearing something would happen during the night.

Eventually Karla returned home, but soon she would resolve to leave her husband for good. Even with that determination, her ordeal was far from over. She went to her pastor, hoping to receive help and guidance.

I went to his office and said, "My husband is abusing me." And I gave him some instances.

He looked at me, and he said, "I find that hard to believe. Do you want me to talk to him?" I don't remember what else he said after that. It was all muffled. I just remember getting up and saying, "Forget I was ever here." I was devastated. It was like a knife had been put in my back.

She made her way to the police station, where a domestic-violence officer helped prepare paperwork to put in place a restraining order and start legal proceedings. She felt safe going to the police because her husband was out of town, but just as she was leaving the station, her husband called and said he wanted to meet. Karla told him she was out running errands and to meet her at the grocery store. Frantic to do something with the police paperwork she was carrying, she opened the trunk, lifted the spare tire, and slid it into the tire well. They went shopping without incident, but when they came out with their groceries, Karla's heart skipped a beat. One of her tires was flat.

"I thought to myself, Lord, what are you doing to me?" But instead of taking out the spare tire, her husband

Doctrines about headship are espoused by many leaders, doctrines that regardless of the intention or sentiment are taken by abusers to justify their acts and create power imbalances.

decided to air up the flat at a nearby gas station and the paperwork remained hidden.

Karla filed for separation, but the nightmare was far from over. Her husband had used her name on bank paperwork and creditors came demanding payment, forcing her to declare bankruptcy. Life would go on, but she would always be haunted in so many ways by what had been.

“I was married for twenty-five years, and I was abused for twenty-five years.”

Karla leaned back on the sofa. Throughout telling her story, she had spoken with a measured tone, her voice steady and clear, only ever containing the faintest hint of a tremor as she spoke of those years, many of which blur together as her mind still struggles to comprehend the horror and fear that was everyday life. She is still active in her church, which she has never stopped attending, though it took years to feel like she was fully comfortable there again, without imagining that she heard whispers behind her back.

Listening to Karla, it was impossible not to think about the dimensionality of domestic violence. She had been abused physically, emotionally, sexually, even spiritually—her husband would quote Bible verses about wives submitting to their husbands and say God hates divorce.

Mustering the courage to even reach out to a leader at her church took enormous fortitude, for while Karla would have been much more comfortable going to another woman for help, there was not a single female pastor. The church was Karla’s haven and deepest network of support, but when she needed it most, when she went to her pastor looking for help to begin a path of liberation and healing, she was rebuffed with the most painful words she could imagine: I don’t believe you.

“What would it have meant to hear a sermon condemning abuse when you were still with your husband?” I asked. “Would it have meant something to hear a pastor tell you there were resources to get help?”

“Oh, definitely,” she said. “It would have given me some hope.”

All the complications were there in her story. While there are elements of Adventism that speak a message of healing and justice to the victim of domestic violence—

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godly relationships and a supportive faith community, for example—there are barriers and demons that must be reckoned with. Doctrines about headship are espoused by many leaders; doctrines, that regardless of the intention or sentiment, are taken by abusers to justify their acts and create power imbalances. Seventh-day Adventist faith leaders, whether at a local level or the highest church governance, remain a majority male, creating another barrier for understanding and a lack of facility for women victims reaching out for help.

Perhaps most of all, there is a need to lift the veil of secrecy and abandon the ill-guided belief that abuse is not a problem within Seventh-day Adventist communities. Data proves the extent of the problem, yet it takes the voices of survivors, men and women—but most often women—to tell their story; yet to be able to speak,

they need to feel they are not alone, and that their stories will be taken, believed, and acted upon.

Before #metoo became a worldwide phenomenon, there was enditnow. Its creators and proponents envisioned a bold wave of activism and programmatic change that would sweep Adventism, but also extend a hand to the entire world to unite with Adventism in an inexorable voice. Perhaps that opportunity passed by; perhaps that opportunity is around the corner. Perhaps enditnow is a hopelessly optimistic phrase—that the violence could ever end outright or that the change could happen immediately—but it also communicates an urgency that you will hear in the voices of those involved, both past and present.

Karla has traveled across her region and even the entire United States telling her story, to pastor trainings and women's conferences. Then this year she was invited to fly to Hawaii to sit at a table with an assortment of church leaders, telling her story and giving feedback about what resources might have helped her all those years ago when she sat in a pew, afraid to even admit to a survey that she suffered from abuse. There is pain in telling that story, but it also gives her purpose.

"I just hope more women speak out," she said.

End Notes

1. To hear Dr. René Drumm talk about the study, listen to Episode 25 of the Adventist Peace Radio podcast. A second interview also talks with Dr. Melissa Ponce-Rodas, assistant professor of psychology at Andrews University, about her research into domestic violence within Hispanic communities. <http://www.adventistpeace.org/blogcontent/2018/8/20/adventist-peace-radio-episode-25-intimate-partner-violence>.

2. There had been some previous academic work that also suggested the relationship between religion and domestic violence was more complicated than originally thought. See the following studies: Merlin B. Brinkerhoff, Elaine Grandin, and Eugen Lupri, "Religious Involvement and Spousal Violence: The Canadian Case," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 31, No. 1 (1992): 15–31. Christopher G. Ellison, and Kristin L. Anderson, "Religious Involvement and Domestic Violence Among U.S. Couples," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, No. 2 (2001): 269–86. For more on the complicated ways women survivors of domestic violence seek help from their faith communities, see the work of Dr. Nancy Nason-Clark, author of *The Battered Wife: How Christians Confront Family Violence* (1997).

3. The studies by René Drumm, et al, "Intimate Partner Violence in a Conservative Christian Denomination: Prevalence and Types," *Social Work & Christianity* 33, No. 3 (2006): 233–51. René D. Drumm, Marciana Popescu, and Matt L. Riggs, "Gender Variation in Partner Abuse," *Affilia* 24, No. 1 (2009): 56–68.

4. Charles Sandefur also chaired the Versacare Board but was not responsible for daily operations.

5. Sources familiar with the project were not certain about the exact number when asked for this story, but matching ADRA funds were likely no greater than the Versacare grant.

6. For a contemporaneous account of the launch see Megan Brauner, "Adventist Church, ADRA Launch Campaign to Stop Violence against Women," Adventist News Network, October 14, 2009. <https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2009-10-14/adventist-church-adra-launch-campaign-to-stop-violence-against-women/>.

7. Alita Byrd, "Looking for Lessons in the ADRA Leadership Change," *Spectrum* (Summer 2012): 38–50.

8. Rudi Maier left ADRA in 2012. When asked for comment on enditnow for this story, ADRA International provided the following statement:

A majority of the beneficiaries ADRA provides relief aid around the world are women and girls, who unfortunately at times are the most susceptible to domestic violence after a natural disaster occurs. In support of educational campaigns like End It Now [sic], ADRA affirms its commitment to protect its beneficiaries, including women and girls facing domestic violence, so they have the right to protection, may realize their worth, and live full meaningful lives free from violence, sexual exploitation, and all other forms of abuse. In countries where domestic violence is particularly rampant, ADRA has established places of refuge for women and girls to escape and recover from the emotional and physical trauma of abuse, but much work to tackle the issue of domestic violence is to be done. When people start by investing in initiatives like End It Now [sic], the livelihoods for women, girls, and everyone benefits. In turn, families are healthier, and communities are stronger.

9. Precise numbers from reporting in *Spectrum*, Summer 2012. Sources familiar with the situation were unable to remember precise numbers when asked for this story.

10. To read/watch the dual statements see: "Seventh-day Adventist Church President's Statement on END IT NOW," Adventist News Network, August 24, 2017. <https://news.adventist.org/en/all-news/news/go/2017-08-24/seventh-day-adventist-church-presidents-statement-on-end-it-now/>.

11. René D. Drumm, et al, "Clergy Training for Effective Response to Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure: Immediate and Long-term Benefits," *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 37, No. 1(2018): 77–93.

12. For an account of the 2018 summit, see the *Adventist Review* report: <https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story12947-adventist-church-does-not-tolerate-abuse-of-any-form>. Links to videos from the 2017 and 2018 summits can be found at enditnownorthamerica.org.

13. Karla is not her real name, but rather the name she uses when telling her story.



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by Marilyn McEntyre

for David and Judy

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consolation to the wakeful.

In the dark you discover
day, already begun.

The black branches
of the piñon tree
hold night like water.
Moonlight lingers on

rock and sand, slow
to let the earth resume
its dusty colors
after the silver hours.

The last star gives
way, submitting
to the greater light.