

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.

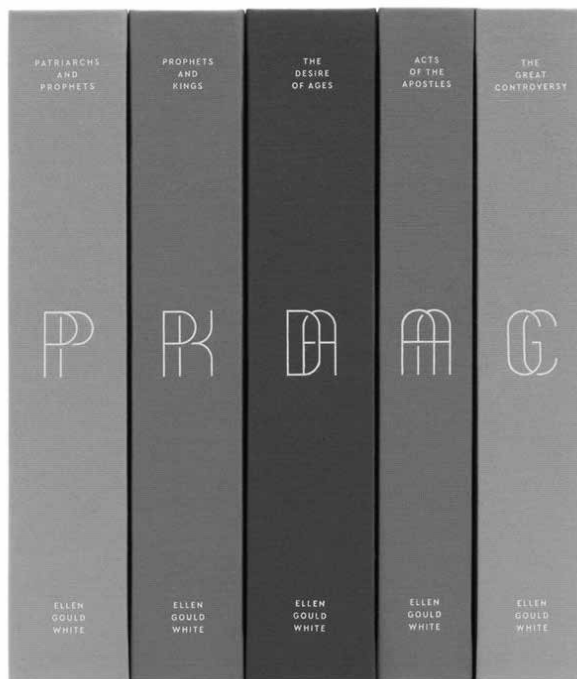
A. G. Daniells: Brother Chairman, I think there has been a misunderstanding among us. I protested against taking such a heavy topic the other day, under the circumstances, and I dismissed it from my mind, and have been thinking along another line, that of pastoral training, and a further discussion of 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

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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

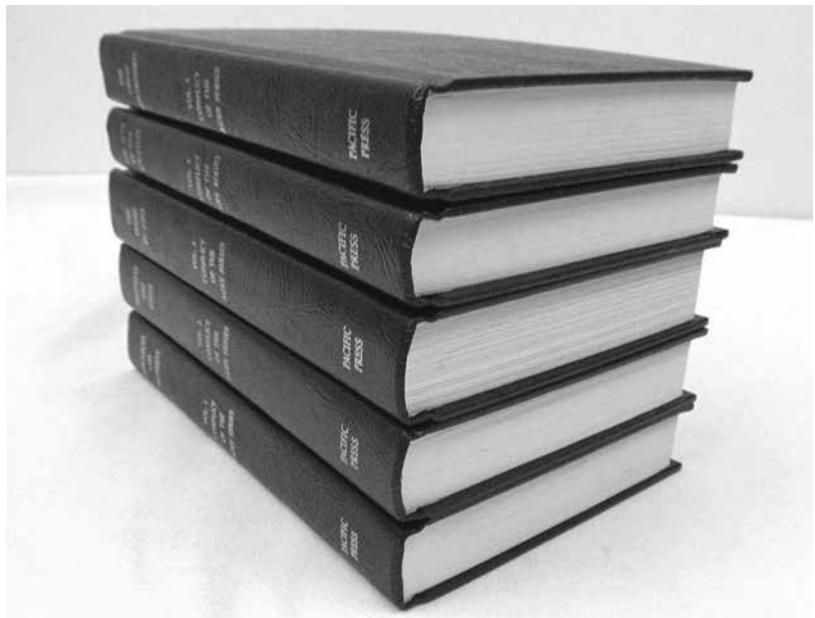
I know that I have enough faith in it to get forgiveness of my sins and companionship with my Lord and the hope of heaven. I know that, and a man that holds a different view need not try to depreciate my faith because I do not hold the same view that he does.

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.

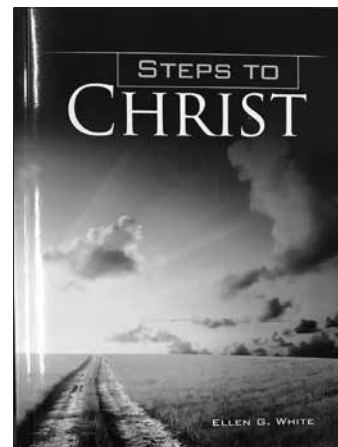
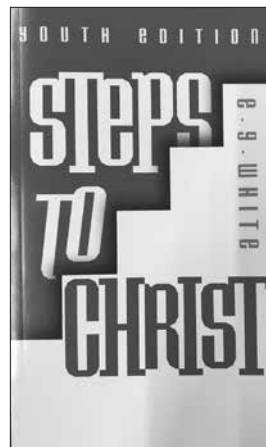
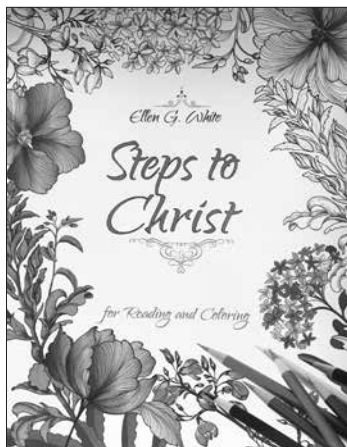
thought one was from the Lord and the other was not. But we certainly do have difficulty in showing the people which is human and which is divinely inspired.

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

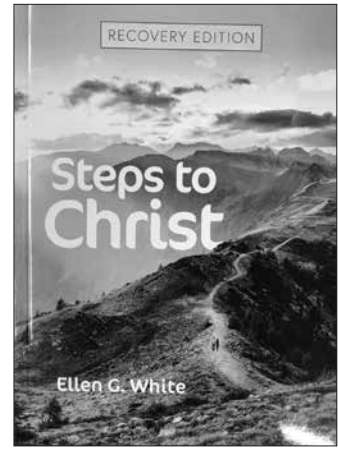
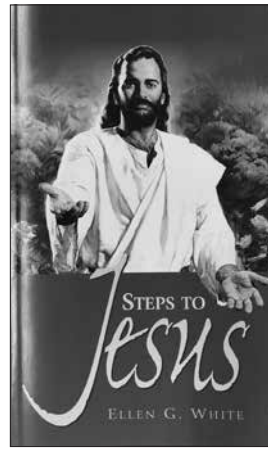
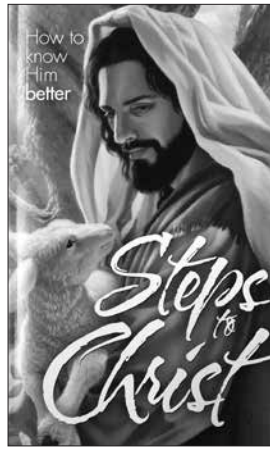
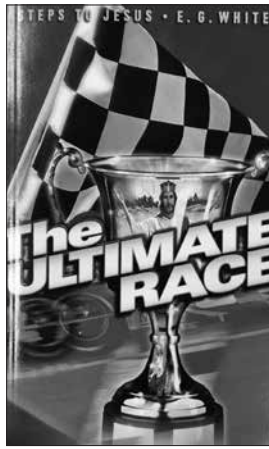
inspiration of the Testimonies is not in their verbal inspiration, but in their influence and power in the denomination. Now to illustrate: Brother Daniells and I were in Battle Creek at a special crisis, and word came to us that some special Testimonies were on the way to us from Sister White, and for 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.

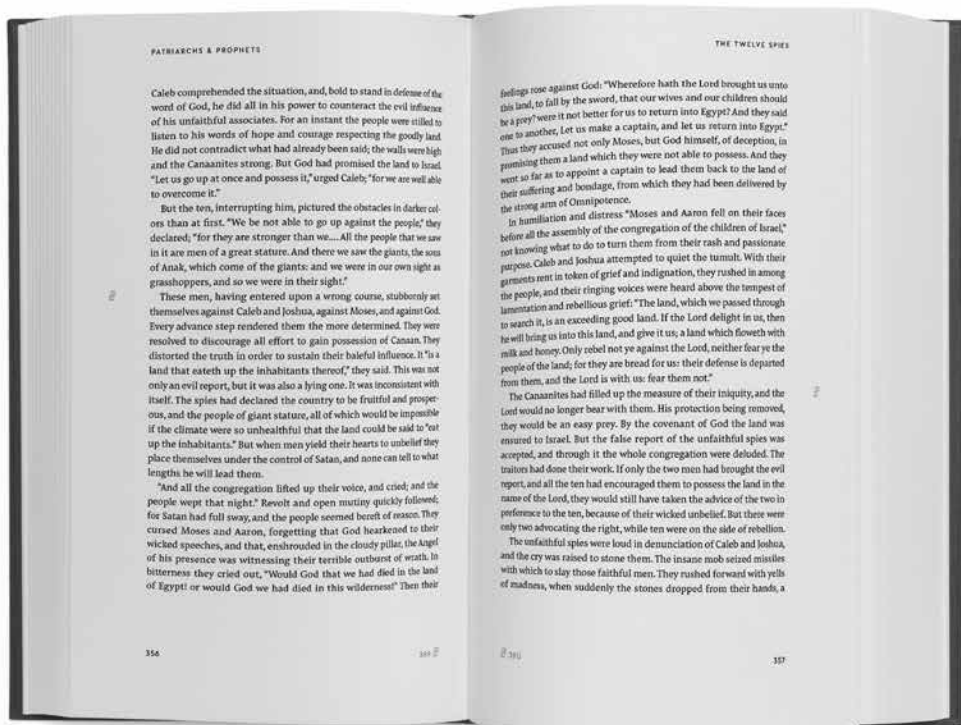
F. M. Wilcox: Articles were published in those early *Reviews* disclaiming that.

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.

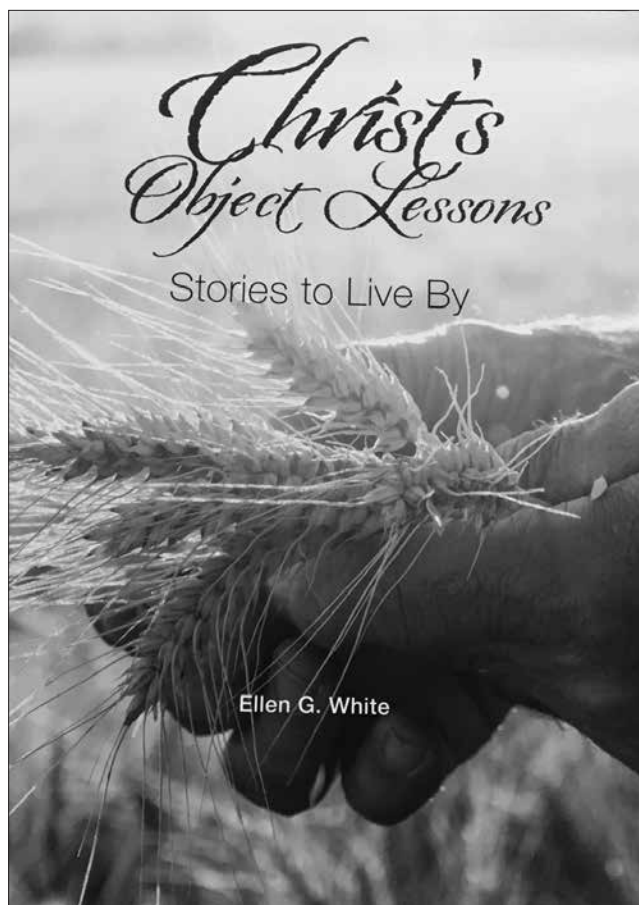
W. E. Howell: Yes, she outlines general principles.

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.

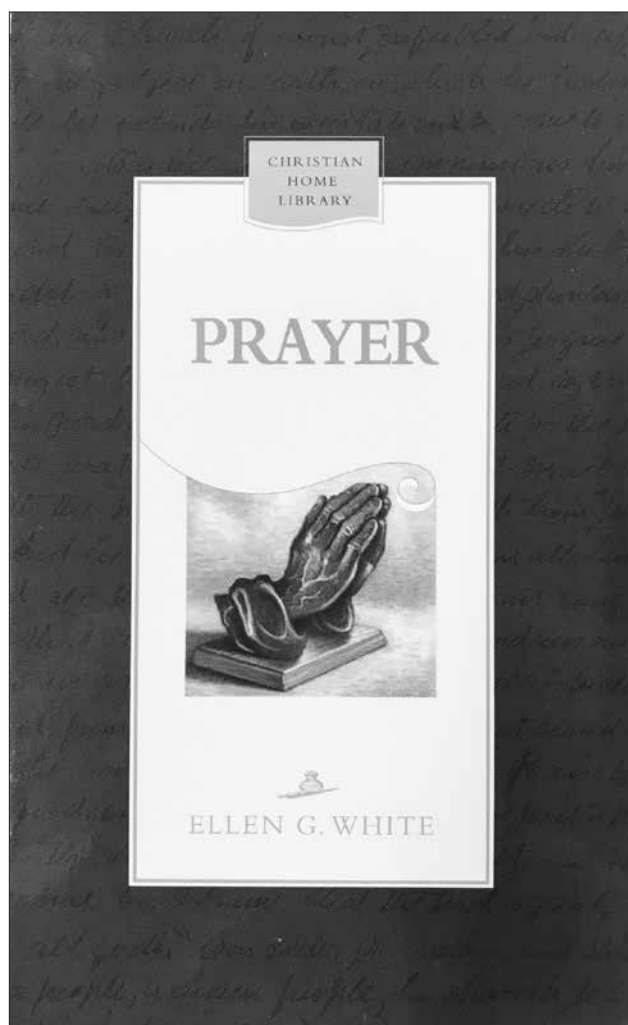
A. G. Daniells: Let us remember that, brethren, and not say a word that will misrepresent Brother Prescott.

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.