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ABSTRACT

IMAGE-OF-GOD MOTIF IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE:  
A SEARCH FOR A DISTINCT VOICE IN  
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

by

Kevin D. Grams

Chair: John V. G. Matthews

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: IMAGE-OF-GOD MOTIF IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE: A SEARCH FOR A DISTINCT VOICE IN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Name of researcher: Kevin D. Grams

Name and degree of faculty chair: John V. G. Matthews, Ph.D.

Date completed: April 2009

### Problem

Ellen White's image-of-God motif and its influence on Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy has not been examined thoroughly by thesis, dissertation, or other academic research. This dissertation is a significant effort toward fulfilling this need by examining and contextualizing White's writings on the image of God as well as examining the educational ramifications of the motif.

### Method

This is a historical/analytical investigation involving a search of Ellen White's writings to locate, identify, and examine passages that refer to the image of God, especially as it relates to education. These passages were then contextualized and studied

to determine how White used the motif in her writings. The historical chapters of this dissertation examine the context of her image-of-God motif while taking into consideration earlier and contemporary writers who might have utilized a similar concept.

### Conclusions

White's image-of-God motif is not original with her. However, her combination of the concepts relating to restoration of the image of God, holistic education, and a great controversy theme does appear to introduce a new approach. Adventist educators can build on this unique blend of concepts to develop an educational system that integrates directly the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions in a distinctive manner.

Andrews University

School of Education

IMAGE-OF-GOD MOTIF IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE:  
A SEARCH FOR A DISTINCT VOICE IN  
EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Kevin D. Grams

April 2009

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## PREFACE

### **Background and Overview**

A personal philosophy provides the “lens” through which one views life. What is deemed as “important to know” is informed by one’s philosophy or life perspective—one’s worldview. In educational circles, these philosophical questions are foundational in determining “what is of most worth” and in establishing reasons for a school’s existence. Philosophic perspectives, according to George Knight’s *Philosophy and Education*, “are major determinants of such practical educational considerations as teaching methodology, curricular focus, the role of the teacher, the function of the school in the social order, and the nature of the learner.”<sup>1</sup> Some have suggested that Ellen G. White, a “central figure” in the nineteenth-century emergence of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system, developed a unique philosophy that guided her insights into education.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, many Seventh-day Adventist educators believe that she was

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<sup>1</sup>George R. Knight, *Philosophy and Education: An Introduction in Christian Perspective*, 4th ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2006), xiii.

<sup>2</sup>George R. Knight, ed., *Early Adventist Educators* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 26. Note that White held a “biblical worldview” throughout her life. A biblical worldview is a theistic perspective that acknowledges the truths revealed in the Bible as authoritative in regard to origins, the human condition, the nature of the universe, the nature of God, moral and ethical questions and other areas of philosophical inquiry. The specifics of her worldview will be examined throughout the first three chapters of this dissertation.

prophetically inspired—adding additional weight to her statements.<sup>3</sup>

White has written abundantly on the topic of education. The compilations *Fundamentals of Christian Education*; *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*; and the book *Education* are three of her most detailed works on the subject.<sup>4</sup> A fourth work, *Counsels on Education*, contains all of White’s writings on education compiled from the nine-volume *Testimonies* set.<sup>5</sup> She also wrote many articles in various denominational publications that address the educational theme. Her overt writings concerning schooling began in 1872 with the publication of the tract, *Proper Education*, and continued until near her death in 1915.<sup>6</sup>

Various aspects of education were emphasized throughout this period. For example, the importance of balanced, holistic schooling appears early and is a theme that

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<sup>3</sup>The following statement is the official church position on Ellen White. “Seventh-day Adventists believe that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord’s messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.” General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988), 216.

<sup>4</sup>Ellen G. White, *Education* (1903; Reprint, Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1952); idem, *Fundamentals of Christian Education: Instruction for the Home, the School, and the Church* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1923); idem, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students* (1913; Reprint, Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1943).

<sup>5</sup>Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Education* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1968); idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948).

<sup>6</sup>The pamphlet “Proper Education” can currently be found within White’s compilation *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 15-46. It was originally published as *Testimony 22, Proper Education* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872).

continues throughout her life.<sup>7</sup> The 1881 article, “Our College,” emphasized the study of the Bible as being the foremost element in the curriculum while acknowledging the school’s role in providing a Christian environment for the study of the various subjects and disciplines (referred to as *the sciences* in White’s nineteenth-century vernacular).<sup>8</sup>

White was personally instrumental in founding a number of Adventist educational institutions: Battle Creek College (1874), Pacific Union College (1881), Madison College (1904), and the College of Medical Evangelists (1905).<sup>9</sup> Additional schools were founded because of her counsel—among them Oakwood College (1896), Union College (1891), and Walla Walla College (1892). In 1891, White sailed to Australia and there developed a “model” school based on her educational ideas. By 1896, the first buildings were erected at what became “Australasian Missionary College” where White played a commanding role in its initial development.<sup>10</sup> Religion classes, nature study, country living, agricultural labor, industrial training, and a practical emphasis to prepare students

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<sup>7</sup>White, *Education*, 15, 42. Throughout the footnotes of this dissertation, “White” will refer to Ellen G. White unless otherwise noted.

<sup>8</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:21-36. Edward Mansfield, writing in the mid-nineteenth century defined the word “science” as meaning any type of “systematical knowledge.” Edward D. Mansfield, *American Education: Its Principles and Elements; Dedicated to the Teachers of the United States* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1855), 96-97.

<sup>9</sup>In 1901, Battle Creek College moved to its current location in Berrien Springs and changed its name to Emmanuel Missionary College—today’s Andrews University. Pacific Union College was originally founded as Healdsburg Academy in 1881. A year later it became Healdsburg College. In 1909 it moved to its current location in Angwin, California. The College of Medical Evangelists is now called Loma Linda University. More information on the beginnings of Adventist education and the role of Ellen White in Adventist education can be found in Floyd Greenleaf, *In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 15-79.

<sup>10</sup>Australasian Missionary College is called Avondale College today. See Milton Hook, “The Avondale School, A Holy Experiment,” *Adventist Heritage* 7 (Spring 1982): 34-45.

for the hardships of missionary work contrasted sharply with the traditional classical style of education—with its reliance on theoretical mental training.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, early in the twentieth century, White assisted in moving the Adventist church toward greater academic accountability through the recommendation to allow the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University) to become a fully recognized medical school. This ultimately led to a general acceptance of academic accreditation within the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. Most of the institutions she was instrumental in founding still operate today, denoting the importance of White's influence in Seventh-day Adventist education.<sup>12</sup>

### **Statement of the Problem, Rationale, and Importance of Dissertation**

This study seeks to augment the ongoing debate concerning Seventh-day Adventist education and its benefit to society and the church. Although few would suggest that there is nothing distinct in the denomination's educational philosophy, some have expressed concern that denominational and public schooling are too much alike.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Chapter 1 of this dissertation briefly examines White's distaste for the traditional classical curriculum. Chapter 2 outlines some of the multitudinous attacks on the classical curriculum that took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Edward Miles Cadwallader, *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1975), 113.

<sup>12</sup>Knight, *Early Adventist Educators*, 46-47. Chapter 1 of this dissertation gives in-depth coverage of Ellen White's role in Adventist education.

<sup>13</sup>For example, see Raymond S. Moore, *Adventist Education at the Crossroads* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1976), 10-11; Colin D. Standish and Russell R. Standish, *Adventism Imperiled: Education in Crisis* (Rapidan, VA: Historic Truth Publications, 1984); and Carl D. Anderson, *Crises in Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1975).



On the other hand, some scholars propose that the Adventist integration of faith and learning provides a unique contribution to the educational debate.<sup>14</sup> Still others see Seventh-day Adventist education as integral to developing a communal consciousness in the church; that is, providing a counter-influence to mass culture in the hope of transforming modern society.<sup>15</sup> Recently, however, a number of leading Adventist theologians and educators have posited that the Great Controversy/Restoration Theme as interpreted by White is a unique perspective that Adventists contribute to the educational debate. This theme contrasts the soteriological restoration in humanity of the image of God with the work of Satan who seeks to deface and mar that image—resulting in a cosmic controversy between good and evil.<sup>16</sup>

This search for the philosophical distinctiveness of Adventist educational principles carries some significant implications as to how the church operates its educational system. Participants in the First International Conference on the Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education (April 2001) circulated a document that summarizes the denomination’s current philosophy and aims of Adventist schooling.<sup>17</sup> The statement reflects a broad consensus among the Adventist educators who attended the conference

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<sup>14</sup>James A. Tucker, Curriculum and Development class notes, EDCI 542, November 4, 1999, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. In my possession.

<sup>15</sup>Edwin I. Hernandez, “A Call for the Renewal of Adventism’s Communal Consciousness,” *JRCE* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001): 285-307.

<sup>16</sup>See Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1950), 664; idem, *The Desire of Ages* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1940), 37; idem, *Counsels on Diets and Foods* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976), 165.

<sup>17</sup>Humberto Rasi, “A Statement of Seventh-day Adventist Educational Philosophy,” *JRCE* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001): 347-355.

and upheld the role of the image-of-God motif in denominational educational philosophy.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, no definitive study has yet been undertaken to investigate the usage of the motif in the educational writings of White.

The image of God concept was selected for investigation because it examines in detail the anthropological dynamics of philosophy—the nature of humanity and ultimately one’s relationship to God.<sup>19</sup> It also upholds the biblical principle that “God created man in His own image.”<sup>20</sup> Although White acknowledges that sin nearly wiped out this image in man, she also emphasizes that Christ came to this earth to *restore* humanity’s lost potential by providing a plan of salvation. She explains it this way: “To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind and soul, that the divine purpose in His creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.”<sup>21</sup> This restoration theme helps illustrate the strong spiritual overtone to her anthropology, especially as it relates to education.

The interpretation of this “image of God” plays a significant role in informing the

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<sup>18</sup>The *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001) is a complete issue dedicated to these meetings.

<sup>19</sup>This dissertation uses the image-of-God motif to represent what White frequently called the restoration of the “image of God” in man. Though not a theologian, White nevertheless used this term in a functionally similar manner to the way theologians and philosophers use the *imago dei* to represent an aspect of metaphysics—the anthropological nature of humanity. See Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 16; David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: SCM Press, 1953), 10; Lois Le Bar, *Education That Is Christian* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1958), 5.

<sup>20</sup>Genesis 1:27.

<sup>21</sup>White, *Education*, 15-16.

educational vision, goals, principles, and methodologies necessary to create a balanced student who is both a contributing member of society and a candidate through spiritual preparation for the world to come.<sup>22</sup> White writes that the most important role a school can play is to lead students closer to God and ultimately fit them for heaven.

True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.<sup>23</sup>

Examining the implications of White's image-of-God motif can provide a forum for exploring the question of whether or not Adventist education has emerged with its own distinct philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the image-of-God motif in the writings of Ellen G. White. This involves investigating the historical context and educational implications of her concept of the image of God as well as examining the influence of her writings on Adventist education.

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<sup>22</sup>Carmen Siebold, "Where People Can See God," *Signs of the Times*, May 1998, 22.

<sup>23</sup>White, *Education*, 13.

<sup>24</sup>George Knight notes, "What seems so obvious to Adventist education—that education and redemption are one—may be the most unique contribution of Adventism to the world of educational philosophy." George R. Knight, "The Devil Takes a Look at Adventist Education," *JRCE* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001): 186.

## General Methodology

This analytic investigation involves a search of Ellen White's writings to locate, identify, and examine passages that refer to the image of God, especially as the motif relates to education. While this research is not a comparative study between White's perspectives and the schooling movements of her day, it nevertheless includes a chapter delving into the historical context of her writings—especially focusing on what other nineteenth-century writers were saying about the image-of-God motif. Understanding and explaining these historical findings will constitute another part of this study. This more subjective segment will explore possible ways in which the image-of-God motif can inform educational practice in Adventist schools.

It must also be noted that this dissertation is focused exclusively on what White meant when she wrote about the image-of-God motif and is not a discussion on the various theological expressions of that term. White never claimed to be a theologian, historian, or philosopher and as such did not limit her use of the motif to the constraints of academic discourse.<sup>25</sup>

With these points in mind, five chapters provide the outline for this dissertation. The first two chapters present a contextual background for achievement of the primary purpose of the dissertation, which is the research conducted in the writings of Ellen White in chapters 3 and 4. An initial descriptive segment introduces White and her writings, paying particular attention to the development of her philosophy as exemplified in the image-of-God motif and its relationship to the great controversy theme. The

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<sup>25</sup>Chapters 1 and 3 will examine this in detail.

influence of her writings on the development of Adventist education is also briefly examined.

A second chapter introduces the reader to White's image-of-God motif and the great controversy theme while building on the historical background supplied in the first chapter. The primary focus of this contextual section is to examine a selection of White's contemporaries to investigate whether or not religious and educational leaders of her time were utilizing a similar philosophy. It should be noted that this chapter is not an exhaustive comparative study of sources that might have influenced White's image of God motif. Although this would make an interesting future dissertation topic, such in-depth analysis is beyond the scope of this project. The sources examined are not necessarily those that White herself might have read, but rather, they are works that identify clearly the content of the image-of-God and great controversy debates as these were being discussed in North America in the nineteenth century. The third chapter explores White's use of the "restoration of the image of God" concept within the broader cosmological context of the great controversy theme. The focus is on White's mature presentation of this theme as exemplified in her Conflict of the Ages series, especially *Desire of Ages*; *Great Controversy*; and *Patriarchs and Prophets*. These books trace the great controversy between good and evil from the fall of Lucifer in heaven to the return of Christ to this earth, and the establishment of His eternal kingdom. The soteriological image-of-God motif is analyzed within this framework.

Although the main emphasis of this dissertation examines the restoration of the image of God, this concept cannot be divorced from the overarching great controversy theme in understanding White's anthropology. Hence, the interaction between the

image-of-God motif and the great controversy theme will be of special interest to this presentation. It should be noted however that this dissertation is concerned with the great controversy theme only as it directly relates to the image-of-God motif. This is not a study of the great controversy theme itself. The image-of-God motif will be primarily investigated by examining White's four principal books on schooling: *Education; Fundamentals of Christian Education; Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*; and *Counsels on Education*. Other significant examples from her writings that deal with the restoration theme will also be discussed as needed.

The fourth chapter of this dissertation focuses on the educational implications of the image-of-God motif. Special attention is given to the interconnecting roles of education and redemption in White's educational philosophy. The impact of this philosophy on the mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of humanity constitutes a portion of this chapter. This chapter also addresses the role of the image-of-God motif in fostering creative and innovative ideas for a distinct and consistent system of Adventist education.

A summary chapter concludes this dissertation by offering some possible directions for change and future development in Adventist education. Perhaps this investigation will stimulate others to bring additional expertise and insights into this exploration. Such interaction can make the findings even more relevant and useable.

### **Review of Related Literature**

While the role of the image-of-God motif seems well known in Adventist circles, few works directly analyze the motif's relationship to Ellen White's educational philosophy. A review of Adventist periodicals reveals many articles that discuss the

restoration theme, but few of these offer any in-depth analysis of the subject—especially as it relates to education.<sup>26</sup>

Recently, however, a number of scholarly articles addressing aspects of the image-of-God motif have been included in a special edition of the *Journal of Research on Christian Education*.<sup>27</sup> These papers were originally presented at the First International Conference on the Adventist Philosophy of Education. In this issue, Jon Paulien explores the image of God from a biblical perspective. His article traces how this theme is present throughout the pages of Scripture.<sup>28</sup> Paul Brantley addressed the image-of-God motif directly in a paper presented at the same conference. Brantley contrasted the motif with conventional humanistic and materialistic educational paradigms while noting how the image-of-God motif as used by White bears a distinct philosophy based on “love.”<sup>29</sup>

George Knight’s presentation, “The Devil Takes a Look at Adventist Education,” emphasizes that White “placed the human [sin and redemption] problem at the very center of the educational enterprise.”<sup>30</sup> His subsequent presentation examined “Adventist Educational Aims” observing that White framed her conception of education within the

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<sup>26</sup>For example, this need is highlighted in George Akers, “Proper Education,” *Journal of Adventist Education* 52 (October-November 1989): 8-11.

<sup>27</sup>*Journal of Research on Christian Education* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001).

<sup>28</sup>Jon Paulien, “The Image of God and Educational Philosophy: A Biblical Construct?” *JRCE* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001): 227-257.

<sup>29</sup>Paul Brantley, “A Case for a Christocentric Epistemology Based upon *Imago Dei*,” <http://circle.adventist.org/browse/resource.phtml?leaf=2161> (accessed 4 July 2008).

<sup>30</sup>Knight, “The Devil Takes a Look,” 175-194.

context of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.<sup>31</sup> Herbert Douglass noted the interrelation between the great controversy theme and the restoration of the image of God in several articles that can be found both in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education* and at the CIRCLE website.<sup>32</sup> Don Roy has created a number of curriculum guides that examine the uniqueness of Adventist education by noting the role of the motif in the denominational paradigm.<sup>33</sup>

Several recent dissertations also cover aspects of White's image-of-God motif. Erling Snorrason outlined how the restoration of the image of God was central to White's aims of education. This is one of the best summaries of the motif's role in White's educational philosophy to date.<sup>34</sup> Ruth Abbott briefly noted how White's restoration motif advocated a holistic and healthy lifestyle, whereas Linda Caviness examined how the motif encourages each person to reach their full potential.<sup>35</sup>

This awareness of the importance of the image-of-God motif in White's writings

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<sup>31</sup>George R. Knight, "The Aims of Adventist Education in Historical Perspective," *JRCE* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001): 195-225.

<sup>32</sup>Herbert Douglass, "Spirit of Prophecy Perspectives: Education's Grand Theme," *JRCE* 10 (Special Edition, Summer 2001): 259-283; Herbert Douglass, "How the Book, *Education*, Unfolds the Great Controversy Theme," <http://circle.adventist.org/download/EdThemeGC.pdf> (accessed 3 July 2008).

<sup>33</sup>Don Roy, "Toward Wholeness: The Special Character of Adventist Education," <http://circle.adventist.org/browse/resource.phtml?leaf=3710> (accessed 4 July 2008).

<sup>34</sup>Erling Snorrason, "The Aims of Education in the Writings of Ellen G. White" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2005), 178-231.

<sup>35</sup>Ruth Duncan Abbott, "A Comparison of the Health Beliefs of Florence Nightingale and Ellen G. White and the Incorporation of Them into Their Respective Schools of Nursing" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2001), 146; Linda Caviness, "Educational Brain Research as Compared with E. G. White's Counsels to Educators" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2000), 21, 251-256.



was also noted in earlier dissertations and theses. Leroy Moore's dissertation, "Ellen G. White's Concept of Righteousness by Faith as It Relates to Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Issues," dedicates a whole chapter to investigating White's philosophy on the nature of man.<sup>36</sup> The main thrust of Moore's dissertation is to study White's ideas on righteousness by faith, but he also gives attention to her views on the nature of man and its relation to denominational educational practice. John Fowler's dissertation, "The Concept of Character Development in the Writings of Ellen G. White," examines the importance of White's restoration theme—especially as it relates to character development.<sup>37</sup> Walter Howe's 1949 M.A. thesis on White's educational philosophy notes in several places the importance the motif played in White's educational philosophy.<sup>38</sup>

One of the most helpful books that emphasizes the connection between philosophy and schooling from a "White-informed" Adventist perspective is George Knight's *Philosophy of Christian Education*, which examines educational philosophy from a Christian perspective.<sup>39</sup> Paul Nash's book, *Models of Man: Explorations in the Western Educational Tradition*, is a work that underscores the importance of

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<sup>36</sup>Leroy A. Moore, "Ellen G. White's Concept of Righteousness by Faith as It Relates to Contemporary Seventh-day Adventist Issues" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1980).

<sup>37</sup>John M. Fowler, "The Concept of Character Development in the Writings of Ellen G. White" (Ed.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1977).

<sup>38</sup>Walter Howe's thesis is examined in detail in chapter 1 of this dissertation. Walter Albert Howe, "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Education" (M.A. thesis, Texas Christian University, 1949).

<sup>39</sup>Knight, *Philosophy and Education*. Note that Knight's *Philosophy and Education* has been revised four times since 1980, denoting the book's wide acceptance in both Adventist and evangelical circles.

philosophical anthropology in determining one's priorities in education.<sup>40</sup> James Sire's *The Universe Next Door* explains how one's worldview determines what values are important to teach in schools. Both Sire and Knight examine various philosophical worldviews and the implications these have on education.<sup>41</sup> Knight's book, *Myths in Adventism*, emphasizes in several places the importance of anthropology in understanding White's "primary aim" in education—education as redemption through restoring His image in man.<sup>42</sup> All these books are helpful in discovering and analyzing White's distinct, biblical worldview—a worldview perspective that is informed by her conception of a great controversy between Christ and Satan.<sup>43</sup>

A widely used synopsis of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs can be found in the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*.<sup>44</sup> This summarizes the way many Adventists perceive White's prophetic role. One of the most comprehensive works that investigates her prophetic role is Herbert Douglass's *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White*.<sup>45</sup> He dedicates a chapter in his book to explaining how the great

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<sup>40</sup>Paul Nash, *Models of Man: Explorations in the Western Educational Tradition* (New York: Wiley, 1968).

<sup>41</sup>Note that "worldview" refers to an individual's philosophical perspective on life. It explores answers to the basic questions of life—questions dealing with the natures of reality, humanity, knowledge, truth and ethics. See James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 16-19. A biblical worldview such as Ellen White's uses insights drawn from the Bible to answer life's fundamental questions.

<sup>42</sup>George R. Knight, ed., *Myths in Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985), 49, 51.

<sup>43</sup>See chapter 3 for an in-depth discussion on White's great controversy worldview.

<sup>44</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988).

<sup>45</sup>Herbert Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1998).

controversy theme is foundational to White's worldview.<sup>46</sup> Douglass portrays Christ as seeking to "vindicate His character and to restore in men and women the image of God."<sup>47</sup>

A number of books examine the context and scope of White's life and writings. Arthur L. White has written a six-volume biography examining her life that is useful in placing many of her writings in their historical context.<sup>48</sup> George Knight has also published a series of accessible books that introduces readers to White's prophetic ministry. Knight places a special emphasis on contextualizing her writings within the milieu of the times. He explores potential contradictions and areas of common confusion that are often caused by overlooking context or misreading White's writings.<sup>49</sup> Knight also notes the role of the great controversy theme and the restoration motif in White's portrayal of the plan of salvation.

Gary Land edited *Adventism in America*, which explores the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America and traces theological and cultural developments that have affected and challenged the church over the years. Land also edited *The World of Ellen G. White*, which offers a historical snapshot into the culture

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 256.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 257.

<sup>48</sup>Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, 6 vols. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1981-1986).

<sup>49</sup>George R. Knight, *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Writings and Major Themes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996); idem, *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997); idem, *Ellen White's World: A Fascinating Look at the Times in Which She Lived* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998); idem, *Walking with Ellen White: Her Everyday Life as a Wife, Mother and Friend* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1999).

from which White wrote.<sup>50</sup> Ronald Numbers's *Prophetess of Health* positions White's writings within the health reform movement of her day—a thesis that generated a significant amount of discussion about the nature of White's prophetic role.<sup>51</sup> Many works were subsequently written exploring the prophetic ministry in the church, some of which were compiled in Roger Coon's *Anthology of Published Essays and Monographs on Contemporary Issues in Prophetic Guidance*.<sup>52</sup>

Land observed in the 1980s that one challenge of investigating the early Seventh-day Adventist educational record is that there is not a “comprehensive history” written on the subject.<sup>53</sup> In 2005 Floyd Greenleaf fulfilled this need by writing the most comprehensive guide to the history of Adventist education to date.<sup>54</sup> In this book he outlines White's significant contributions to the rise and development of Adventist education. A number of other works examine Adventist schools individually, and are helpful in “getting a picture” of the various ways Adventist schools began and the significant role of White's philosophical guidance. These include Emmet K. Vandere's *The Wisdom Seekers* and more recently Meredith Jones Gray's *As We Set Forth*,

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<sup>50</sup>Gary Land, ed., *Adventism in America: A History* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1986); idem, *The World of Ellen G. White* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1987).

<sup>51</sup>Ronald Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

<sup>52</sup>Roger W. Coon, *Anthology of Published Essays and Monographs on Contemporary Issues in Prophetic Guidance* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987).

<sup>53</sup>Land, *Adventism in America*, 296.

<sup>54</sup>Greenleaf, *In Passion for the World: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*.

which focus on the beginnings of Andrews University.<sup>55</sup> Ira Gish and Harry Christman's *Madison: God's Beautiful Farm* tells the story of the founding and growth of Madison College.<sup>56</sup> Walter Utt's history of Pacific Union College is chronicled in *A Mountain, A Pickax, A College*.<sup>57</sup> Union College's early history is discussed in David D. Rees and Everett Dick's *Union College: Fifty Years of Service* and Everett Dick's subsequent *Union: College of the Golden Cords*.<sup>58</sup> Medardo Marroquin's dissertation, "The Historical Development of the Religion Curriculum at Battle Creek College, 1874-1901," offers a detailed history of the early days of Battle Creek College and its curricular struggles.<sup>59</sup> All of these works note the significant role of White's guidance in the development of Adventist education.

Maurice Hodgen's *School Bells and Gospel Trumpets* is a compilation of primary sources referencing the earliest years of Adventist schools and is interesting in noting White's influence in their development.<sup>60</sup> The role of White in founding a number of

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<sup>55</sup>Emmet K. Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1972); Meredith Jones Gray, *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College and Emmanuel Missionary College* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002).

<sup>56</sup>Ira Gish and Harry Christman, *Madison: God's Beautiful Farm* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979).

<sup>57</sup>Walter Utt, *A Mountain, A Pickax, A College* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1996).

<sup>58</sup>Everett N. Dick and David D. Rees, *Union College: Fifty Years of Service* (Lincoln, NE: Union College Press, 1941); Everett N. Dick, *Union: College of the Golden Cords* (Lincoln, NE: Union College Press, 1967).

<sup>59</sup>Medardo Marroquin, "The Historical Development of the Religion Curriculum at Battle Creek College, 1874-1901" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 2002).

<sup>60</sup>Maurice Hodgen, *School Bells and Gospel Trumpets: A Documentary History of Seventh-day Adventist Education in North America* (Loma Linda, CA: Adventist Heritage Publications, Loma Linda University Library, 1978).

Adventist educational institutions is documented in Edward Miles Cadwallader's book, *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*, which gives abbreviated histories of various denominational schools—both secondary and collegiate.<sup>61</sup> George Knight's *Early Adventist Educators* gives excellent profiles of pioneering Adventist educators, including Ellen White, and is especially helpful in the context of this dissertation.<sup>62</sup>

Several other books have been used extensively in this dissertation to help contextualize White's writings. Randy Maddox's *Responsible Grace* offers an interpretation of John Wesley's Methodist theology that is helpful in understanding White's own Methodist background and her concern for holistic growth.<sup>63</sup> Nineteenth-century writers Ira Mayhew and Edward Mansfield have each written books that explore broad, holistic models of education that to some extent share a concern with White for restoring the image of God in students through formal education. These authors will be discussed in detail in chapter 2 of this dissertation.<sup>64</sup>

Regarding the writings of White, abundant resources can be found in her various published works through the Ellen G. White Estate and in other Adventist archives.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Cadwallader, *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*.

<sup>62</sup>Knight, *Early Adventist Educators*.

<sup>63</sup>Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1994).

<sup>64</sup>Ira Mayhew, *The Means and Ends of Universal Education* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1857); Edward Mansfield, *American Education: Its Principles and Elements*.

<sup>65</sup>“The Ellen G. White Estate, Incorporated, is an organization created by the last will and testament of Ellen G. White to act as her agent in the custody of her writings, handling her properties, ‘conducting the business thereof,’ ‘securing the printing of new translations,’ and the ‘printing of compilations from my manuscripts.’” The Ellen G. White Estate, Inc. “The Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.,” <http://www.whiteestate.org/about/estate.asp> (accessed 29 June 2008).

Nearly all these resources are readily available in major denominational libraries, on CD-ROMs, and through online sources.

## CHAPTER I

### A HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS OF ELLEN WHITE'S WRITINGS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADVENTIST EDUCATIONAL THEORY

#### **History and Background of Ellen G. White's General Writings**

Ellen White (1827-1915) has a commanding presence in Seventh-day Adventism. Throughout her lifetime, she channeled the energies of many Adventist adherents toward accomplishing diverse goals and reforms. Arthur White, who for many years was secretary/director of the Ellen G. White Estate, contended that if the Adventist members had not believed that she was a prophetic messenger from God, then the cohesive spirit of innovation that characterized the Adventist Movement of her day might never have occurred. No other leader in the denomination could command such respect.<sup>1</sup> Her timely messages frequently advocated change, and arguably she had greater influence than any other leader in the church.<sup>2</sup>

As has occurred with a number of other enigmatic religious leaders in American history—such as Joseph Smith of the Mormons or Mary Baker Eddy of the Christian

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur L. White, *The Early Years: 1827-1862*, Ellen G. White 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985), 16. The Ellen G. White Estate was established to oversee the dissemination of her writings. More information on the White Estate, its duties, and programs can be found at <http://www.whiteestate.org>.

<sup>2</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 97.



Science persuasion—many Seventh-day Adventists came to see Ellen White as possessing supernatural prophetic insights. For example, Roger Coon, an Adventist educator, has written extensively about the manifestations accompanying White’s writings—from dramatic visions and fulfilled predictions to uncanny exposés of the secret sins of others.<sup>3</sup> Although in today’s world such manifestations might be viewed as rather eccentric, in the nineteenth-century world of Ellen White Christianity was going through a “creative and experimental” stage.<sup>4</sup> Adventists and their prophet were not unusual in a world where many unconventional religious voices proliferated. Ellen White’s influence, coupled with Adventism’s unique doctrines, seemed to anchor denominational distinctiveness when American religion was in this state of flux.

### Ellen White’s Vibrant Conception of Truth

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, Adventism manifested a vibrant spirit.<sup>5</sup> This vibrancy and innovation stemmed largely from White’s penchant for progressive reform and became characteristic of the Adventist church in those days.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Roger W. Coon, *A Gift of Light* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1983), 20-35; see also Herbert Douglass, *Dramatic Prophecies of Ellen White: Stories of World Events Divinely Foretold* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup>Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1989), 88. (Note that the words “creative and experimental” were edited out of Bull and Lockhart’s second edition.) A major thesis of Whitney Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950), illustrates this point.

<sup>5</sup>For a detailed examination of the progressive nature of the early Adventist conception of “present truth” see George Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 17-28.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

Herbert Douglass, who has done extensive research in White's writings, noted that throughout her life she advocated the principle of growth. Accordingly, her perspectives matured over time as she continued to learn and grow into a fuller understanding of God's truths.<sup>7</sup> White perceived new truths as building upon previously discovered insights found in Scripture. Following her lead, Adventists began developing an almost oxymoronic progressive conservatism that "combined both conservatism and reform."<sup>8</sup>

Within the maturing epistemological concepts of White's writings, one should note the consistent lens by which she viewed truth and revelation. She never slavishly followed any predetermined rules of systematic theology or philosophy. Adventist pioneer Arthur Daniells (1858-1935), who knew White personally, testified that she did not claim to be a historian or a "dogmatic teacher on theology."<sup>9</sup> Yet on occasion, if today's reader focuses on her early writing when her philosophical worldview was in an embryonic stage of development, and then upon her later writings, one might find what appears to be a contradictory emphasis. George Knight accounts for this apparent discrepancy by suggesting that White's writings had a certain flexibility.<sup>10</sup> The Adventism of her time tended to avoid views such as the fundamentalist position on the

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<sup>7</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 457.

<sup>8</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 12.

<sup>9</sup>Arthur G. Daniells, "The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Teaching of Bible and History" (Document on file, 19 June 1919, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI); reprinted in *Spectrum* 10, no. 1 (May 1979): 34.

<sup>10</sup>George Knight discusses this concept in his "Myth of the Inflexible Prophet," in *Myths in Adventism*, ed. Knight, 17-25.

inerrancy of the Bible, a belief which magnified the verbal inspiration of Scripture.<sup>11</sup> Instead, there is abundant evidence indicating White's affinity with thought inspiration coupled with continual growth toward objective truth.<sup>12</sup> This flexibility characterized the development of White's relevant and vibrant ministry.

### Adventism's Female Leader and Crusader

The times may have been ripe for progressive growth, yet it was not easy to be both a woman and a leader in the nineteenth century. White's success came despite the prejudices of the age. Throughout the history of the world women have generally taken a subservient role to men. In the nineteenth century, many felt that if a woman studied rigorously or wrote frequently, she might faint and collapse due to the mental strain, and suffer life-endangering injuries.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps these prejudices made White more sensitive to the interests of other minorities—be they racial, gender, or religious.

Additionally, such themes as equality, freedom, and independent choice were woven into the fabric of her great controversy perspective. While the United States was hailing itself as a “Manifest Destiny” power—destined to subjugate the entire Western Hemisphere under a Christian America, White pessimistically wrote that in the future America would evolve into a persecuting beast that would eventually trample minority

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<sup>11</sup>Ellen White shared concerns with fundamentalists regarding the theory of evolution, for example. Nevertheless, neither she nor the denomination's official statements advocated verbal inspiration, though it seems that many Adventist members did. See pages 66-70, for a discussion on fundamentalists, verbal inspiration, and Seventh-day Adventism.

<sup>12</sup>See Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 1:21, 24-26, 37; idem, *Great Controversy*, vii; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:706.

<sup>13</sup>David M. Kennedy, Lizabeth Cohen, Thomas A. Bailey, and Mel Piehl, *The Brief American Pageant*, 6th ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 205.

freedoms.<sup>14</sup> She sought to avoid the religious narrowness and racial bigotry that characterized some of the thinking of her day. As a result, White actively worked to educate and uplift the freed slaves of the South after the American Civil War. Some of her writings on this topic have been compiled in a book entitled *The Southern Work*.<sup>15</sup> Originally published in 1898, it is composed of excerpts from letters written by White between 1891 and 1899. It also includes a series of *Review and Herald* articles published in 1895 and 1896.<sup>16</sup> Ronald Graybill has explored White's stance against racial intolerance in his book, *E. G. White and Church Race Relations*.<sup>17</sup> This openness by White enabled her writings to reach a broader scope of readers despite their race, gender, and even religious persuasion. Her ministry also benefited the church by fostering significant membership growth throughout her lifetime, a trend which continues even in the twenty-first century.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>For example, see White, *Great Controversy*, 440-443. One detailed interpretation of this concept is outlined in Clifford Goldstein's *Day of the Dragon: How Current Events Have Set the Stage for America's Prophetic Destiny—The Great Controversy Vindicated* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993). See page 141 for a definition of Manifest Destiny.

<sup>15</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Southern Work* (1898; reprint, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1966).

<sup>16</sup>Note that *Review and Herald* commonly refers to the official Adventist publication *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. A number of name changes have occurred over the years. In 1849 James and Ellen White published *The Present Truth* magazine, the forerunner of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. Since that time the name has been changed to *The Advent Review*, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (and variations) and in 1978, *Adventist Review*, the name it retains to this day (2008).

<sup>17</sup>Ronald Graybill, *E. G. White and Church Race Relations* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970).

<sup>18</sup>Ciro Sepulveda, *The Troubles and Triumphs of an American Prophet* (Huntsville, AL: Oakwood University Press, 2002), 253. Sepulveda's book, though lacking in documentation, emphasizes Ellen White's progressive and tolerant attitude toward minorities, especially within the context of her times. Sepulveda has also edited an informative book on the topic, *Ellen White*

## Ellen White's Optimistic Legacy

Ellen White emerged from uneducated obscurity to, as one author stated, “become the guiding force behind one of the fastest growing religious movements of the twentieth century.”<sup>19</sup> As will be discussed thoroughly in a later chapter, she tirelessly advocated an optimistic anthropology that saw regenerate humanity accomplishing great things by the grace of God.<sup>20</sup>

White's writings played an important role in the development of each major innovation that later characterized the Seventh-day Adventist Church: Publishing (1850s), health reform (1860s), and education (1870s).<sup>21</sup> Extending to the present, White's written legacy has inspired hundreds of educational institutions around the world.<sup>22</sup> Her health ideas spawned a proliferation of vegetarian restaurants and food factories in all the inhabited continents. Numerous clinics, hospitals, and sanitariums, many still in operation, were founded upon the ideas expressed in her books.<sup>23</sup>

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*on the Color Line: The Idea of Race in a Christian Community* (Leominster, MA: Biblos Press, 1997).

<sup>19</sup>Sepulveda, *Troubles and Triumphs*, 15.

<sup>20</sup>Chapter 3 of this dissertation covers her optimistic anthropology in detail.

<sup>21</sup>Note that the denominational name and church structure did not emerge until 1860 and 1863 respectively. *SDA Encyclopedia*, 1966 ed., s.v. “SDA Church”; Richard Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant: Denominational History Textbook for Seventh-day Adventist College Classes* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979), 72-77 (publishing), 106-109 (health), 120-127 (education).

<sup>22</sup>Ellen White's role in the founding of a number of schools will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>23</sup>Dores Robinson outlines the rise and development of the Adventist medical ministries in his book, *The Story of Our Health Message: The Origin, Character and Development of Health Education in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing

Surprisingly, White had only the equivalent of an early elementary education, yet wrote so much material that it would eventually fill over one hundred thousand pages of manuscripts, periodicals, articles, and tracts.<sup>24</sup>

It is unlikely these developments would have transpired if she had been merely a mediocre, uninspiring writer, slavishly tied to her own era. To accomplish such a literary feat Ellen White needed to inspire many people for a long period of time. At the time of her death in 1915 she had published 24 complete books with two more waiting at the printers. By the late 1990s, there were 128 publications ascribed to her name.<sup>25</sup> In Adventist circles, significant interest in her writings continues into the twenty-first century.

#### Ellen White: Writer and Speaker

Ellen White had a difficult time writing in her teenage years due to a trembling hand. This all changed, however, when she experienced a vision where an angel commanded her to write the things she saw while in her trance-like state. Thus encouraged, White began writing, usually using a fountain pen and ruled paper.<sup>26</sup>

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Association, 1965). Richard Schwarz summarizes the development of the Adventist health systems in his book *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 558-614.

<sup>24</sup>Specific details of her writings can be found in Arthur White's six volume biography series, *Ellen G. White*. See also Coon, *A Gift of Light*, 21, 30-31; Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 108.

<sup>25</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 108. The trustees of Ellen White's writings, the Ellen G. White Estate, continue to compile books and pamphlets drawn from the significant stores of unpublished writings left when she died. Most of these, however, are now available to the general public in published books and manuscripts. Unpublished materials reside in the White Estate vaults, where they are accessible to researchers. These may soon be available online.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

Because she traveled frequently, she found it convenient to rise before anyone else was awake and write for several hours undisturbed. On occasion when she urgently needed to finish a writing project, she would lock herself in her room while refusing to see company or visitors until she had completed her tasks.<sup>27</sup> Such focus and dedication overcame any lingering writing handicaps.

Being the prolific writer that she was, White often found herself working on several books simultaneously. While the *Desire of Ages* (1898) was being written, she composed enough material to fill three additional books: *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (1896), *Christ's Object Lessons* (1900), and a portion of *The Ministry of Healing* (1905).<sup>28</sup> Quite often her books were compiled from material she had written earlier. For example, when writing *Acts of the Apostles*, she utilized a significant portion of her earlier 1883 work, *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, plus segments from the fourth volume of her *Spirit of Prophecy* series.<sup>29</sup> Frequently her articles would appear alongside the writings of other leading Adventist pioneers, as is illustrated in the book *Christian Temperance* and in periodicals.<sup>30</sup> Although names were often changed for the sake of anonymity, many of White's personal letters to various individuals have also been published, evidence that her church-wide celebrity allowed little privacy in regard to her

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>28</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1870-1884; facsimile reproduction, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1969), 4:527. Bibliographic details of titles to which reference is made are found in the bibliography of this dissertation.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 4:528.

<sup>30</sup>Ellen G. White and James White, *Christian Temperance by E. G. White and Bible Hygiene by James White* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1890); Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 116.

writings.<sup>31</sup> As she matured in her writing skills, her literary production increased significantly, especially after the early 1880s.<sup>32</sup>

White requested and received support from literary assistants in completing her voluminous writing projects. For example, she frequently left sentences unfinished due to interruptions; literary assistants would then perform a valuable role in sorting through these sentences while assisting in improving grammar and clarity. White fastidiously proofread all documents to ensure that her assistants never introduced aberrant material on a particular issue.<sup>33</sup> She also utilized a book committee that would read her writings and note areas of ambiguity. She found it helpful to use certain leading ministers to read her manuscripts in order to gain quality feedback on the theological content. Medical specialists were employed to read through her writings on health for consistency and clarity.<sup>34</sup>

Ellen White frequently modified her writings, depending on the intended audience. In her educational writings, for example, she would have her literary assistants

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<sup>31</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 114.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>33</sup>See *ibid.*, 109-110, for a detailed examination on her use of literary assistants. Jerry Moon provides a scholarly examination of Ellen White's relationship to assistants and son W. C. White. He also investigates charges leveled at Ellen White that she relied too heavily on these assistants. Jerry Allen Moon, *W. C. White and Ellen G. White: The Relationship between the Prophet and Her Son*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 19 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993), xii-xvii.

<sup>34</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 111, 121-122. Douglass notes how Uriah Smith, one of the denomination's leading theologians of the time, critiqued one of Ellen White's articles. David Paulson, a medical doctor, reviewed the manuscript of *Ministry of Healing* at her request. See Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases: From the Files of the Letters and Manuscripts Written by Ellen G. White*, 12 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981-1993), 10:12; W. C. White to David Paulson, 15 February 1905, William Clarence White Letterbook, microfilm roll 16, reel 26, 685, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.



divide her works into two categories—those germane for the general public and those more suited to the Adventist church.<sup>35</sup> This assisted her in directly addressing complex challenges within the church while avoiding unnecessary barriers to those who might take offense from the directness of some of her “in-house” writings.

Despite the limitations of her formal education, one notes that over time her writings evidenced significant progress toward a higher level of sophistication. Throughout her life she read widely, thus developing intellectually. Her wide-ranging reading habits “helped to fill in her broad conceptual framework with historical background and fresh ways to state her insightful perceptions.”<sup>36</sup> An awareness of contemporary educational issues was certainly part of her repertoire as well. For example, she specifically requested the educational works of Horace Mann. At other times she read works of history and incorporated portions of leading texts into her own books.<sup>37</sup> Yet, as Arthur White reminds us, “in all her writings, the details of history were always subordinated to the great themes of the conflict” between good and evil—the great controversy theme.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 112-113.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 111. Adventist educator and writer George Akers has suggested that White was perhaps “one of the best read thought leaders of her day.” Akers, 10.

<sup>37</sup>See Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 111-112. White possessed a significant library by the time of her death. The Ellen G. White Estate has published a booklet outlining these holdings. Warren H. Johns, Tim Poirier, Ron Graybill, comp., *A Bibliography of Ellen G. White’s Private and Office Libraries*, 3rd ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993). Her request for books by Horace Mann can be found in White, *Manuscript Releases*, 14:281.

<sup>38</sup>White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:536, 543. Arthur White (1907-1991) was secretary of the White Estate from 1937-1978. In this capacity, he wrote a number of books about Ellen White and was considered an authority on her writings throughout his lifetime.

Her worldwide travels also helped enhance the vividness of her writing. After visiting many of the sites of the Reformation in Europe, White felt better equipped to write in greater and more life-like detail the historical narratives of these chapters in Christian history. Her Conflict of the Ages Series shows a remarkable improvement in descriptive language from her earlier descriptions of the great controversy.<sup>39</sup>

Ellen White was also a capable public speaker. For example, on a three-month tour in 1891 she spoke 55 times, while writing about 300 pages during the same period.<sup>40</sup> She was known to be a powerful speaker and once spoke before a crowd of 20,000 people at a New England camp meeting in 1876.<sup>41</sup> She was in demand as a public speaker both within and outside of the denomination, regularly speaking at Adventist camp meetings and local temperance rallies.<sup>42</sup> Whether through the medium of speaking or writing, Ellen White was a dynamic person who communicated with conviction.

#### A Brief Synopsis of Ellen White's Major Works

Although Ellen White began receiving visions toward the end of 1844, it was not until 1851 that her first book was published, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*. It was composed of materials gathered from seven magazine

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 4:521-522. Chapter 3 of this dissertation discusses her great controversy chronology in detail.

<sup>40</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 109.

<sup>41</sup>Uriah Smith, "Grand Rally in New England," *Review and Herald*, September 7, 1876, 84.

<sup>42</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 124.

articles and three broadsides that White had published before 1851.<sup>43</sup> This early habit of compiling periodical articles and other material into book-length works increased toward the end of her life. In addition to magazine articles, she also began collecting her personal letters and short tract-sized books and manuscripts for inclusion into her *Testimonies* series.<sup>44</sup> Her first testimony pamphlet contained only 16 pages, while Volume 5 of the *Testimonies*—eventually published in book form—logged in over 826 small-font pages with a complete index.<sup>45</sup> The ninth and final volume of the *Testimonies* was published in 1909, completing a series that spanned the major portion of White’s productive literary career, 1855-1909.

White’s mature thoughts on healthy living were outlined in her 1905 book, *The Ministry of Healing*.<sup>46</sup> From the 1860s on, she frequently wrote on health topics,

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<sup>43</sup>Ellen G. White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen White* (Saratoga Springs, NY: James White, 1851).

<sup>44</sup>For White a “Testimony” was a message she had for the church. When these messages were written down they became part of her *Testimonies for the Church* series of books which eventually grew to include nine volumes of published material. Often, White did not write her books chapter by chapter in a chronological format. Arthur White, Secretary of the White Estate (1937-1978), notes that she had her assistants compile material she had previously written to create the content of each chapter. Then she would write additional material as needed. Books developed after her death are also compilations of her earlier writings, usually topically organized. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:527.

<sup>45</sup>Originally volume 5 of the *Testimonies* was published as three smaller tracts—number 31 (1882), number 32 (1885) and number 33 (1889).

<sup>46</sup>Adventist historian Richard Schwarz noted that as early as 1848 Ellen White was decrying the detrimental effects of tobacco, tea, and coffee. White’s health and temperance emphasis grew dramatically after she received a vision on the subject of health reform in 1863. By 1867 her writings on health reform led to the creation of the Western Health Reform Institute, the forerunner of Battle Creek Sanitarium. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 106, 108, 113. Under the able leadership of John Harvey Kellogg, Battle Creek Sanitarium treated thousands of patients, gained world-wide fame, and led to the denomination’s initial attempts in 1877 at preparing medical professionals (ibid., 206).

encouraging schools to open sanitariums on their campuses, and recommending church members to adopt vegetarianism.<sup>47</sup> Also emphasized was the importance of natural remedies in treating the sick. Ultimately, this emphasis led to the development of the Seventh-day Adventist medical school, now Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California.<sup>48</sup>

### Ellen White's Grand Central Theme

Throughout her life Ellen White was writing the great controversy story—a panorama of a cosmic battle between Christ and Satan, good and evil. This theme informed White's philosophy and worldview and can be traced throughout her writings.<sup>49</sup> She first began scripting portions of the great controversy theme in her book *Spiritual Gifts* in 1858. By 1864 she amplified the work to include four volumes which traced the progress of the great controversy throughout history. A series of four books, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, published between 1870 and 1884, took this theme a step further. Then, beginning in 1888 and finalized shortly after her death in 1915, the Conflict of the Ages

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<sup>47</sup>Sanitariums were medical institutions that catered to long-term healthcare or lifestyle needs. Denominational sanitariums (such as Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanitarium) specialized in restoring health through lifestyle changes, simple treatments, and preventive medicine. In the twentieth century, most of these institutions evolved into hospitals and acute care facilities.

<sup>48</sup>The once close relationship between Ellen White and John Harvey Kellogg deteriorated in the early 1900s, eventually culminating in the denomination's loss of Kellogg and his Battle Creek sanitarium in 1907 and 1908 respectively (see fn. 46 above). Richard W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1970; reprint Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995), 189-191. Between 1905 and 1909, the denominational leaders, responding in part to Kellogg's disaffection, founded a new medical sanitarium and school in Loma Linda, California, at Ellen White's request. This institution continued the medical training of the denomination's youth. See Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 314, 316. See pages 68-70 of this chapter for more on the Kellogg issue.

<sup>49</sup>White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:507.

series was developed, her most thorough enunciation of the great controversy theme.<sup>50</sup>

The history and content of this overarching theme will be examined in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

### **History and Background of Ellen White's Educational Writings**

Most Adventists had little interest in denominational education prior to 1872.

They felt that the imminent return of Christ diminished the need for the endless recitations and tedious memorization that characterized schooling in those days.

Education could only be justified as it related to the premier task of early Adventism—understanding and disseminating the apocalyptic Adventist message. As time went on

and the Lord did not come, a small minority of Adventists agitated for a new attitude toward schooling. In response to this emerging interest in Christian educational content,

James White (1821-1881) in 1852 focused his energies on providing a spiritually instructive periodical for Adventist young people—*The Youth's Instructor*.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile,

Ellen White, though writing on a variety of subjects, avoided the schooling debate almost entirely.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>See White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:507-549, for a complete discussion on the progression of the great controversy theme in her writings. Ellen White had completed all of the text for the *Conflict* series except two chapters before she died. These final two chapters were finished using material from her earlier writings to complete the series in 1917 with the publication of “The Captivity and Restoration of Israel”—later known as *Prophets and Kings*. *Ibid.*, 4:528-529.

<sup>51</sup>Early Adventists seemed primarily concerned with the religious guidance given by parents to their children at home. *The Youth's Instructor* was printed to satisfy this desire. See Joseph Bates, “Our Duty to Our Children,” *Review and Herald*, January 1851, 39. This article was actually written November 24, 1850.

<sup>52</sup>Ellen White sounded a similar theme to Joseph Bates (see previous footnote) by calling for parents to employ every opportunity for the salvation of their children. Emphasis was placed

Many Adventists felt that establishing schools demonstrated a lack of faith in the nearness of Christ's coming—an understandable taboo for members of a group whose very name focused on the soon-coming "Advent" of Christ. In fact, education became the last major structure of organized Adventism to develop. First, the publishing work began in 1849, followed by centralized church organization in 1863, and the development of a health ministry in 1866. Yet the first denominationally sponsored school did not open its doors until 1872, and there was no widespread elementary education program until 1900 despite recommendations by denominational leadership in 1881 for immediate expansion of primary schools.<sup>53</sup>

#### Ellen White's Writings on Education prior to 1872

Prior to 1872 Ellen White wrote almost nothing concerning the need for formal Adventist schooling. Accordingly, the first attempts at Adventist education were rather small and limited. The first church school opened by Adventists apparently began accepting students around 1853 at Bucks Bridge, New York, with Martha Byington as the first teacher. This school operated at least three years with a different teacher each year.<sup>54</sup>

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on religious training and the avoidance of worldly influences, but at this time she said nothing about establishing Christian schools to achieve these ends. See E. G. White, "Duty of Parents to Their Children," *Review and Herald*, September 19, 1854, 45-46. It should be noted that the denomination did not have a name till 1860, nor did it have a system of finance or organization, so Adventists were not in a position to sponsor schools even if she had called for them. Additionally, most Adventists expected the Lord to return very soon, which minimized the need for long-term educational planning.

<sup>53</sup>"The General Conference Business Proceedings," *Review and Herald*, December 13, 1881, 376.

<sup>54</sup>Marroquin, 26-27.

Early sentiments toward the school held that Adventist children should be taught by wholesome instructors of the same faith. During 1856-1857 several attempts at educating the Adventist youth occurred at Battle Creek, yet were all short-lived.<sup>55</sup> Parents cited lack of structure and poor classroom discipline as reasons for withholding their support from these early attempts at Christian schooling.<sup>56</sup>

Adventist educator Ciro Sepulveda asserts that at this juncture Ellen White played a role in getting Martha's brother, John Fletcher Byington, to start yet another school in Battle Creek in 1858.<sup>57</sup> However, it was James White who announced the need for a new school in Battle Creek and it was he who arranged for Byington to be the teacher.<sup>58</sup> Despite James White's best efforts, however, Adventist schooling in Battle Creek stalled when criticism of Byington and lack of parental support again doomed the enterprise. The frustration of these failures had the effect of discouraging James White from additional attempts at starting Adventist schools during the next half a decade.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>See *ibid.*, 26-40, for a more in-depth discussion of early Adventist education.

<sup>56</sup>See William C. White, "Champion Pilots in Pioneer Christian Education," unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 6, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 15-16; Cadwallader, *History*, 5-6. Both Vande Vere and Cadwallader seem to be referring indirectly to W. C. White's article.

<sup>57</sup>Sepulveda, *Troubles and Triumphs*, 127-128. James White was directly involved in encouraging this school, so more than likely Ellen White played some role in its establishment as well, although she did not write any overt counsels on schooling at this time. See James White, "School at Battle Creek," *Review and Herald*, 14 January 1858, 80.

<sup>58</sup>Sepulveda, *Troubles and Triumphs*, 127-128.

<sup>59</sup>His frustration can be sensed by reading an 1861 comment he made declining further involvement in new attempts at starting a school in Battle Creek. James White, editorial note to William Russell, *Review and Herald*, 24 September 1861, 134.

Nevertheless, he was still opposed to arguments that questioned the need for formal mental training in light of Christ's soon return. In 1862 he proclaimed, "The fact that Christ is very soon coming is no reason why the mind should not be improved. A well-disciplined and informed mind can best receive and cherish the sublime truths of the Second Advent."<sup>60</sup> Despite James White's recognition of the need for intellectual training, five more years would pass before Seventh-day Adventists would again attempt to found a school.

Although James White had expressed an interest in Adventist schooling prior to 1868, Ellen White, as noted earlier, had written almost nothing on the subject. In 1854 she reminded parents of their duty for the salvation of their children and recommended the avoidance of worldly influences. Moral and spiritual training was to take place in the home.<sup>61</sup> A decade later Ellen White wrote a few articles on childcare in which she appealed to parents and children to avoid negative choices and vices, but the need for formal Adventist schooling was conspicuously absent. However, these writings seem to indicate that Ellen White had a growing interest in child-rearing that eventually led to a concern for quality schooling.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>James White, "Questions and Answers," *Review and Herald*, 23 December 1862, 29.

<sup>61</sup>White, "Duty of Parents to Their Children," 45-46.

<sup>62</sup>Both *An Appeal to Mothers* and *An Appeal to the Youth* were published in 1864. Ellen G. White, *An Appeal to Mothers: The Great Cause of the Physical, Mental, and Moral Ruin of Many of the Children of Our Time* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864); idem, *An Appeal to the Youth* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864). See also Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 23; Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1962), 2:113.



The Whites' interest in denominational schooling was rekindled in 1867 with the arrival at Battle Creek of Goodloe Harper Bell (1832-1899)—a talented and skilled public school educator with fifteen years of teaching experience. Henry Farr notes that he was the first to experience long-term success in dealing with the challenges of schooling the Battle Creek youngsters and handling their parents.<sup>63</sup> Originally a patient at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, Bell was recruited to teach by the Whites' at the request of their own son, Edson—in itself a portentous development.<sup>64</sup> Bell used innovative instructional methods to stimulate student enthusiasm for learning and his success awakened an interest in education amidst the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the school reignited the Whites' enthusiasm

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<sup>63</sup>Henry E. Farr, "The Historical Development of Seventh-day Adventist Educational Philosophy," *JAE* 41 (October-November 1978): 5. Henry Farr, long-time Adventist educator, is currently (2006) listed as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Georgia Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He also spent nearly thirty years as Associate Superintendent in the Georgia Cumberland Conference Office of Education.

<sup>64</sup>Gray, 1-2. In 1867 the school was privately operated by Bell. Yet according to Sydney Brownsberger's recollection, it had all the hallmarks of a church-sponsored school (Sydney Brownsberger, *Personal Experiences, Conditions, and Impressions in Connection with the Educational Work among Seventh-day Adventists*, Sydney Brownsberger Collection, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI). By 1868, with the Whites' blessing, Bell's school became sponsored by the Battle Creek church. After one year, however, the Battle Creek church withdrew its support, citing financial concerns. Bell tried to support himself unsuccessfully through tuition but eventually had to close the school. By popular demand he continued tutoring workers at the Review and Herald and Battle Creek Sanitarium for several years (William White, "Champion Pilots," 26-27). The above manuscript can also be found at Andrews University in the booklet, *Founders' Golden Anniversary Bulletin of Battle Creek College and Emmanuel Missionary College: 1874-1924* (Berrien Springs, MI: College Press, 1924), 6, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>65</sup>See George Royal Avery, "Personal Recollections of an Ideal Teacher," Manuscript 7, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; idem, "Diary," 17 March 1876, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; John O. Corliss, "Early Experience—No. 8: Divine Providences," *Review and Herald*, March 6, 1919, 10-11.

concerning the potential of denominational schools.<sup>66</sup>

In 1868 Ellen White penned one of her earliest comments concerning the value of education when she remonstrated with several parents for denying their children access to a quality education.<sup>67</sup> James and Ellen White were no doubt encouraged to see their own children develop a growing interest in schooling, thanks in part to the education provided by Bell. By 1869, James White, buoyed by the success of Bell's latest school, was recommending the formal organization of an educational society to further the aims of Adventist education.<sup>68</sup>

It was the sudden departure of a tired and discouraged Goodloe Harper Bell from Battle Creek that initially impressed Ellen White to begin writing in earnest on educational topics. On December 10, 1871, White wrote a direct message to the Battle Creek church expressing disappointment with their unkind treatment of Bell and his educational attempts.<sup>69</sup> While Bell's shortcomings were also pointed out, White encouraged him to return to Battle Creek to help found another school. This time the

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<sup>66</sup>According to Maud Sisley Boyd, a former student at Battle Creek College, a pleased Ellen White recommended that the Review and Herald workers should be given the opportunity to attend the school (Maud Sisley Boyd to Mary Kelly-Little, April 16, 1931, quoted in Mary Kelly-Little, "Development of the Elementary Schools of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States" (M.A. thesis, University of Washington, 1932), 12. James White was also enthusiastic about the success of the school. James White, "Youth's Department," *Review and Herald*, August 18, 1868, 144.

<sup>67</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:94-96.

<sup>68</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 17.

<sup>69</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimony to the Church at Battle Creek* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1872), 1-10.

Whites and other church officers were directly involved.<sup>70</sup> Adventists were finally ready to sponsor wholeheartedly an educational program.<sup>71</sup> In the spring of 1872, Bell accepted the invitation and set about developing his program. James White desired ultimately to organize the school into a college to prepare workers for the Adventist cause. The success of Bell's efforts, James White's visionary leadership, and Ellen White's effective testimony to the Adventist church at Battle Creek led to the beginnings of Battle Creek College in 1874.<sup>72</sup>

In 1872, Ellen White wrote her first full-length treatise dealing directly with her concepts of education. This article contained, in its incipient form, nearly all the elements that would characterize her later educational writings, particularly in regard to the great controversy and education's role in restoring the image of God in humanity.<sup>73</sup> This served to increase the interest of the church in the benefits of denominational

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<sup>70</sup>Allan G. Lindsay, "Goodloe Harper Bell: Teacher," in *Early Adventist Educators*, ed. Knight, 53-55.

<sup>71</sup>Seventh-day Adventist Educational Society, "A School in Battle Creek," *Review and Herald*, April 16, 1872, 144.

<sup>72</sup>James White, "Conference Address: Before the General Conference of the S. D. Adventists, March 11 1873," *Review and Herald*, May 20, 1873, 181; Roy E. Graham, "James White: Initiator," in *Early Adventist Educators*, ed. Knight, 20-21. See also Mahlon Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925), 337; Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 267; Marroquin, 35-40.

<sup>73</sup>This treatise, "Proper Education," can be found in Ellen G. White's *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 15-46. Early hints at her restoration theme occur on pages 22-23, 26-27, 45. It would take another two decades for these thoughts to mature fully. See chapter 3 of this dissertation for a more thorough discussion of her writings on the great controversy theme and the image-of-God motif.

schooling—especially the phrase prominently set in the final paragraph “. . . we need a school.”<sup>74</sup>

James White, delighted with Ellen’s growing interest in education, enthusiastically proclaimed, “I judge that it is almost impossible for a young man whose mind never has been disciplined to study, who has not had educational advantages, to become a thorough Bible student and able minister.”<sup>75</sup> From this time forward, Ellen White’s voice and writings produced an increasing stream of speeches and articles on the topic, especially after the late 1880s.

On June 3, 1872, Bell’s select school officially came under the umbrella of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Yet ironically, Bell’s triumph did not guarantee him a stable administrative post in the school he created. The Adventist leadership now desired more than just a place where their children could learn “readin,’ ‘ritin and ‘rithmetic.” They now wanted a full-fledged educational facility operated by highly qualified personnel. One year later, Bell, who as principal did not hold a college degree, was abruptly replaced with the college-educated Sidney Brownsberger (1845-1930). Vande Vere notes that in order “to accomplish what the leaders had in mind [concerning denominational education], scholastic reputation seemed essential.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 45; idem, *Counsels on Education*, v.

<sup>75</sup>James White, “Conference Address,” 181.

<sup>76</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 19. Bell, however, continued to be a highly influential teacher at the school and got along superbly with Brownsberger. Other researchers explain the transfer of Bell from principal to the English department as being due to Bell’s poor health rather than his lack of a degree as Vande Vere insinuates. See Joseph G. Smoot, “Sidney Brownsberger: Traditionalist,” in *Early Adventist Educators*, ed. Knight, 75.

It is intriguing to find that in 1866 the Whites had encouraged none other than Sidney Brownsberger to finish his classical degree rather than immediately join the ministry.<sup>77</sup> As noted earlier, the Whites were sympathetic to the need for educated workers to further the Adventist cause. When the church needed qualified Adventist teachers, this foresight reaped a dividend.

In reality, Adventist education did not begin with a clear-cut philosophy or blueprint, despite White's article on "Proper Education."<sup>78</sup> Early Adventist attempts in education at Battle Creek College did not contain much in the way of religious instruction at all. The curriculum itself simply reflected the common classical model; Bible instruction was optional and no prominent Adventist pioneer was chosen to lead the college. Instead, recent Adventist converts Goodloe Harper Bell and Sidney Brownsberger were chosen—both of whom were educators whose training and experience had been in the public sector.<sup>79</sup>

#### Ellen White's Writings on Education after 1872

Even though key aspects of Ellen White's early educational writings were not immediately implemented, her ideas eventually led to one of the largest Protestant

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<sup>77</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 27; Brownsberger, *Personal Experiences*.

<sup>78</sup>For more information on Ellen White and the concept of an Adventist educational blueprint, see pages 38-39, 60, 66-70 of this dissertation.

<sup>79</sup>This point is noted in Gray, 1-4; Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 316.

educational systems in the world.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps one reason for this growth is that White was very practical. She realized nearly a decade before 1872 that the church needed educated workers in order to move the work of the church forward—thus her interest in Brownsberger. White’s concern with the holistic development of the mental, physical, and spiritual also boosted the relevancy of her writings to students. From the beginning her articles on education promoted the idea that the school should play an integral role in moving students into a saving relationship with God.<sup>81</sup> Schools were not only to provide useful, occupational training, but most importantly they were to facilitate a student’s growth spiritually.

In “Proper Education” White offered some practical suggestions on how a Christian school could be different from the common public schools that had developed in the nineteenth century.<sup>82</sup> By the mid-1870s, graduates from Battle Creek College began filling the need for trained denominational workers.<sup>83</sup> Another development occurred in 1874 when John Nevins Andrews (1829-1883) became the first

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<sup>80</sup>In 2006, the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist denomination ran 7,284 schools. Of these, 106 were tertiary institutions, 1,512 were secondary or worker training schools, while 5,666 elementary schools were operational. Total enrollment in Adventist schools was 1,436,290. Office of Archives & Statistics, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “144<sup>th</sup> Annual Statistical Report—2006,” <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/ASR/ASR2006.pdf> (accessed 11 September 2008)

<sup>81</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 309. For example, see Ellen White’s original article on schooling, “Proper Education,” quoted in *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:131, 135.

<sup>82</sup>She recommended Bible study in the curriculum, practical missionary training, and physical activity to balance the mental emphasis, a balance that was not initially adopted in Adventist education. Instead, a classical course dominated. The challenges to the classical curriculum are outlined in chapter 2 of this dissertation. See also Marroquin, 107-109.

<sup>83</sup>Greenleaf, 30-31.

denominationally sponsored Adventist missionary to Europe.<sup>84</sup> These events heralded a broader perspective for the Church—the formal educational training of young people and the sending out of missionaries to spread the Adventist message. At this time, however, there was a significant disconnect between the college’s curriculum and the training needed for mission service.<sup>85</sup>

Additionally, White’s writing energies were predominantly focused elsewhere during the mid- to late-1870s.<sup>86</sup> However, in 1880 she wrote a defining article titled “Our College” in which she addressed some of the challenges that had been faced by the struggling Battle Creek College since its inception.<sup>87</sup> She advocated modifying the complex and lengthy classical curriculum by granting a more prominent role to Bible study.<sup>88</sup> Some attempts to implement these counsels were initiated, but a brewing schism

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<sup>84</sup>John Nevins Andrews was a prominent church leader who became the first official Seventh-day Adventist missionary. Battle Creek College was eventually renamed Andrews University in his honor even though Andrews himself was not a graduate. Greenleaf, 105.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 30-31; Knight, “The Aims of Adventist Education,” 198-199. It took a number of years before Battle Creek College’s curriculum became restructured to produce the number of biblically trained workers that were needed. This process is alluded to throughout this chapter.

<sup>86</sup>Throughout these years the Whites often resided in the western United States, away from Battle Creek College. Though she still visited the campus to speak to the students on occasion, she did not write a major testimony on education for a number of years. White was traveling frequently to speak at various Adventist gatherings and camp meetings. She was also busy completing manuscripts on other subjects, apparently leaving little time for educational writings. For a synopsis of White’s activities in the late 1870s, see Arthur L. White, *The Lonely Years, 1876-1891*, Ellen G. White 3 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1984).

<sup>87</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:418-429.

<sup>88</sup>The physical sciences, up through most of the nineteenth century, were traditionally relegated to the academic “back seat” in favor of classical studies throughout most of secondary and higher education. Traditional classical studies were closely aligned with the neo-scholastics and idealists. From this perspective, the mind “has different potentials, or faculties, which must be carefully developed. Therefore, the faculty of reason is trained through the formal discipline inherent in the study of those subjects having the most logical organization, the faculty of memory is developed by having students memorize, and the faculty of the will is strengthened by

at the college prevented the realization of significant changes. By 1881 a major controversy raged between the supporters of Goodloe Harper Bell and those of Alexander McLearn.<sup>89</sup> The situation at Battle Creek deteriorated to such an extent that it closed for a year to reorganize in 1882-83.<sup>90</sup> Marroquin noted that “an avalanche of personal, philosophical, and practical difficulties” complicated all efforts to reform and stabilize the school program.<sup>91</sup> The Adventist experiment in higher education seemed in danger of collapse as the infighting and bickering intensified.

Ellen White did not sit idly by while the various disagreements threatened to destroy the fledgling college. She promptly wrote several critical testimonies challenging the denomination’s leaders to restructure Battle Creek College’s curriculum.<sup>92</sup> In September 1881 she challenged the church not to copy other institutions, but to focus on

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having students engage in tasks that require a high degree of perseverance for completion” (Knight, *Philosophy of Education*, 55). The classical curriculum was predominately buttressed by Latin and Greek literature, oration, and abstract mathematics—classes designed for exercising the mind rather than for practical value. See Hodgen, *School Bells*, 17-19; Gerald Gutek, *An Historical Introduction to American Education*, 2nd ed. (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1991), 97. On the heels of the christocentric 1888 conference, the Harbor Springs Convention (1891) emphasized the elimination of “pagan and infidel authors” and cast doubt on the benefits of the classical curriculum. Knight, *Early Adventist Educators*, 33. Note that Medardo Marroquin has examined Battle Creek College’s curriculum challenges in detail in his dissertation, “The Historical Development of the Religion Curriculum at Battle Creek College, 1874-1901.” Chapter 2 of this dissertation covers the classical curriculum debates in detail.

<sup>89</sup>Meredith Gray presents an in-depth examination of the controversy between Bell and McLearn in her book on the history of Andrews University, *As We Set Forth*, 6-7, 11.

<sup>90</sup>White, *Counsels on Education*, vii; Marroquin, 66.

<sup>91</sup>Marroquin, 106.

<sup>92</sup>Ellen G. White, “Our College” (1880), published in *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:418-429; idem, “The Cause in Iowa” (1880), published in *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:430-437; idem, “Proper Education” (1881), published in *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:648-653; idem, “Our College” (1881), published in *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:21-36; idem, “Important



developing a new and unique identity. Knight emphasizes this point by stating that White never really wanted just a Bible College or a manual labor school.<sup>93</sup> Instead she envisioned a broader style of education that combined academics and useful exercise within a biblical perspective. She did not seem to be giving an “either-or” mandate—academics or the Bible—but was advocating a balanced, broader education.<sup>94</sup> It was time for Battle Creek College to develop its own distinct identity.

The first steps towards developing such an identity at Battle Creek College began shortly after the school reopened on September 5, 1883.<sup>95</sup> Short, instructive courses were introduced and a movement emerged to bring the curriculum more in line with White’s counsel.<sup>96</sup> Bible instruction was added to the curriculum as attempts were made to incorporate the biblical worldview into individual classes.<sup>97</sup> Strict discipline now characterized the campus while a vibrant, spiritual emphasis reshaped the atmosphere of the school.<sup>98</sup> A manual labor emphasis was eventually implemented, but did not thrive until many years later.<sup>99</sup>

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Testimony” (1882), published in *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:45-62; idem, “Workers in Our College” (1882), published in *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:84-94.

<sup>93</sup>See George Knight’s discussion on these issues in “The Aims of Adventist Education,” 200-201.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>95</sup>Marroquin, 110-165, referred to the decade of 1883-1891 as the “restoration period” when attempts were made to realign the curriculum closer to White’s model.

<sup>96</sup>Greenleaf, 37-38; Marroquin, 111-112, 126.

<sup>97</sup>Marroquin, 144-145, 151.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 137-140.

In 1885 the College Board voted to distribute a number of White's testimonies for Battle Creek College in an effort to build support for implementing White's educational counsels.<sup>100</sup> In 1888, the church experienced a revival that began at the General Conference session in Minneapolis.<sup>101</sup> This experience greatly influenced W. W. Prescott, then president of Battle Creek College. White supported the revival and its emphasis on a "righteousness by faith" that portrayed Jesus' life and ministry as the focal point of Adventist doctrine. One educational application that emerged from this revival was an emphasis on sharing Adventist beliefs in the context of a living relationship with Jesus Christ rather than as dry legalistic requirements.<sup>102</sup> This redefined theological emphasis impressed Prescott to seek creative ways of applying the new ideas to educational settings. In 1891 he organized an educational convention at Harbor Springs to devise methods of applying biblical principles throughout the curriculum.<sup>103</sup>

The Harbor Springs convention was a gathering of Adventist educators to discuss the reasons and purposes for denominational education. White and others spoke on the educational importance of advocating a personal relationship with Jesus, the need for spiritual revival, removing the pagan classics from the curriculum, and teaching students

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<sup>100</sup>Battle Creek College Board Minutes, Battle Creek College, Battle Creek, MI, 26 July 1885, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; Marroquin, 112.

<sup>101</sup>This "General Conference Session" was a gathering of church administrators and representative delegates from the various world regions of the church who come together to vote on church policy.

<sup>102</sup>Greenleaf, 41.

<sup>103</sup>Gilbert Murray Valentine, "William Warren Prescott: Seventh-day Adventist Educator" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1982), 178.

about the gospel.<sup>104</sup> The Harbor Springs meeting was the first significant challenge to the classical curriculum in Adventist education. Curriculum changes included the implementation of more Bible classes while teaching history classes from a biblical perspective. Most importantly, Adventist educational philosophy adopted both mission and evangelism as significant reasons for its existence.<sup>105</sup> Shortly after Harbor Springs, White's mature educational perspective emerged as she blended the great controversy theme, salvation, schooling, and restoring the image of God into one concise philosophy.<sup>106</sup>

Although Prescott was keenly aware of the need for substantive curriculum change, he was largely unable to initiate any major changes to the established classical curriculum. He did, however, manage to make some headway in introducing the biblical worldview to more students.<sup>107</sup> Adding additional Bible and history classes without significantly reforming the curriculum added another year of study to the classical course. Knight writes that the resulting seven-year classical course seemed like an excessive

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<sup>104</sup>Knight, "The Aims of Adventist Education," 202. Six of Ellen White's sermons from Harbor Springs have survived. Ellen G. White, "The Proper Way to Deal with Students in Our Schools," MS 8a, 1891, currently printed in White, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:55-64; idem, "The Importance of Exercising Faith," MS 83, 1891; idem, "The Great Sacrifice Made for Us," MS 8, 1891; idem, "Talk to Teachers," MS 8b, 1891; idem, "Relationship of Institutional Workers," MS 3, 1891; idem, "Sermon," MS 10, 1891, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>105</sup>Craig S. Willis, "Harbor Springs Institute of 1891: A Turning Point in Our Educational Concepts" (research paper, Andrews University, 1979), 52, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>106</sup>See chapter 3 of this dissertation for an in-depth look at the evolution of White's restoration theme in the early 1890s.

<sup>107</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 62; Gilbert Murray Valentine, "William W. Prescott, Architect of a Bible-Centered Curriculum," *Adventist Heritage* 8 (Spring 1983): 21.

amount of time to invest in one's education when most people of the time were fortunate to complete an elementary education.<sup>108</sup> This long course of study seemed especially irrelevant when the church needed qualified workers to fill an immediate and ever-growing world mission program.

In 1895 White felt compelled to respond to this disconnect by writing "Speedy Preparation," which offered strategies for avoiding the problem of dedicating too many resources to over-educate a few students.<sup>109</sup> But shortly thereafter some in Battle Creek were overreacting by using this latest testimony to press for downgrading the academic quality to a sub-college level. So a month later she again took up her pen and wrote "The Essential Education," decrying a hasty, slipshod style of schooling.<sup>110</sup> Several months after this she wrote still another testimony entitled "Diligent and Thorough Education."<sup>111</sup> Here she defined quality from a Christian perspective, arguing that the Bible provided the foundation for all knowledge while at the same time making clear that she did not consider the Bible to be the only legitimate source of knowledge.<sup>112</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1886, White's early writings on education were compiled into a pamphlet titled, *Selections from the Testimonies Concerning the Subject of Education*,

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<sup>108</sup>Knight, "The Aims of Adventist Education," 204-206. This seven-year program included three years of preparatory school plus four years of college-level study.

<sup>109</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 334-367.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, 368-372.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 373-380.

<sup>112</sup>Note that since 1891 Ellen White had been writing from Australia where she was directly involved in founding a new Adventist school, Avondale College.

which was enlarged and reprinted in 1893 under the title *Christian Education*.<sup>113</sup> Late in 1891 Ellen White, prompted by the General Conference and wearied by the politics and inertia toward reform at Battle Creek College, set sail for distant Australia. There she would be instrumental in developing the type of school she had advocated in 1872, uninhibited by the ideologies and preconceived notions of the leadership in Battle Creek.<sup>114</sup> In February of 1894 she wrote an article entitled “Work and Education” which laid out her ideals for the new Australian school—today’s Avondale College. The importance of Bible study, missionary work, increased spirituality, practical labor, physical activity, mental acuity, and a setting far away from the cities buttressed her vision for educating students in rural Australia.<sup>115</sup> Avondale quickly came to be regarded as a pattern for schooling in Adventist circles. By 1897, the leadership at Battle Creek College, inspired by the example at Avondale, began adopting significant reforms.<sup>116</sup>

During her time in Australia, Ellen White wrote more on educational principles than on any other facet of denominational work.<sup>117</sup> Most of these counsels can be found in her subsequent series of books on education, *Special Testimonies on Education* (1897), *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 6 (1900), and her classic work on the subject, *Education* (1903). It was during her time in Australia that her mature concept of the

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<sup>113</sup>Ellen G. White, *Selections from the Testimonies Concerning the Subject of Education* (Battle Creek, MI: College Printing Department, 1886); idem, *Christian Education* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1893). See White, *Fundamentals*, 5.

<sup>114</sup>See pages 53-54 of this chapter for more on Avondale.

<sup>115</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 318-327.

<sup>116</sup>Marroquin, 230.

<sup>117</sup>Knight, “The Aims of Adventist Education,” 209.

image-of-God motif emerged. In *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 6, she included an abundance of material stressing the need for educational reform.<sup>118</sup> This reforming impulse had been present in her writings from her very first treatise, “Proper Education,” and continued to almost the time of her death, as will be noted throughout the second half of this chapter.

In *Education*, White framed the great controversy theme solidly within her educational perspectives, thus making this book the best example of her mature educational thoughts. In this volume she viewed conversion as the primary aim of schooling, including service to God and humanity as its ultimate expression—all embodied within the concept of restoring the image of God in each student.<sup>119</sup> *Education* was written for all Christian educators, whether Adventist or not.<sup>120</sup>

In 1913 White published *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, a book specifically designed for the benefit of the Seventh-day Adventist reader. The book includes some of White’s testimonies plus material that was not deemed suitable for the

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<sup>118</sup>See White, *Fundamentals*, 5. Section 3 of *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, was dedicated to White’s writings on education. Note that the first five volumes of Ellen White’s *Testimonies for the Church* were largely compiled from testimonies previously published in pamphlets or small booklets. Most of these testimonies were chronological and not in topical order. Starting with vol. 6, however, the *Testimonies for the Church* were arranged topically, as were subsequent volumes. Vol. 6, for example, was published many years after vol. 5, so the content of vol. 6 dates from 1889 to 1900. See White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:3.

<sup>119</sup>Chapter 3 of this dissertation examines these relationships in detail. See also Snorrason, 188-192.

<sup>120</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 5.

broader readership of *Education*. It also incorporated a number of earlier works that were out of print.<sup>121</sup>

*Fundamentals of Christian Education* (1923) was compiled after Ellen White's death in 1915. It also included material from her earlier works that were out of print—those portions of *Christian Education* and *Special Testimonies on Education* that were not included in *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*. Also utilized were excerpts from the out-of-print pamphlet, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, plus many of her articles on education found in the denominational periodicals: *Review and Herald*, *Signs of the Times*, *Youth's Instructor*, and *Bible Echo*.<sup>122</sup> These articles were selected from her entire literary offerings on education, from 1872 to 1915.

In addition, seven of the nine volumes of *Testimonies for the Church* contain chapters dedicated to the subject of education. Prior to 1968 one needed an entire set of the *Testimonies* to read these excerpts. In response to this inconvenience the General Conference Department of Education compiled these references into one handy volume—*Counsels on Education*.<sup>123</sup> The above books cover the entire spectrum of White's educational writings throughout her lifetime.

In 1897, White wrote a testimony later included in *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6 (1900), that advocated the immediate need for an Adventist elementary school

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<sup>121</sup>Included were selections from her earlier books, *Christian Education* (1893) and Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies on Education* (n.p., 1897), plus additional articles selected by Homer Salisbury, then secretary of the General Conference Department of Education. See Arthur L. White, *The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915*, Ellen G. White 6 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1982), 381.

<sup>122</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 7-13.

<sup>123</sup>White, *Counsels on Education*, iii.

wherever there was a handful of Adventists to support it.<sup>124</sup> The response to this testimony was significant. Many young missionary-minded teachers emerged from Battle Creek College to answer White's call for a concerted evangelistic effort in schooling Adventist youth.<sup>125</sup> By 1900, Seventh-day Adventists had a strong and growing educational system in place, thanks largely to White's personal interest in its development.<sup>126</sup>

### **The Influence of Ellen White's Educational Writings on Adventist Schools in the Twentieth Century**

Ellen White is widely recognized as having exerted the dominant influence on the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. Denominational historian Emmet K. Vande Vere attested that "Adventist thinking focused mainly upon Mrs. White's concepts. Other men's ideas were little more than eddies in the mainstream of denominational hopes."<sup>127</sup> Outdoor educator Gary Knowles noted that White provided the "philosophical

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<sup>124</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:198-199; Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 86. An in-depth discussion of the movement of 1897 can be found in Greenleaf, 80-103.

<sup>125</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 86; Cadwallader, *History*, 285-303; Knight, "The Aims of Adventist Education," 210-211.

<sup>126</sup>Cadwallader offers an interesting summary of student enrollment in early Adventist schools in his book *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*, 314. More than likely there were many more schools in existence that were not directly affiliated with the conference. Nevertheless, the official growth was notable, especially after 1900. Enrollment had doubled again by 1908. See also *Seventh-day Adventist Annual Statistical Reports* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists).

<sup>127</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 24.



framework on which the church's education system would be built."<sup>128</sup> Adventist theologian Leroy Moore assigns her the "unique position" of being the primary educational visionary in Adventism. She determined the development and direction of Adventist education.<sup>129</sup> Walter Howe, best known for writing one of the earliest academic philosophies of Adventist education, stated that the "prolific writing" of White has probably been the most significant source for Adventist educational ideas and philosophy.<sup>130</sup> Arthur Spalding noted that, without question, her writings were the backbone and she was the primary developer of Adventist education.<sup>131</sup> Well-known Adventist historian Everett Dick assessed her as the "most powerful single influence on Seventh-day Adventist believers."<sup>132</sup> Herbert Douglass has clearly documented the profound influence White's writings have had on Adventist leaders.<sup>133</sup>

It is not only White's supporters who have recognized the significance of her leadership. Her detractors were especially sensitive to her influential role in the church. For example, Albion Fox Ballenger, a critic of White, charged that her interpretation of

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<sup>128</sup>Gary J. Knowles, "A Philosophy of Outdoor Education as It Relates to the Mission of Seventh-day Adventist Christian Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, Western Kentucky University, 1983), 5.

<sup>129</sup>Leroy A. Moore, "A Study of Ellen G. White's Concept of the Nature of Man as It Relates to the Objectives of Bible Teaching" (M.A. thesis, Walla Walla College, 1966), 4.

<sup>130</sup>Howe, 6. Howe's master's thesis on the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is examined later in this dissertation.

<sup>131</sup>Spalding, 2:91-109. Abundant quotes from Ellen White characterize his discussion of Adventist education.

<sup>132</sup>Everett N. Dick, "Ellen Gould White," *Dictionary of American Biography* (1936), quoted in Fowler, 5.

<sup>133</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 427-432.

Scripture was the only interpretation the church allowed.<sup>134</sup> Another critic, Jonathan Butler, called her writings the “framework” for Adventism, serving as the denomination’s arbiter of truth—its “new scriptures.”<sup>135</sup>

Social historian Malcolm Bull and journalist Keith Lockhart point out that when White was alive she tended to lead the church into complex debates, innovation, and discussion, but when she died, her perceived role changed from innovator, reformer, and visionary to one of static authority to be mined for already revealed truth.<sup>136</sup> Officially, Adventists see White’s writings as an “authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction and correction.” Nevertheless, the Bible is upheld as the “standard by which all teachings and experience must be tested.”<sup>137</sup> Regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with aspects of her writings, Ellen White still influences Seventh-day Adventism.

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<sup>134</sup>See Calvin Edwards and Gary Land, *Seeker after Light: A. F. Ballenger, Adventism and American Christianity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2000), 88, 91-92, 140.

<sup>135</sup>Jonathan Butler, “The Historian as Heretic,” in Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, xxix-xxxii.

<sup>136</sup>Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 2nd ed., 105. The controversies of the first decade of the twentieth century in Adventism provide some evidence that White was being used as an arbiter of truth by some well before she died. For example, see Calvin Edwards and Land, 88, 92, 98-100, 116-118; Schwarz, *Kellogg*, 185-187; Jonathan Butler, “The Historian as Heretic,” xxxii, lvii; George Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1987), 181, 210, 220. Edwards and Land emphasize that there were certain “pillars” of the faith that were revealed to White in vision, and hence were non-negotiable (Calvin Edwards and Land, 118, 121). White herself, while recalling in 1905 the dynamic quest for truth in the early days of Adventism, implies that as truths were discovered they were substantiated via vision (Ellen G. White, “The Work for This Time,” *Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905, 17). Testimonies like these probably contributed to the change of emphasis toward White’s writings after she died.

<sup>137</sup>*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 216.

Ellen White and Educational Change:  
A Visionary's Challenge

Despite Ellen White's significant influence on the Adventists of her day, she rarely succeeded in implementing all the changes she desired. Throughout her life she consistently advocated progress, growth, and innovation.<sup>138</sup> As a visionary, White was often unhappy with the way things were in Adventist education and frequently voiced suggestions for improvement.

Regarding Battle Creek College, White was disappointed that adequate rural lands were not procured.<sup>139</sup> She saw the acquisition of large landholdings around schools as important buffers necessary for creating a safe, spiritual environment while providing resources for useful student employment, recreation, and learning.<sup>140</sup> When Walla Walla College sought to raise money by selling off school land, she recommended doing just the opposite—purchasing more land, if possible, so that abundant opportunities for outdoor work and education would exist.<sup>141</sup> It was not necessarily the case that Adventist leaders overtly opposed White's views; instead, it was just difficult for many Adventists

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<sup>138</sup>See chapter 3 of this dissertation for a detailed examination of White's optimistic perspective.

<sup>139</sup>William White, "Champion Pilots," 29; Cadwallader, *History*, 39-40.

<sup>140</sup>White advocated many types of experiential learning innovations throughout her life: nature study, agriculture, industrial training, hands-on work environments, and outdoor recreation. Many of these activities required larger acreage commitments. She also suggested that city living could be detrimental to spirituality. See White, *Fundamentals*, 311-312; 423-424; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:153; idem, *Gospel Workers* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1892), 457; idem, *Education*, 211-212. Chapter 4 of this dissertation investigates these educational applications in detail.

<sup>141</sup>White, *Manuscript Releases*, 11:164.

to grasp White's holistic and expansive vision of education.<sup>142</sup>

White repeatedly called for elementary education in the late nineteenth century but, according to Cadwallader, even the educational institution most closely associated with the General Conference failed to produce an elementary school until 1907.<sup>143</sup> She adamantly counseled about the importance of the Bible in the curriculum but made little headway for many years.<sup>144</sup> On a number of occasions her counsels were overlooked in dealing with personnel and organizational challenges.<sup>145</sup> If she was not physically present at schools such as Battle Creek, her advice often seemed overlooked.<sup>146</sup> Even in the case of Avondale College, a school which White directly founded, many challenges existed in getting her vision of education implemented.<sup>147</sup> White's attitude in developing

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<sup>142</sup>Spalding, 2:164. Spalding, for example, traces the difficulty many Adventists had in grasping the depth of her vision for denominational medical education (ibid., 3:161-167). The fact that school property was being sold which Ellen White felt should be preserved for educational purposes prompted Vande Vere to quip that "often profits speak louder than prophets!" Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 30.

<sup>143</sup>Cadwallader writes, "Washington Missionary College called Washington Training College at first . . . was established without making any provision for the Adventist children of the community who were growing up around the General Conference office, the Review and Herald Publishing Company and the college itself." Cadwallader, *History*, 307-308. Note that the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists had been moved from Battle Creek, Michigan to Tacoma Park in the Washington D.C. area in 1903.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 265; Marroquin, xvi. See pages 24-29 of this chapter for more information on the challenges facing the incorporation of Bible study into the formal curriculum at Battle Creek College.

<sup>145</sup>Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy*, 185, 213.

<sup>146</sup>White, *Counsels on Education*, v.

<sup>147</sup>For example, at Avondale, Ellen White wanted many acres of land, while local church leaders preferred a much smaller 40-acre parcel. See Arthur L. White, *The Australian Years 1891-1900*, Ellen G. White 4 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1983), 176-177. It was a struggle to obtain the land at Avondale, despite White's favorable review. See Ellen G. White to Edson and Emma White, Letter W 126, 1895; Ellen G. White to Brethren, Letter 154, 1894, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; Arthur White, *The*

a school reflected innovation and experimentation within her overarching principles of practical learning, wholesome outdoor recreation, a spiritual environment, and a curriculum based on a biblical worldview.<sup>148</sup> Her influence, though stronger than anyone else's, simply had its limits in the face of long-standing educational traditions.<sup>149</sup>

With this background in mind, it is difficult to conclude that a single blueprint or pattern could ever fulfill White's innovative perspectives of education. There does not seem to be any era in Adventist history where she was fully pleased with the way things were. The challenges White faced in developing a relevant model for schooling illustrate the value she placed on innovative educational reform that is informed by distinctive guiding principles. Restoring the image of God in students, as will be pointed out in subsequent chapters of this dissertation, necessitates a constant advancement toward

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*Australian Years*, 177, 215-216. Power struggles were common. Ellen G. White to Willie White, Letter W 186, 1897; Ellen G. White to W. C. White, Letter W 140, 1897, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; Arthur White, *The Australian Years*, 289, 306.

<sup>148</sup>See Ellen G. White to John Harvey Kellogg, Letter K 042, 1895; Ellen G. White to Br. Sr. [J. H.] Kellogg, Letter 47a, 1895; Ellen G. White to W. C. White, Letter 141, 1897; Ellen G. White, *Diary*, MS 174, 1897, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>149</sup>For example, see Valentine, "Seventh-day Adventist Educator," 73; Emmett K. Vande Vere, comp., *Windows: Selected Readings in Seventh-day Adventist Church History, 1844-1922* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1975), 54. Medardo Marroquin gives a number of reasons for the difficulty Battle Creek college administrators had in following Ellen White's ideas: 1. Land procurement issues. Ellen White's vision needed relatively large and expensive acreage requirements. 2. The pull of traditional education was too great. It was difficult to abandon the classical approach in favor of White's holistic educational conceptions. 3. The classical curriculum left little room for Bible study. 4. Faculty graduated from traditional schools and had little experience in academic innovation. 5. There really was no clearly stated (or agreed upon) Adventist philosophy of education. 6. Differences between members of the faculty often led to an impasse. Marroquin, 308-309. Some of White's joys and challenges in moving forward with her educational ideas are outlined in "The Australian Campmeeting," Ellen G. White, *Diary*, MS 001, 1895, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

greater educational and personal heights. This educational model demands more flexibility than a one-size-fits-all blueprint.

### Ellen White's Influence on Educational Developments to 1915

#### **Battle Creek and Emmanuel Missionary College**

Ellen White's participation in developing schools during her active career provides a window into some of the educational ideas she espoused. White had something to say about nearly every Adventist school that was founded during her lifetime. Balance and quality were important goals that she advocated for denominational schools. Second-class institutions were not to be tolerated; rather students were to be given whatever education was necessary to excel in their professional fields.<sup>150</sup> This advice ultimately encouraged denominational educators to accept accreditation and licensing.<sup>151</sup>

Battle Creek College, the first Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher education, was organized in 1874, partly in response to White's call for a school. As noted earlier, a significant reason she gave for creating a college was to offer practical training to prepare workers to fill positions in the church both in America and beyond.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup>For example, see Ellen G. White, "A Statement Regarding the Training of Physicians," *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1910, 18; Knight, "The Aims of Adventist Education," 218; White, *Counsels to Parents*, 479-480.

<sup>151</sup>The accreditation struggles of Adventist education are briefly discussed on pages 59-66 of this dissertation.

<sup>152</sup>Erling Snorrason in his dissertation, "The Aims of Education in the Writings of Ellen G. White," notes in several places the relationships among the process of restoring the image of God, Ellen White's educational philosophy, and student service to the church and the world.

At first, however, the college struggled to develop a curriculum that would aid in fulfilling these needs.<sup>153</sup> During its first decade of existence, the college bulletin actually boasted that most classes reflected little that was denominationally oriented or sectarian.<sup>154</sup> There was no practical missionary training, few physical or spiritual components in the formal educational program, and the teacher-training emphasis was geared primarily for public schools with a classical curriculum.<sup>155</sup> This is another example of the challenge White faced while trying to encourage others to adopt her educational vision.<sup>156</sup> It also caused some Adventists to wonder why the school was founded in the first place.

White was absent from Battle Creek when the first grounds for the college were purchased. Sometime later, when White returned to the area and saw how different the school was from what she envisioned, she was disappointed because there was no provision for agriculture or practical training.<sup>157</sup> White advocated an education closer to the vocationally-oriented Agricultural and Mechanical (A&M) colleges that were

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<sup>153</sup>See Marroquin, xvi.

<sup>154</sup>*Third Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Battle Creek College, with the Course of Study, Rules and Regulations, for the College Year 1876-77* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Steam Book and Job Print, 1877), 9-10; *Sixth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Battle Creek College, with the Course of Study, Rules and Regulations, for the College Year 1879-80* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Steam Book and Job Print, 1880), 6.

<sup>155</sup>See George I. Butler, "Our College at Battle Creek," *Review and Herald*, July 31, 1883, 489-490. At the time of publication, George Butler was president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Marroquin, 108-109).

<sup>156</sup>See above, "Ellen White and Educational Change: A Visionary's Challenge," 36-39. See also pages 24-29, 43-46, and 52-53 of this chapter.

<sup>157</sup>White, *Counsels on Education*, vi. See also William White, "Champion Pilots," 29.

emerging on the American frontier, rather than to the classical model that characterized traditional higher education of the time.<sup>158</sup> Throughout the 1880s she became well known at Battle Creek for her lectures, sermons, testimonies, and poignant challenges to the students and faculty to adopt a distinct type of education that was more in line with denominational needs.<sup>159</sup>

The fruit of her labors began to pay off in the 1890s while she was away in Australia. A shift occurred at Battle Creek college—“a new era [emerged] that stressed doing over knowing, the practical over the academic.”<sup>160</sup> First, the classical courses were shortened as Bible instruction gained a more prominent role in the formal curriculum. Battle Creek Sanitarium founder John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943), long irritated at the impracticality of the classical course of study, eagerly lent his support to excising the classics from the college curriculum.<sup>161</sup> Kellogg’s good friend and now president of Battle Creek College, Edward Alexander Sutherland (1865-1955), concluded that the most effective way to purge the classics from the curriculum and adopt a more practical

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<sup>158</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 21. Also see chapter 2 below, pages 175-76, for more information on the A&M colleges and the Morrill Acts. Note that White herself never advocated an A&M model—her educational vision extended well beyond contemporary models. But her vision of practical, holistic education had much more in common with this type of schooling than the traditional classical model—the two dominant types of education available in mid- to late-nineteenth-century America.

<sup>159</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 38.

<sup>160</sup>Gray, 65.

<sup>161</sup>J. H. Kellogg to O. A. Olson, 2 June 1895, J. H. Kellogg letters, microfilm roll 69, General Conference Archives, Washington, DC; See also O. A. Olson to W. W. Prescott, 24 April 1896, O. A. Olson Letterbook, microfilm roll 6, reel 9, book 15, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 74. Part of Kellogg’s antipathy toward the classical curriculum probably had to do with his strong interest in science and related medical fields. See, for example, Schwarz, *Kellogg*, 96-99.



frontier-style curriculum would be to relocate to the country—far from the conservative influences of Battle Creek.<sup>162</sup> White agreed and supported Sutherland in moving the college to the countryside.<sup>163</sup> Battle Creek College subsequently changed its name to Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC) upon relocating to the new campus at Berrien Springs, Michigan, in 1901.

### **Ellen White's Influence in the Emergence of Two Parallel Tracks in Adventist Education**

Sutherland eventually became one of the most influential and controversial pioneers of Adventist education. A serious disciple of Ellen White, and significantly influenced by the educational model presented at Harbor Springs in 1891, he set about reforming EMC's educational offerings based on his interpretation of her writings. In his previous position as the first president of Walla Walla College (1892-1897) he had spent considerable time studying White's counsels on education, eventually developing a rather distinct interpretation of what Adventist education should be.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Sutherland considered himself to be a progressive reformer. Those who were not in favor of what he considered to be innovative educational reform, he called "conservative." Conservatives, from his perspective, were unwilling to advocate holistic education, agriculture, or much needed curriculum reform. They could not innovate and were, in consequence, stuck "in a rut." Edward Alexander Sutherland, *Studies in Christian Education* (Madison, TN: Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute, [ca. 1915]); reprint, Payson, AZ: Leaves of Autumn Books, 1982), 105, 129, 131.

<sup>163</sup>"General Conference Proceedings," *The Daily Bulletin of the General Conference: Thirty-Fourth Session*, April 14, 1901, 212, 216. See also Gray, 88; Cadwallader, *History*, 54.

<sup>164</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 102, 264. See also, Warren Sidney Ashworth, "Edward Alexander Sutherland and Seventh-day Adventist Educational Reform: The Denominational Years, 1890-1904" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1986), 35-50. As president of Walla Walla College (1894-1897), Sutherland advocated vegetarianism, shorter courses, minimizing the classical curriculum, and no sports, while discouraging socializing between male and female students—standards that he also advocated both at EMC and Madison. Note that Madison, an educational institution in Tennessee, was founded in 1904 by Sutherland and Percy Magan.

Working closely with fellow ideologue Percy Magan (1867-1947), Sutherland sought to develop at Berrien Springs a missionary training school that strongly emphasized religious training and manual labor.<sup>165</sup> In Sutherland's understanding, there were two diametrically opposed systems of education. "One impresses the image of God, the other the image of Satan which is the image of the world."<sup>166</sup> To pattern an Adventist school by using worldly standards was to defeat the purpose of training Christian workers. As a result, degrees were abolished at EMC and set courses of study were eliminated in favor of short missionary-oriented training. Sutherland saw little value in traditional academic courses if they were not overtly spiritual or directly practical.<sup>167</sup>

Some interpreted Sutherland's early reforms as an "either-or" perspective. One either had a spiritual, missionary-oriented program, or one sold out to the world by advocating degrees and high academic achievement.<sup>168</sup> Sutherland was primarily concerned with filling the desperate need for denominational teachers as quickly as

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<sup>165</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 86. Percy Magan was sympathetic to Sutherland's educational views and supported the latter's reform attempts at Battle Creek College. Both believed their educational ideals were in line with White's writings. Magan later joined Sutherland in founding the self-supporting Madison College. He was eventually called to improve the curriculum and served as academic dean and later president of the denominational medical school, College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda, CA. See Merlin L. Neff, *For God and C.M.E.* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1964), 90-104.

<sup>166</sup>Edward A. Sutherland, "Educational," *The Daily Bulletin of the General Conference*, February 25, 1897, 148-150. Ellen White herself insisted on manual labor reform by personally asking Sutherland to immediately implement it. E. G. White to E. A. Sutherland, 24 September 1898, Letter 75, 1898, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>167</sup>Emmanuel Missionary College Board Minutes, Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, MI, 2 October 1902, 105-107, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. See also Sutherland's 1915 work, *Studies in Christian Education*, 28, 80, 119, 122, 133, 138, 143; Gray, 103-110.

<sup>168</sup>Edward A. Sutherland, "The True Meaning of Degrees," *Training School Advocate*, April 1901, 121. See also Cadwallader, *History*, 247-250.

possible. Long, tedious courses seemed irrelevant to this need. Nevertheless, he still claimed to expect degree-level schoolwork from the students. “[No] work done either for or by students will in any way fall below the true culture where degrees are given.”<sup>169</sup>

Sutherland’s interpretation of White’s counsel was seen as rather extreme to those satisfied with the earlier Battle Creek approach.<sup>170</sup> Sutherland saw himself as an innovator, joining forces with White and other reformers in battling against the conservative status quo.<sup>171</sup> Despite Sutherland and Magan’s zeal at Berrien Springs, enrollment at the college dropped significantly as students and faculty members reacted against what they perceived as ideological extremism.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup>Edward A. Sutherland, “A Training School for Christian Workers,” *Training School Advocate*, June 1899, 290. See also Ashworth, 146-155.

<sup>170</sup>For example, see Ashworth, 226-227.

<sup>171</sup>Ashworth, 422; Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 104. Ashworth places Edward Sutherland, Percy Magan, John Kellogg, and Alonzo Jones in favor of reform while Arthur Daniells, William Prescott, William Spicer, and later Ellet J. Waggoner advocated a more traditional approach to education. Ashworth, 155, 201, 216. Meredith Gray adds Stephen Haskell and George Butler to those who were suspicious of what they perceived as Sutherland’s radical reforms. Gray, 113.

<sup>172</sup>Gray, 83. Apparently, rumors and inaccuracies were regularly circulated around Battle Creek, exaggerating the nature of Sutherland’s reforms. Accusations ranged from the absurd—charging that he refused to kill bugs on the farm—to suggestions that he advocated using just the Bible and Ellen White as textbooks. Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 85; Ashworth, 102-111. Ironically, others insinuated that Sutherland had not done *enough* to make the Bible and manual labor central to the curriculum. Ashworth, 209, 211. These rumors challenged his reform efforts. Complicating matters was the gradual disappearance of the word “college” from the school’s literature, as Sutherland preferred to call EMC a “mission school.” See Gray, 71; H. H. Haskell to E. G. White, August 9, 1900, Ellen G. White Estate Research Center, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD; Battle Creek College Board Minutes, Battle Creek College, Battle Creek, MI, 10 April 1901, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; Ashworth, 126-127; Battle Creek College Board Minutes, Battle Creek College, Battle Creek, MI, 25 April 1901, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Ironically, according to Sutherland’s biographer, Warren Ashworth, Ellen White had ordered Sutherland to reduce the size of the college at Battle Creek by encouraging the development of other schools elsewhere and thus decentralizing the Adventist educational work from Battle Creek. This could be another significant reason for the enrollment decline during the

Based on White's writings, at least two competing schools of thought had now emerged in Adventist education. Some interpreted her writings as favoring manual labor and Bible study at the expense of academics. Others just as vigorously defended an opposing and more academic view.<sup>173</sup> George W. Caviness, the president immediately preceding Sutherland at Battle Creek College, emphasized that White advocated a strong academic curriculum—as “broad as the intellect could comprehend.”<sup>174</sup> Undoubtedly Caviness had gained some insights from the previous president, W. W. Prescott, who favored certain aspects of manual labor and the centrality of the Bible, yet within the structure of the traditional classical curriculum.<sup>175</sup> Interestingly, all disparate parties believed they were following the true counsel of the denomination's prophet.

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Sutherland years. See E. A. Sutherland to E. G. White, 3 August 1898, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; Ellen G. White, “A Misapplied Message,” *The Daily Bulletin of the General Conference*, March 2, 1899, 130-131; White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:211-212; Ashworth, 158-159.

<sup>173</sup>Although there were a number of additional reforms being advocated by various Adventist educators in Battle Creek, each of these was generally sympathetic to one or the other schools of thought mentioned here (see pages 59-60 below). One early example of this debate is documented in Arnold Colin Reye's dissertation on “Frederick Griggs: Seventh-day Adventist Educator and Administrator” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1984), 71-74. A power struggle between Sutherland and Griggs over the training of teachers occurred at Battle Creek College in 1899, where Griggs was head of the teacher training department. Sutherland, as president of the college, favored short, vocational courses, while Griggs wanted a more thorough college-level curriculum. Both advocated a strong spiritual and biblical perspective, but the “short course” versus “thorough training” controversy eventually led to Griggs's departure from Battle Creek to serve as principle of South Lancaster Academy in Massachusetts.

<sup>174</sup>“General Conference Proceedings,” *The Daily Bulletin of the General Conference*, February 25, 1895, 341.

<sup>175</sup>Gray, 68, 73. During both the Caviness and Prescott administrations “thorough instruction” was emphasized in the wording of the Battle Creek College bulletins. *Tenth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Battle Creek College, with the Course of Study, Rules and Regulations, for the College Year 1883-84* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Steam Book and Job Print, 1884), 8; *Fourteenth Annual Calendar of Battle Creek College* (N.p., 1889), 5; *Twenty-first Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Battle Creek College*,

Sutherland was a sincere and superbly talented educator who, on occasion, had a tendency to be a bit extreme in his reforms. Yet, to his credit, he played a significant role in steering Adventist education away from an overreliance on classical education. In addition to maintaining the biblical worldview emphasis that had grown during the previous two administrations at Battle Creek College, he also implemented a more holistic curriculum that added a strong work-education component. What he sometimes overlooked early in his career were instances in White's writings where she advocated solid academics.<sup>176</sup> In this regard, she cautioned Sutherland to avoid extremes by telling him, "You must not let the students suppose that their education is to be loose or haphazard."<sup>177</sup> On the other hand, the more traditional educators were also fulfilling a much needed role in Adventist education by holding to a solid academic curriculum. What was sometimes hard for her contemporaries to grasp is that White spoke favorably of both quality academics and Bible study in the schools.<sup>178</sup> Indeed, White's idea that the image of an all-knowing God was to be restored in every student suggests a strong orientation toward intellectual growth along with practical training, physical exercise, and

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*with the Course of Study, Rules and Regulations, for the College Year 1894-95* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Steam Book and Job Print, 1895), 9. During these administrations, courses were shortened and the biblical worldview was incorporated, yet the collegiate classical curriculum remained. See Marroquin, 126-127.

<sup>176</sup>Sutherland later expanded his views and became a leading proponent for the highest levels of academic quality in Adventist schools. See page 65 below.

<sup>177</sup>Battle Creek College Board Minutes, Battle Creek College, Battle Creek, MI, 11 October 1899, 43, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Gray, 86.

<sup>178</sup>For example, see White, *Fundamentals*, 45, 47, 82, 243-244, 316; idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 118, 369, 394; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:425.

spiritual commitment.<sup>179</sup> To White there was no dichotomy; but rather a seamless, integrated, holistic educational endeavor.

As the attacks on Sutherland and Magan became more personal and strident in Berrien Springs, White felt that something needed to be done to reconcile the two camps that were both citing her as inspired authority. Under unhappy circumstances, both Sutherland and Magan resigned in 1904 from their posts at the college. With White's blessing they headed south to develop a new type of school not tied to a denominational educational structure that Sutherland felt limited his ability to innovate. In 1904 she encouraged both of them to found an independent school which later became known as Madison College.<sup>180</sup> White played a direct role in organizing and supporting this endeavor by encouraging Sutherland and Magan to purchase the land and start the school on little more than faith.<sup>181</sup> The school eventually obtained 1,000 acres, enjoyed a rural location, and, in association with its health-promoting sanitarium, was completely self-supporting.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup>This concept will be examined in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>180</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 105. The complex controversies that surrounded Sutherland and Magan's departure from EMC are outlined in Ashworth's "Edward Alexander Sutherland and SDA Educational Reform," 353-396.

<sup>181</sup>An example of Ellen White's support for Madison can be found in the booklet, *The Madison School: An Appeal for Encouragement and Aid to Be Given to the Burden-Bearers in the Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute at Madison, Tennessee*, Special Testimonies, Series B, no. 11 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1908). Ellen White was also a member of the board at Madison College, which is significant in that this was the only board of an educational institution on which she served. See *SDA Encyclopedia*, 1966 ed., s.v. "Madison Institutions."

<sup>182</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 101-105. "Self-supporting" usually refers to a supporting ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church that is not regularly funded by the General Conference or its official subsidiaries.

Through these actions White created a whole new order in Adventist education—the independent, self-supporting ministry that originated in the southern United States.<sup>183</sup> Her writings during this time also influenced many small home-school centers and independent schools. This created a de facto second branch of Adventist education that was to augment the work of the organized church.<sup>184</sup> In this way White acknowledged two different yet legitimate branches of Adventist education, the “short and fast” program and the more academically oriented liberal arts curriculum. Both programs claimed to be effectively training missionaries and denominational workers for labor in the Adventist cause.

A few years after Sutherland had vacated Berrien Springs there was some question as to whether to continue along Sutherland’s vocationally oriented course or to develop a more academically oriented liberal arts program. Earlier, in 1903, White counseled in favor of full college preparation—a point reiterated by Arthur Daniels in 1906.<sup>185</sup> These developments illustrate the dynamic nature of White’s counsels. Rather than state dogmatically that there was only one particular way to do schooling, White

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<sup>183</sup>In 2008 there were numerous self-supporting schools and ministries in Adventism, many of which trace their heritage and inspiration to Madison College. Most of these organizations work in harmony with the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some schools of this nature include: Amazing Facts College of Evangelism (Roseville, CA), Fletcher Academy (Fletcher, NC), Fountainview Academy (Lillooet, BC), Laurelbrook Academy (Dayton, TN), Uchee Pines Institute (Seale, AL), Wildwood Lifestyle Center and Hospital (Wildwood, GA), and Weimar Institute (Weimar, CA). Sutherland’s Madison College closed in 1964.

<sup>184</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 307. See White, *The Madison School*, 3, 10, 17, 31, 33.

<sup>185</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 122-124. In 1903 Ellen White advocated that ample provision should be made so schools can reach high standards of academic proficiency (White, *Fundamentals*, 488-491). Arthur Daniells emphasized this counsel when the direction for EMC was being reviewed. See Arthur Daniells, “Who Will Join the Educational Movement?” *Review and Herald*, August 2, 1906, 6.

offered guiding principles that could be applied in varying circumstances, depending on the local situation. For White, whatever the method, educating young people must have a strong salvific component—the process of restoring the image of God in every student. Such an education would, in turn, stimulate a movement to bring the gospel of salvation to the world.

White, in her innovative and pragmatic way, advocated that the church needed both types of educational offerings in order to forward the church's ministry on multiple fronts. In espousing this conclusion she succeeded to a certain extent in diffusing the powder keg of emotional accusations that threatened to undermine the overall mission of denominational education. She seemed reluctant to suggest that there was only one proper way to do Adventist schooling, although she clearly questioned the effectiveness of the traditional classical curriculum. The independent short course/vocational emphasis and the full preparation college course would serve different Adventist constituencies with their diverse educational interests and needs. Students with limited formal education who later desired more specialized training could then build on their earlier short-course training and complete their degree for further service in the professional fields.

Until about 1908 Emmanuel Missionary College continued in the Sutherland vein under the subsequent presidency of Nelson Walker Kauble, who advocated agricultural work while only minimally improving the academic program.<sup>186</sup> This prompted the

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<sup>186</sup>Board members considered the academic program to be well below college level in 1906. Emmanuel Missionary College Board Minutes, Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, MI, 28 February 1906, 246, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Others also argued the academic program needed significant improvement. See S.



trustees of the college to investigate returning to the pre-1897 Prescott academic tradition in order to bolster the reputation and quality of the school, though this time from a liberal arts perspective rather than that of the traditional classical curriculum. The man chosen to rebuild the college from what some considered the Sutherland deprecations was Otto Julius Graf.<sup>187</sup> This change of direction became known as “the return to thorough education.”<sup>188</sup>

Interestingly, it does not appear that White protested either this broadening perspective or the self-supporting movement that fulfilled the need for shorter vocational programs. By 1910 students were agitating to include caps and gowns as part of their formal graduation services. By 1915, degrees and sports were once more a part of the

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P. S. Edwards, “Memories of Berrien,” 1962, 8, unpublished manuscript, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Emmanuel Missionary College Board Minutes, Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, MI, 10 July 1904, 262, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>187</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 126-128. The local newspaper noted that Graf’s administration would be improving academics significantly. “Prof. Kauble Succeeded by Prof. O. J. Graf,” *The Berrien Springs Era*, July 9, 1908, 281.

<sup>188</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 128-132. Prior to the 1960s Vande Vere interviewed a number of early EMC students who recalled Otto Graf as the one who returned college status to the school. See Vande Vere’s unpublished manuscript, “A History of Battle Creek College,” chapter on Graf, 35, Document File 256, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Graf also encouraged additional teacher training, higher academics, and salaries while increasing the number of teachers in the various departments of the school (*ibid.*, 5). See *Announcement 1908-9* (Berrien Springs, MI: Emmanuel Missionary College, 1908-1909), 4-5, and “Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College 1918-1919,” *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin* 8 (First Quarter 1918): 3-5, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. See also Emmanuel Missionary College Trustees Minutes, Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, MI, 16 May 1917; Emmanuel Missionary College Trustees Minutes, Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, MI, 18 February 1918, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. Some of White’s comments on the importance of a thorough education can be found in the following passages: Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1941), 333-334; *idem*, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:425; *idem*, *Counsels to Parents*, 394.

program at Emmanuel Missionary College.<sup>189</sup> Nevertheless, throughout Adventist education the missionary emphasis remained prominent, and for at least the next thirty years Adventist schools produced a significant number of workers almost exclusively for the cause of the church.<sup>190</sup>

It is interesting to note that in the continued quest for an innovative ministry, E. A. Sutherland eventually merged academic quality and accountability into Madison's unique program, inspiring a number of highly successful self-supporting schools and ministries that exist even to this day.<sup>191</sup> Madison's co-founder, Percy Magan, went on to successfully guide the denomination's fledgling medical school at Loma Linda through a myriad of complex challenges associated with accredited medical education.

### **Examples of Other Denominational Schools in North America (to 1915)**

Ellen White's influence was felt in the creation of virtually every school that was founded during her lifetime.<sup>192</sup> On the occasions when she was not directly involved in

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<sup>189</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 132. See O. J. Graf, "Biennial Report of Emmanuel Missionary College for 1908-1910," *Lake Union Herald*, March 9, 1910, 3-4; Emmanuel Missionary College Faculty Minutes, Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, MI, 28 and March 30, 1910, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. These minutes demonstrate that there was still some significant debate amongst the faculty regarding the appropriateness of wearing caps and gowns. Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin 4, no. 4 (1915): 43-44, refers to ball playing.

<sup>190</sup>Paulus W. Coetser, "The Changing Goals of S.D.A. Education in the U.S.A. (1874-1976)," Term Paper, 1976, 10, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>191</sup>See fn. 183 on p. 48 for a partial list of schools Madison influenced.

<sup>192</sup>Gilbert Valentine outlines the immense influence of Ellen White in his examination of W. W. Prescott's educational achievements. Gilbert Murray Valentine, *The Shaping of Adventism: The Case of W. W. Prescott* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992), 101-112.

the founding of a school, she would offer her blessing and financial support. For example, White's advice led to the development of a new school near the United States capital—Washington Missionary College (1903). Washington, D.C., was low on the list of desirable locations, until she pointed out the virtues of being located near the capital.<sup>193</sup> In California, San Fernando Academy's trustees, seeking the "assurance that God would approve of the property for the proposed school," wrote to White in 1902 for her blessing on the project. She not only agreed to its creation but participated in the opening of the school.<sup>194</sup>

White's influence is also illustrated in the early history of the South Lancaster School in Massachusetts. Founded in 1882, the school was immediately embroiled in a controversy over whether or not the Bible should serve as virtually the only textbook in the curriculum. She had earlier counseled that a broad-based curriculum within the context of the biblical worldview was a more balanced approach for educating students.<sup>195</sup> This approach was eventually adopted at South Lancaster.

Another example of White's educational guidance was the 1881 founding of Healdsburg Academy. She again enunciated the importance of a biblical worldview

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<sup>193</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 204-206. See Ellen G. White, "From Washington," *Signs of the Times*, June 15, 1904, 13; idem, *Letters and Manuscripts Relating to Medical Missionary Work and Going to Battle Creek* (Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1975), 86.

<sup>194</sup>White, *Manuscript Releases*, 16:129-135.

<sup>195</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:21-22; Cadwallader, *History*, 65-67. The 1885 debate over the use of the Bible as the sole textbook is documented in Myron F. Wehtje, *And There Was Light: A History of South Lancaster Academy, Lancaster Junior College, and Atlantic Union College* (South Lancaster, MA: Atlantic Press, 1982), 74-84. Ellen White grappled with the faculty over issues such as academic accountability and striking a proper balance between spirituality and schoolwork. Wehtje includes a number of unpublished quotes that are helpful in understanding Ellen White's perspectives on these issues.

within the curriculum—“the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” The holistic values of high moral and religious standards were to strengthen students to stand firm in their faith.<sup>196</sup>

As previously noted, in the earliest Adventist secondary and tertiary schools, Bible classes were rarely a part of the formal curriculum. This prompted White to issue some strong statements in an attempt to make Bible study an integral component of denominational schools.<sup>197</sup> The nature of these statements caused some Adventists to feel that she was advocating nothing but the Bible in class work, which, as has been pointed out, was not the case. At schools such as Battle Creek College and Union College (1890), initial offerings did not include Bible study for all students. But within a decade nearly all Adventist schools had moved the study of the Bible from an extracurricular activity to an integral part of the formal curriculum while striving to incorporate the biblical worldview into every class.<sup>198</sup>

### **Ellen White’s Influence on Schools outside North America**

Ellen White’s Australian experimental school, Avondale, certainly did not fit into the category of limited Bible study, as she herself saw to it that the main goal of the school was to “convert young people and train them to be effective missionaries both in

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<sup>196</sup>Ellen G. White, “Our School at Healdsburg,” *Signs of the Times*, May 4, 1882, 212-213.

<sup>197</sup>For example, her 1881 article “Our College” dealt at length with this topic (quoted in White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:21-36). See pages 26-27 for more on Ellen White’s efforts to have Bible study as part of the formal curriculum.

<sup>198</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 235-236.

and out of denominational employ.”<sup>199</sup> The curriculum at Avondale placed the biblical worldview squarely in the center. The school exemplified an austere bent as well—no sports, no courting, extensive physical labor, spiritual teachers, a vegetarian diet plus a “philanthropic and evangelistic outreach into the community.”<sup>200</sup> Writing from Avondale, White noted the keystones of her curricular interests: Bible study, high standards, vital godliness in students and teachers, preparation for the end of time, temperance, health, an active lifestyle, and a safe environment in the scenes of nature.<sup>201</sup> As noted earlier, Avondale played a significant role in influencing other Adventist schools, serving as a “sample of what all Seventh-day Adventist schools should be like.”<sup>202</sup>

In addition to her interest in Avondale, White advocated the development of other schools outside North America to further the cause of Adventism. As early as her trip to Europe (1885-1887), she encouraged Adventists to develop strategies for training denominational workers in their native countries.<sup>203</sup> Several small educational endeavors began in Scandinavia as early as 1888, but the limited population of Adventists in northern Europe made it difficult for them, during the next several decades, to support

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<sup>199</sup>Hook, 44. Ellen White lived in Australia from 1891-1900. Much of this time her primary residence was near the Avondale School.

<sup>200</sup>Ibid. See also Robert K. McIver, “Physical, Mental and Moral Education at Avondale College,” *Adventist Heritage* 16 (Spring 1993): 47, which outlines the school’s curriculum and White’s influence on it.

<sup>201</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 285.

<sup>202</sup>Marroquin, 230-231; White, *Counsels to Parents*, 533.

<sup>203</sup>D. Arthur Delafield, *Ellen G. White in Europe, 1885-1887: Prepared from Ellen G. White Papers and European Historical Sources* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1975), 193-194.

denominational schools.<sup>204</sup> A number of small European Adventist educational ventures came and went, but in time, several schools emerged that still operate today.<sup>205</sup>

The beginning of today's Friedensau Adventist University was designed in 1899 largely on the industrial-missionary training school model of Ellen White.<sup>206</sup> Located in Germany, it eventually included a sanitarium, health food factory, and nursing home that helped integrate the holistic elements of health with educational training. The curriculum emphasized a self-supporting vocational perspective not unlike White's Avondale experiment and Sutherland's Madison school. Nearly all early graduates became denominational workers or missionaries.<sup>207</sup> Similarly, England's Newbold College was founded in 1901 with the goal of training missionaries for the denomination.<sup>208</sup> Newbold can trace its origins to Homer Salisbury, who was a faculty member at Battle Creek College during the Sutherland reform years. In 1912 a nursing department was added to

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<sup>204</sup>Greenleaf, 108.

<sup>205</sup>Floyd Greenleaf's chapter, "Bridging the Atlantic," offers a more in-depth history of these early Adventist efforts at education in Europe and Australia. Greenleaf, 104-123.

<sup>206</sup>Friedensau traces its roots back to a small Adventist school in Hamburg, Germany, ca. 1889. The school was formally founded as Missionsseminar Friedensau in 1899. Over the next century the name changed several times, culminating in its current title. Greenleaf, 111-113.

<sup>207</sup>Wilhelm Muller, "Friedensau, Citadel of Faith," *Journal of True Education* 15 (June 1953): 31-33.

<sup>208</sup>Originally Newbold was known as Duncombe Hall College. After a number of relocations the current name and property were established in 1945. Information on Newbold College history can be found at the College's website. Newbold College: A Mind Opening Experience, "A Quick Look at Newbold," <http://www.newbold.ac.uk/content/view/47/1242/> (accessed November 17, 2008).

bring the school closer to White's vision of combining healing ministries with education.<sup>209</sup>

The earliest permanent training school outside of the United States was founded in South Africa in 1893. The philanthropic efforts of a wealthy convert, Peter Wessells, generously supported the fledgling school—today's Helderberg College. Enrollment, however, remained low, partly due to student apathy toward the school's manual labor component and partly to the facility's remote location. Following a pattern that would characterize the development of many schools outside North America, the original school changed its name and location several times before settling down at its current, more accessible location in 1928. It was hoped that this setting would better enable the school to follow the ideals of White's educational model.<sup>210</sup>

Helderberg was initially concerned with reaching settlers of European descent in Africa. This left a significant need for an educational enterprise to serve the native African. In 1895, Solusi College located in Southern Africa was created to teach the indigenous population literacy skills that would facilitate spreading the gospel to the surrounding villages. The school initially focused on educating students through the third grade. Equipped with this education, students ventured to open outpost schools in the

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<sup>209</sup>A. J. Woodfield, "Rise and Progress of Educational Work in England," *Journal of True Education* 15 (June 1953): 26-27.

<sup>210</sup>Helderberg was originally called Claremont Union College and was located at Claremont, Cape Town. After 1919 it moved several times in an attempt to locate where agricultural training and student industrial labor could be a part of the educational experience as recommended in Ellen White's writings. During this time the name was changed to South African Training School to better reflect this emphasis. Finally, in 1928 the school moved to its current location at the base of Helderberg Mountain. See Greenleaf, 125-128; Helen M. Hyatt, "Christian Education Begins in South Africa," *JTE* 15 (June 1953): 38-39, 63.

surrounding communities. Many students from these satellite schools would continue their education by returning to Solusi for additional training.<sup>211</sup> By 1917, more than 1,000 church members had been educated in this way. Throughout Solusi's development, White's writings served as the guiding influence. Agriculture, self-sufficiency, and hygienic living were emphasized in the early curriculum of Solusi.<sup>212</sup>

This industrial-school pattern characterized the early Adventist educational endeavors in South America as well. In Argentina, River Plate College traces its roots back to 1898 when Adventist educators first began teaching European immigrants. The school featured short, nonacademic courses that were designed to quickly equip much-needed workers to fill denominational needs. However, as time went on, parents came to appreciate the spiritual benefits of an Adventist education as an important alternative to public education, and as a consequence demanded that the academic curriculum be strengthened. The quality of Adventist schools in the region was greatly boosted in 1908 with the arrival of a professional school administrator who set about bringing academic integrity to the program by meeting Argentinean national standards for the school.<sup>213</sup>

As in North America so also in Argentina: Trying to strike a balance between academic integrity and strong spirituality was fraught with tension. In addition, bringing the school plant up to minimum standards required significant upgrading of the facilities. Teacher qualifications needed improvement as well. The resulting integration of

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<sup>211</sup>Greenleaf, 172-177.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., 177. Ellen White's involvement in procuring the land for Solusi is outlined in Arthur White's *The Australian Years*, 185-186.

<sup>213</sup>See Frank Westphall, *Pioneering in the Neglected Continent* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1927), 44-50; Greenleaf, 136-137.



academics and spirituality served to make Adventist education a viable alternative to public education in Argentina.

In 1892 believers in Brazil founded their first Adventist school. Like many other denominational schools of the time, its earliest years were characterized by a progression of school relocations and closings. In 1914, however, Adventists in Brazil, seeking to follow White's counsel, located some land far out in the country and opened the school that became the forerunner of today's Brazil College.<sup>214</sup> It is insightful to note that nearly all of these early schools evolved in a similar way, from industrial-oriented short-course training of denominational workers to secondary and, in more recent times, to college-level institutions. These schools found their inspiration in White's writings at each stage of their development.

Yet, as Floyd Greenleaf writes, the details of Adventist education still varied from region to region. Although every Adventist school owes a certain philosophical debt to White's writings, Adventist education took on "new forms," depending on local circumstances.<sup>215</sup> Most schools outside North America followed an evolutionary path from an emphasis with little academic orientation, to a more balanced program that blended academics with experiential-vocational learning. A similar process took place in many North American schools as well—a near exclusive emphasis on the training of denominational workers was followed by a broader desire to extend the benefits of an Adventist education to all Adventist students, regardless of their ultimate career paths.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>214</sup>Greenleaf, 142-144.

<sup>215</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid., 146.

Wherever White's educational ideas took root, the result was a remarkable growth of Seventh-day Adventist education. In 1920, just five years after White's death, the denomination was operating 716 elementary schools plus 55 secondary academies and colleges in North America. Outside of North America, the church had approximately 212 elementary schools plus 42 pre-secondary "training" schools for older students. Total world-wide enrollment for elementary-level education was 23,481 students, whereas training schools, secondary-level academies, and colleges educated 14,614 students.<sup>217</sup> White's motivational vision and tireless efforts for Adventist education contributed largely to the growth of these Adventist schools.

### **Ellen White's Influence on the Accreditation Issue**

In the opening years of the twentieth century each Adventist school developed in its own particular way without standardized guidelines. In North America, for example, there was little denominational oversight of the fledgling schools. In addition, few legal requirements for chartering schools existed in most states. The curriculum, emphasis, and mission of each school evolved independently based on how local church leaders interpreted White's educational writings.<sup>218</sup>

By 1903 the church had at least three educational reform movements operating simultaneously in Battle Creek alone. Each of these movements included a capable

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<sup>217</sup>*Seventh-day Adventist Conferences, Missions, and Institutions: The Fifty-eighth Annual Statistical Report Year Ending December 31, 1920* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1920).

<sup>218</sup>Greenleaf, 299.

reform-minded leader and an enthusiastic following. All cited White for support—the “acknowledged source of Adventist educational philosophy.”<sup>219</sup> William Warren Prescott emphasized the role of the Bible in the curriculum while John Harvey Kellogg focused on the need for students trained in health and hygiene. Edward Alexander Sutherland’s burden for practical missionary training was the third emphasis. White, as noted earlier, never laid out an exact blueprint for all schools, choosing instead to support educational reform wherever it occurred.<sup>220</sup>

Greenleaf argues that the main difference among these reform efforts boils down to just two divergent perspectives as to why Adventist schools were created. One group saw Adventist schools as existing solely to train workers for denominational or mission employment. Another group held that all Adventist children deserved an Adventist education no matter what career they chose. White’s support of both perspectives as being necessary elements of Adventist education ultimately paved the way for accreditation.<sup>221</sup> She did not restrict her concept of mission to either denominational or foreign mission work—although she strongly recommended that students choose one of these paths. Rather, she envisioned that a balanced, high-quality education would equip students to uplift those around them no matter what vocation they chose.<sup>222</sup> This was an important part of her restoration motif, a philosophy which emphasizes improvement of

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<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 203.

<sup>220</sup>See Knight, *Early Adventist Educators*, 45.

<sup>221</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:207. See also Greenleaf, 301-302, 319-320.

<sup>222</sup>See Greenleaf, 219, 319. Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation examine White’s optimistic restoration motif as it applies to all students regardless of career path.

the mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of students.<sup>223</sup> For White, the biblical worldview, health, hygiene, environment, and useful labor were all integrated components of her educational scheme.

White was reluctant to abandon any aspect of her holistic educational concepts. One of those significant aspects was health education. She not only believed that all students should be trained in principles of health and hygiene, but also envisioned an educational system that would train highly qualified medical evangelists. She considered denominational sanitariums and medical missionary work to be the “right hand of the gospel.”<sup>224</sup> Consequently, she perceived a significant need for well-trained, conscientious Adventist doctors and nurses. She envisioned an educational institution at Loma Linda, California, that would educate committed doctors and nurses to work with pastors and teachers in reaching the world for Christ.<sup>225</sup>

The development of the fully qualified medical school that White proposed was a daunting challenge for the small Adventist denomination. This aspiration became even more difficult as the American Medical Association (AMA) began to crack down on what they considered to be substandard medical schools.<sup>226</sup> The cost and commitment

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<sup>223</sup>Chapter 4 of this dissertation emphasizes White’s emphasis on restoring the image of God physically, mentally, and spiritually.

<sup>224</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 7:59. See also chapter 3, “Glorifying God through Health and Lifestyle Reform.”

<sup>225</sup>Ellen G. White, *Medical Ministry: A Treatise on Medical Missionary Work in the Gospel* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1963), 238, 259, 320; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9:211.

<sup>226</sup>Dr. Abraham Flexner’s 1910 report on the dismal state of medical education in the United States led to much-needed reforms. Standards for medical schools were dramatically raised, leaving Loma Linda with a “C” rating—barely recognized as a functioning medical

required to bring Loma Linda into good standing with the AMA caused some leaders in the church to question the value of dedicating so many resources to just one category of education. One group suggested that denominational education should provide only the first two years of medical training. Others recommended abandoning altogether the idea of training fully-qualified medical professionals.

When White was questioned whether or not it was in the church's best interest to expend the resources necessary to train medical professionals, she advocated a high-quality medical school that would educate fully-trained doctors. The facility at Loma Linda needed to be of the "highest order," supplying students with "whatever might be required" in order to pass state medical examinations.<sup>227</sup>

White wrote additional articles on the issue, advocating the elimination of barriers that might threaten the standing of Loma Linda in light of higher requirements from governing agencies.<sup>228</sup> When denominational education had faced academic and institutional challenges previously, White told W. W. Prescott that Adventist schools should "give a better class of education than the schools of the world."<sup>229</sup> This did not

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school. The "C" rating did not actually shut down the program outright, but immediate steps were required to bring the facility into line with the AMA requirements. This demanded a significant outlay of funds which the denomination found difficult to raise. Neff, 163-164.

<sup>227</sup>Her position was stated in a series of letters reprinted under the title "College of Medical Evangelists: Report of a Special Meeting in Behalf of the Loma Linda College of Medical Evangelists, Held During the Fifth Biennial Session of the Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists," *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 3, 1910, 2-3. This entire issue of the *Recorder* was dedicated to the meetings.

<sup>228</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 479-481.

<sup>229</sup>See letter from W. W. Prescott to E. A. Sutherland, 29 April 1896, microfilm roll 52, reel 26, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

mean that Adventist schools were to mirror secular schools, but that Adventist education could be “of an entirely different character” than what was offered by anyone else.<sup>230</sup>

Innovation and creativity within a holistic perspective were educational characteristics that White expected Adventist schools to exemplify. She stated that there is no one special plan or pattern for all schools. Each Adventist school needed to consider and carefully study local conditions in order to develop creative ways of giving the most beneficial education to students. She was careful to describe overarching principles, but these did not demand a static, unchangeable pattern.<sup>231</sup>

Restoring the health of body, mind, and soul meant that nothing short of the highest standards in all three areas should be sought.<sup>232</sup> This optimistic theme challenged students to seek the best education possible, while encouraging Adventist administrators to provide a balanced educational environment that would train students to uplift those with whom they came in contact.<sup>233</sup> These counsels that advocated top-quality, recognized schooling for students, became the pillars of future arguments that favored the eventual accreditation of all Adventist schools.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>230</sup>Ibid.

<sup>231</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 203; idem, *The Madison School*, 27-32.

<sup>232</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 465, 467, 470.

<sup>233</sup>Ellen G. White, “Christian Character Exemplified in Teachers and Students,” *Review and Herald*, December 8, 1891, 753.

<sup>234</sup>Edward Sutherland claimed to have spent considerable time discussing with White her vision for the medical school at Loma Linda. Writing in 1931, he recollected that White wished Loma Linda to be one of the leading medical universities in the land (E. A. Sutherland to O. J. Graf, 18 May 1931, E. A. Sutherland Special Collection, box 14C2 1021, Loma Linda University Archives, Loma Linda, CA). In the circumstances under which these discussions took place (the “C” rating of Loma Linda by the AMA), the clear implication is that White favored accreditation, at least in the case of Loma Linda. But the principle she appeared to be following was that, if

As early as 1905 Fredrick Griggs, then president of South Lancaster Academy, encouraged the General Conference to accept a recommendation to advise Adventist schools to “plan their work [so] that the state examining boards, such as the Regents of New York, can give credit for any work done in the [Adventist] schools.”<sup>235</sup> In this way students would have more options available to them in whatever occupation they might be called to serve. The New York Board of Regents represented the highest endorsement a school could receive at the time, as most state regional accrediting boards had not yet been organized. In 1905, Union College, seeking to provide the best education possible for their premedical students, also chose to seek recognition from the New York Board of Regents. An affiliation with the University of Nebraska was arranged to further strengthen their program.<sup>236</sup> Private regional accrediting boards later emerged to establish minimum standards for educational institutions in the face of widely varying state educational licensing requirements.

At first, accreditation was used to ensure that colleges offering pre-medical programs were requiring adequate coursework. But by the 1920s, nursing and teaching programs were also coming under increasing scrutiny, leading to licensing requirements in these professions as well.<sup>237</sup> Considerable debate and discussion ensued throughout

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professional service to humanity demanded an accredited degree, then Adventist intuitions should offer accredited degrees.

<sup>235</sup>Frederick Griggs, “On Educational Work,” *Review and Herald*, June 1, 1905, 20.

<sup>236</sup>Dick, 155; Greenleaf, 304.

<sup>237</sup>Greenleaf, 306. An excellent definition of accreditation can be found on the American Psychological Association’s website. “Accreditation is both a status and a process. As a status, accreditation provides public notification that an institution or program meets standards of quality set forth by an accrediting agency. As a process, accreditation reflects the fact that in achieving

the 1920s over whether or not Adventist schools should rise to these new standards via the accreditation process.<sup>238</sup> These animated debates culminated in the 1930s with one group of Adventists strongly supporting accreditation while another felt that such recognition was an abandonment of Adventist educational ideals.

Interestingly, both educational reformers P. T. Magan and E. A. Sutherland offered persuasive arguments in favor of accreditation by explaining that Adventist education had to innovate and improve or be rendered obsolete.<sup>239</sup> Sutherland also wrote a noteworthy set of letters where he defended his choice to seek accreditation for Madison College in the face of strong opposition from former supporters and acquaintances.<sup>240</sup> Sutherland cited his understanding of Ellen White's educational counsels as being a major influence in his decision to seek accreditation.

From September 25 to October 23, 1930, the *Review and Herald* dedicated a number of pages to the accreditation debate raging in Adventism. Greenleaf summarizes the accreditation controversies in Adventist education, noting that “by 1945 all of the

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recognition by the accrediting agency, the institution or program is committed to self-study and external review by one's peers in seeking not only to meet standards but to continuously seek ways in which to enhance the quality of education and training provided.” <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/faq1.html> (accessed July 1, 2008).

<sup>238</sup>Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 37-45. For a detailed account of this debate within Adventism, see Greenleaf, 299-323.

<sup>239</sup>See Edward Alexander Sutherland, “Why Should Madison College Become a Senior College?” *The Madison Survey*, January 7, 1931, 1-4; Greenleaf, 309.

<sup>240</sup>O. J. Graf to E. A. Sutherland, January 16, 1931, Loma Linda University Archives, Loma Linda, CA. O. J. Graf likened Sutherland to a “Brutus” for advocating accreditation. After Sutherland persuasively explained his reasoning for seeking accreditation, Graf became an influential supporter. E. A. Sutherland to O. J. Graf, May 18, 1931, Loma Linda University Archives, Loma Linda, CA. Sutherland's response to Graf highlights Sutherland's assertion that Adventist education should never be content with “second best,” but should continually strive to be progressive and innovative—to do the “best thing.”



Adventist degree-granting institutions in North America were accredited by their regional associations.”<sup>241</sup> From that time to the present, Adventist denominational schools have continued to grow and develop within the paradigm of offering an accredited education in the distinct context of White’s holistic vision.

Ellen White’s Influential Legacy:  
1920 to the Present (2008)

### **The Blueprint and Fundamentalism in Adventist Education**

Even though Ellen White died in 1915, her influence on Adventist education continues. During the 1920s, White’s counsels were formalized more rigidly than when she was alive. James Robison, the first president of the denomination’s La Sierra University, spoke of “the Blueprint that God had given us”—saving souls and redeeming students.<sup>242</sup> While White’s image-of-God motif illustrates her interest in the salvific elements of education, she herself did not use the more static term “blueprint” in her writings. Eventually this term came to be widely utilized in Adventist circles to justify a rigid interpretation of her educational writings—namely, that there is only one particular way of conducting Adventist education. While the theme of restoring the image of God seems prevalent in her educational writings, the multitudinous ways this could be

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<sup>241</sup>Greenleaf, 317. This also included Sutherland’s Madison College, the only North American self-supporting school that sought to offer a fully recognized college curriculum.

<sup>242</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 273.

accomplished weakens the usefulness of the term “blueprint” in regard to her educational philosophy.<sup>243</sup>

As noted earlier, White played an integral role in encouraging the church to elevate its educational institutions to the highest levels of competency. At a time when educational requirements for doctors, nurses, and teachers were becoming increasingly stringent, Adventist schools faced a growing crisis in providing quality training for denominational students called to these professions. Rising to this challenge eventually led to the accreditation of all denominational schools by the 1940s.<sup>244</sup>

Why did accreditation generate so much controversy? George Knight explains that from White’s death through the 1950s a large segment of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination favored a fundamentalist perspective that was popular in conservative Christian circles during that era.<sup>245</sup> Fundamentalism was often suspicious of academic learning, portraying it as liberal and modernistic.

Richard Hofstadter has traced the emergence of anti-intellectualism to the dissenting inheritance of the early American settlers and the realities of living on the American frontier. Practical, commonsense problem solving was promoted at the expense of “bookish” learning. Denominations that relied on an elite educated clergy

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<sup>243</sup>The use of the term “blueprint” apparently peaked between the 1920s and 1960s, as there is evidence that it was then widely used in the denomination. See Spalding, 2:65. More recent discussions of the blueprint idea can be found in Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 18-19, and Vance Ferrell, *The Broken Blueprint* (Altamont, TN: Harvestime Books, 2003), 22, 41, 42, 50, 64-66, 119-120. See also page 22 for a further discussion of Adventist education and the idea of White’s “blueprint.”

<sup>244</sup>See pages 59-66 for a discussion of the accreditation challenges in Adventist education in the 1930s.

<sup>245</sup>Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 133, 128-159 passim.

were seen as out of touch with the realities of the frontier. Fundamentalists built on this heritage of mistrust by openly questioning the value of modernistic empirical education which they perceived as casting doubt on the clear teachings of the Bible.<sup>246</sup>

It also seems evident that before her death, White and many other Adventists of her day shared some of these fundamentalist concerns. Modernist tendencies to question the Bible as the word of God, while advocating an evolutionary worldview, especially concerned her. Science historian Ronald Numbers writes that White viewed evolution as a significant threat to Christian ethics and morality because “tracing human genealogy back to apes would invalidate the concept of humans being created in the image of God.”<sup>247</sup> George McCready Price (1870-1963), a self-taught Adventist geologist who derived much of his inspiration from the writings of White, was influential in moving fundamentalists to strongly support the six-day creation concept of a young earth at a time when most of Christianity was leaning toward some variant of the theory of evolution.<sup>248</sup>

Early in the twentieth century, Seventh-day Adventists were especially sensitive toward modernistic “science talk” as a result of the Kellogg-pantheism controversy.<sup>249</sup> John Harvey Kellogg, founder and leader of the Battle Creek sanitarium and the pre-

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<sup>246</sup>Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Knopf Publishing, 1963), 154-157.

<sup>247</sup>Ronald Numbers, *Darwinism Comes to America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>248</sup>*Ibid.*, 2-3. Note that some Christians were seeking to develop a theistic counterpart or parallel to evolutionary theory.

<sup>249</sup>See pages 41-42 for a brief examination on some of Kellogg’s reform initiatives.

eminent Adventist advocate of science at the time, supported some unorthodox views concerning “the personality of God and the divine presence in all things.”<sup>250</sup> These “pantheistic” views appeared in the doctor’s book, *The Living Temple*.<sup>251</sup> The crux of his argument was that God was not above or behind nature, but was in fact nature itself. This initially caused considerable debate among Adventists, but when White came out against Kellogg’s views, the ensuing differences eventually led to his separation from Adventism.<sup>252</sup> Consequently, in the first decade of the twentieth century, a number of prominent Adventist leaders sympathetic to the views of Kellogg also ended up leaving the church and eventually denouncing the ministry of Ellen White.<sup>253</sup>

A major outgrowth of this controversy led Adventists to refocus on fundamental “non-negotiable” pillars of their faith—the old landmarks—and to defend them vigorously against any perceived threat of modification. When White eventually wrote a testimony against the pantheistic views of Kellogg, many Adventists felt that she was attacking science itself.<sup>254</sup> All this negative publicity toward science, generated in part

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<sup>250</sup>Schwarz, *Kellogg*, 184.

<sup>251</sup>John Harvey Kellogg, *The Living Temple* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1903). Most of the controversial material was located in the first few pages of chapter 1.

<sup>252</sup>See Schwarz, *Kellogg*, 184-186. Although Kellogg’s pantheistic leanings became the focal point of his departure from Adventism, other issues such as his troubled relationship with the General Conference president Arthur Daniels and Kellogg’s tendency to “empire build” at Battle Creek also strained his rapport with the church.

<sup>253</sup>These included prominent denominational ministers such as Alonzo T. Jones, Albion Ballenger, and Ellet J. Waggoner—once staunch supporters of Ellen White. W. W. Prescott, Edward Sutherland, and Percy Magan, though initially sympathetic to Kellogg, eventually modified their perspectives—largely because of their continuing belief in Ellen White’s counsels. See Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy*, 210-225, 236-237.

<sup>254</sup>White, “The Work for This Time,” 16-17; Calvin Edwards and Land, 118-121.

by pantheism and what some believed were the modernistic tendencies of the well-educated Kellogg, contributed to a reaction that drove many Adventists into the arms of fundamentalism.

By the mid-1920s, this concern created close ties between Seventh-day Adventists and Fundamentalists with the question of scriptural inerrancy becoming another point of contact.<sup>255</sup> After White's death, the issue of inspiration caused considerable debate within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Animated arguments occurred over which position the church should take in regard to thought or verbal inspiration as it related to White's writings and to Scripture.<sup>256</sup> This debate raged in mainstream Adventism up through the 1950s and to a lesser extent, to the present.<sup>257</sup>

### **Adventist Educational Philosophy Defined: The Howe Statement, 1949**

One of the earliest efforts to examine systematically the philosophy of Seventh-

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<sup>255</sup>See Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 282, 432; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 56-57; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 103.

<sup>256</sup>See Molleurus Couperus, "The Bible Conference of 1919: Introduction," *Spectrum* 10 (May 1979): 23-26.

<sup>257</sup>See Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 128-159, for a scholarly overview of Adventism and fundamentalism. The official Adventist stance on inspiration has consistently rejected verbal inspiration throughout the denomination's history. See "General Conference Proceedings," *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883, 741; W. H. Littlejohn, "The Commentary: Scripture Questions," *Review and Herald*, December 11, 1883, 778; cf. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 227-228.

day Adventist education was Walter Howe's 1949 master's thesis.<sup>258</sup> Prior to this time, few materials existed offering a philosophical foundation for the existence of Adventist schools.<sup>259</sup> White's writings played the most significant role in informing Adventist members why denominational schools existed, yet aside from a few expressions of educational thought scattered throughout the literature of the church, a formal statement had not yet been produced.<sup>260</sup>

Perhaps one reason for the seeming delay in producing a statement was that the pathway to a consensus on Adventist educational philosophy was hindered by disagreement.<sup>261</sup> Despite the challenge, Walter Howe sought to synthesize many comments concerning the philosophy of Adventist schooling from educational leaders, both past and present. He also considered "authoritative documentation"—most of this being the writings of Ellen White.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>258</sup>Walter Howe (1910-1989), Ed.D., was an Adventist administrator who served as a pastor and superintendent of education for several local conferences and in the General Conference Department of Education.

<sup>259</sup>Rueben Hilde, "Bookmarks—A Review of Maurice Hodgen's 'School Bells and Gospel Trumpets,'" *Adventist Heritage* 8 (Spring 1983): 62. Erling Snorrason recently noted in his doctoral dissertation that even though White is frequently quoted on educational topics, "her educational philosophy and its application to the aims of education have not been systematically or thoroughly addressed" prior to his dissertation (Snorrason, xi). He has provided the most in-depth investigation into White's aims of education, of which restoring the image of God plays an overarching philosophical role.

<sup>260</sup>Howe, 1-2.

<sup>261</sup>It should also be noted that during White's lifetime, her frequent writings on education fulfilled the need for denominational direction in educational matters.

<sup>262</sup>Howe, 1-2. It is of interest to note that Howe placed Adventism squarely in the fundamentalist camp and stated this fact throughout the document. *Ibid.*, 9.

Of special interest is the fact that Howe overtly recognized that the restoration of the image of God was the “ultimate result” and “underlying objective” of Adventist schooling at all levels.

It is believed that the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers can only be accomplished as the image of God is restored in the soul of fallen man. This ultimate result is the underlying objective of Seventh-day Adventist education at all levels of formal school experience and during both the pre-school and post-school periods of development as well.<sup>263</sup>

This point, however, was not explicitly stated until page 50 of his statement although he did acknowledge earlier that the purpose of Adventist education was to “reflect more fully the glory of the Creator.”<sup>264</sup>

Howe emphasized that Adventist education was interested in “man,” regardless of race, color, or creed. No class was above another, as every single human being was in need of education.<sup>265</sup> This education was to combine individual development through personal choices, learning experiences, and godly teachers to develop an “experimental” knowledge of religion.<sup>266</sup> This whole process was to be part of restoring the image of

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<sup>263</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>264</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>265</sup>Ibid., 34. The nature of humanity is foundational to understanding what is being restored in White’s restoration of the image-of-God motif. The choice of educational methods and approaches is largely determined by one’s perspective on human nature. The significance of this concept will be explained in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>266</sup>The word “experimental” in White’s vocabulary refers to real and practical experiences. It is the opposite of theoretical—defined as being detached from real life (White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 114; idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 11; idem, “Prepare to Meet Thy God,” *Review and Herald*, July 20, 1897, 449). This concept was part of the language used in reacting against the classical curriculum then prevalent in education. John Dewey, whose pragmatic progressivism was becoming a significant eddy in the mainstream of educational thought, wrote as early as 1915 that “learning is a necessary incident of dealing with real situations.” See John Dewey and Evelyn Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1915), 4. Learning from real-life practical exercises caused Dewey to support vocational laboratory-

God through the harmonious development of the mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions as part of one's educative course. Adventist education was to take an individual as high and as far as his talents and skills would allow.<sup>267</sup> Howe continued his optimistic portrayal of individual ability by noting that in Adventist thinking "wisdom is closely associated with happiness."<sup>268</sup> For this reason, Adventists have no argument with achieving the good life, yet all that we receive exists "solely for the purpose of sharing those blessings with others."<sup>269</sup> Attainment was not seen as an end in itself, but as a way to better the individual to serve others. "Religion, education and life are one."<sup>270</sup>

Manual labor, vocational training for a useful occupation, and observing the timeless laws of God in nature were seen as important components of Adventist education. Howe emphatically stated that no student in a Seventh-day Adventist school is considered fully educated until that student has attained a proficiency in at least one vocational trade.<sup>271</sup> Hence, practical labor was considered an integral part of character development, a belief that was emphasized repeatedly throughout his statement.

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style experiential learning. White supported a similar perspective, but emphasized the spiritual dimension considerably more than Dewey with his pragmatic science orientation (Dewey and Dewey, 60). These concepts were well-documented in the educational literature of the 1940s when Howe wrote his master's thesis.

<sup>267</sup>Howe, 50, 77.

<sup>268</sup>Ibid., 11-12. As noted in chapter 3 of this dissertation, Ellen White suggests that wisdom, learning, and education are ways in which an individual can gain greater insights into the laws of God. Restoring the image of God, then, is the process of aligning oneself closer to God's ideal—living in harmony with His laws. This, in turn, should result in a happier, more fulfilled existence.

<sup>269</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>270</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>271</sup>Ibid., 66-67.



“Seventh-day Adventist education is designed to be a benefit to society through the character changes wrought in the individual.”<sup>272</sup> A Christ-like character was one of the major objectives of denominational education. All of these ideas were buttressed in Howe’s philosophy statement by citing numerous quotes from White—demonstrating the importance academically-minded Adventists still placed in her counsel even decades after her death.

### **The 1950s and the Hammill/Cadwallader Statements**

Edward Miles Cadwallader, writing in the late 1950s, stated confidently that Adventists have always felt that it is “imperative” that their children be educated in high-quality denominational schools.<sup>273</sup> He noted that in most cases denominational education with its holistic emphasis was better than the best public schools in the land. Adventist schools offered a holistic education—complete with spirituality, academics, and vocational training.<sup>274</sup>

Richard L. Hammill continued this line of thought in a small pamphlet printed by the General Conference in 1959.<sup>275</sup> He asserted that although private education costs significantly more than attendance at a public school, the abundant rewards are worth the

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<sup>272</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>273</sup>Edward Miles Cadwallader (1896-1987) was an Adventist educator who served as a teacher, school principal, foreign missionary, college professor, and chair of the Department of Education and Psychology at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

<sup>274</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 270.

<sup>275</sup>Richard Hammill (1913-1997) was a church administrator, college professor, university president, foreign missionary, and General Conference officer.

expense. In denominational education, every experience in the curriculum contributes to the spiritual environment where prayer and seeking to do God's will is the primary motivation.<sup>276</sup> Hammill expressed the idea that Adventist schools are selective because associations with peers of high moral standing are very important to the success of the school program. Only students of good character were to be admitted. Teachers were to be carefully selected to provide the highest moral leadership to students.

Hammill cited the restoration of the image of God to emphasize the importance of individual growth within an educational perspective. After noting the depth and challenge of restoring the image of God in humanity, he claimed that this "far-reaching program for human education" is much too comprehensive to be achieved by church attendance alone during a few hours on Sabbath. Drawing heavily on White's ideas, he charged that the work of redemption and education are one, thus the first goal of education is to know and do the will of God. Hammill writes:

It is our belief that fallen men cannot achieve the purpose for which they were created without a God-centered education that teaches them to open their minds to the unseen but all-powerful Spirit of God, the only agency that can bring a rebirth of the original nature and an enduring reformation of life habits and mental outlook. Ellen G. White, who was the denomination's first and major writer on educational theory, states this viewpoint: "To bring man back into harmony with God, so to elevate and ennoble his moral nature that he may again reflect the image of the Creator, is the great purpose of all the education and discipline of life."<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>276</sup>Richard Hammill, *Philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist Education* (Washington, DC: Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Educational Leaflet #47, 1959), 8.

<sup>277</sup>Hammill, 4; White, *Counsels to Teachers*, 49.

This theme seeks to foster an education concerned with lifestyle improvement, not just a career or job venue. Adventist educational philosophy emphasizes that the objective of education is to train students to love and serve God and humanity.<sup>278</sup>

All aspects of human nature need restoring according to this scenario: the physical, the mental, and especially the spiritual.<sup>279</sup> Hammill again cites White by noting the body-mind-soul connection and how all these dimensions affect the development of character. Useful labor was upheld as being an integral part of the Adventist educational scheme.<sup>280</sup> The biblical worldview was to be “the center of all study and teaching.”<sup>281</sup> “All truth—whether it be spiritual, historical or scientific—is part of one great circle of truth; and any system of education that omits religion is presenting only a partial view of truth.”<sup>282</sup> Public education did not accommodate this need because separation of church and state forbade sectarian spiritual instruction.

Hammill ends his statement by noting how excellence in Adventist education leads to successful service in many professional fields such as ministry, medicine, dentistry, nursing, teaching, secretarial science, and business.<sup>283</sup> Scattered throughout this small pamphlet were Ellen White quotes that buttressed each assertion, again demonstrating how the official voices of the church markedly utilized her counsel to

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<sup>278</sup>Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>279</sup>Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>280</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>281</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>282</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>283</sup>Ibid., 24.

justify the denomination's educational system.

In 1958, Cadwallader included in his book, *A History of Seventh-day Adventist Education*, an outline which enumerated what he felt were the important tenets of Adventist education. Most of the inspiration for his widely-read document came directly from White's writings. His outline offered an extensive list as to what made Adventist education distinctive.<sup>284</sup> He reiterated what others were saying during the 1950s—academic improvement is vital to the health of educational institutions. Using Oakwood College as an example, he lauded the upgrading of faculty degrees to graduate levels as being “fully supported by the principles of Ellen G. White.”<sup>285</sup>

Arthur Spalding, writing in the 1950s about White's “educational blueprint,” outlined a perspective on the origins of Adventist education that was widely held by certain sectors of Adventism that flourished from the 1920s to at least the 1950s.<sup>286</sup> He advocated the creation of schools out in the country, forsaking fame and avoiding the “fashions and the foibles of the world” while getting close to the Creator's Edenic plan. One almost senses an “either-or” scenario to his interpretation of White's counsels on education. Either schools are academically oriented and popular, or schools are godly and, from a secular perspective, insignificant.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>284</sup>Cadwallader, *History*, 126-127.

<sup>285</sup>*Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>286</sup>Arthur Whitefield Spalding (1877-1953) started his administrative duties by serving as secretary to such prominent men in Adventist history as John Harvey Kellogg, William K. Kellogg, and Edward Sutherland. He was an educator, author, and editor. See pages 38-39, 60, 66-70 of this chapter for further discussions of the idea of a blueprint in Adventist education.

<sup>287</sup>Spalding, 3:65.

Spalding nostalgically celebrates the hewing down of great forests to make way for vocational schools where small groups of dedicated students would learn the virtues of quiet toil in field and forest. He speaks admiringly of escaping the “tentacles” of city life, forsaking popular schooling and worldly success in favor of submissive holiness nourished amidst a rural countryside. Prestige was frequently rendered as worldly while true Christian education was portrayed as almost monastic in its isolation.<sup>288</sup> Spalding seemed especially attracted to segments of the self-supporting model of Seventh-day Adventist education, finding much to laud in vocational-industrial-missionary-oriented educational conceptions.

#### The 1960s to the Present: Ellen White’s Influence on Select Seventh-day Adventist Authors

In 1966 an article in the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* broadly outlined the denomination’s educational philosophy. The two primary concerns of the article were challenging students to love and serve God and people. Other important themes were the salvation of the youth, the spiritual atmosphere of the schools, Bible-centered studies, character development, healthful living, home skills, and life-long service that promulgates faith.<sup>289</sup>

This statement is especially relevant to this dissertation because it clearly identifies the importance of the “nature of man” in Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy. This anthropologic concept is based directly on White’s writings—the

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<sup>288</sup>Ibid., 3:54.

<sup>289</sup>*SDA Encyclopedia*, 1966 ed., s.v. “Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Education.”

reason for denominational schooling is to “reflect the image of the Creator.” Humans, born sinful, “must open their minds to the unseen but all-powerful spirit of God, the only agency that can bring a rebirth of the original nature and an enduring reformation of life habits and mental outlook.”<sup>290</sup> The importance of an environment “conducive to spiritual development” was also emphasized.<sup>291</sup>

Emmet Vande Vere, writing in the 1970s, contrasted early Battle Creek College President Sidney Brownsberger’s desire for “careful, intelligent, affable” Christianity with the “blueprint” provided by White.<sup>292</sup> As noted earlier, some Adventists were suspicious of “affable” academic intelligence and sought to utilize White’s quotations to support an exclusive “Bible college” model as the only true style of denominational education. This perception seemed widespread through the 1950s and still exists to a lesser extent in certain circles today.<sup>293</sup>

In 1972, Vande Vere in his *Wisdom Seekers* outlined his conclusions on White’s concepts of education. Christian education was to integrate religious training with a practical emphasis on the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of humanity. Practical and vocational education were to be significant aspects of the educational curriculum. Regimented and transmissive styles of teaching that required students to

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<sup>290</sup>Ibid.

<sup>291</sup>Ibid.

<sup>292</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 28, 41. Emmett K. Vande Vere (1902-1989) spent nearly his entire life as a denominational educator. He taught at the secondary level for a number of years but served as a college professor for most of his life. He is best remembered as chair of the department of History and Political Science at Andrews University.

<sup>293</sup>For examples of this genre see Colin Standish and Russell Standish, *Adventism Imperiled: Education in Crisis* and Ferrell, *The Broken Blueprint*.

spend long hours toiling over petty assignments were to be discouraged. Health and lifestyle training were to round out the education of students. He wrote that White “called for a balanced, practical education which embraced the physical, mental, and moral faculties. Her thinking closely related Christian education with religion.”<sup>294</sup>

In the early 1970s the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists produced another booklet outlining the denomination’s philosophy of higher education. Authored by Frederick Harder (b. 1916), this statement is notable because it emphasizes the dynamic nature of Adventist educational philosophy.<sup>295</sup> Citing early Adventist educational pioneers, this statement portrays educational philosophy as interacting with the times, necessitating modification as conditions warrant. While still relying on White’s writings, Harder seemed to be consciously pursuing a different approach toward denominational educational philosophy than what was seen in many of the earlier blueprint-oriented statements.<sup>296</sup> Instead of celebrating a period of educational perfection that might have existed sometime in the past, Harder was advocating an innovative approach that built on the principles of Ellen White but within a whole new context.

This statement clearly acknowledged White’s restoration motif as being a distinguishing feature of denominational education.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>294</sup>Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 23, 72-73.

<sup>295</sup>Until retirement, Frederick Harder served as an associate at the General Conference Department of Education.

<sup>296</sup>Frederick E. J. Harder, *A Statement Respecting Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Higher Education* (Washington, DC: North American Committee on Administration, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1973), 3, 37.

<sup>297</sup>*Ibid.*, 14-17.

The ultimate religious objectives of Christian education are to restore in man the image of God, to bring about a submission to the divine will and grace, and to form the true regenerated Christian growing in a knowledge of and in personal fellowship with God. These are bound up with the dynamics of the gospel: a recognition of sin through Scriptural knowledge of the divine character, freedom from guilt through repentance and forgiveness, reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ, and renewal of motives and desires as well as conduct through continuing action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>298</sup>

Rebuilding this image restores happiness and balance to sinners—a redemptive eschatology vital to Adventist thought. Part of this restoration theme is “helping human beings find God’s solutions to their problems, . . . a calling for which Adventist higher education seeks to prepare students.”<sup>299</sup> Harder sees the embrace of the restoration theme encompassing the following specific aims of Christian education: Health, economic security, vocational competence, intellectual responsibility in the search for truth, structured inquiry, and valid judgments along with aesthetic, social, moral, and religious values.<sup>300</sup> The ultimate guiding philosophy of Adventist education was following the will of God as communicated through revelation. This was to be the source of all moral value and truth.<sup>301</sup>

In 1978, both Charles Hirsch (b. 1919) and Henry Farr (b. 1942) provided examples of articles in denominational educational journals that illustrate the widespread use of White’s writings in determining Adventist educational practices.<sup>302</sup> Hirsch cited

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<sup>298</sup>Ibid., 23.

<sup>299</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>300</sup>Ibid.

<sup>301</sup>Ibid., 20-21; 22-25.

<sup>302</sup>Charles Hirsch served as a foreign missionary, professor, and General Conference administrator. He is currently retired (2008). Henry Farr is the Associate Superintendent of the



White as advocating a balance among the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions while also celebrating the educational value of the family, vocational training, and even one's choices for leisure time.<sup>303</sup> Farr noted White's preference for schools that provide an environment to escape worldly influences while offering moral and religious training, practical educational alternatives, and an emphasis on agriculture.

By the late 1970s it appeared that Adventist education and public schools were becoming more alike. Farr was quick to point out that this was not necessarily due to denominational compromise, but instead it seemed that secular educational philosophy and practice had adopted "sounder principles."<sup>304</sup> This similarity, however, made it more important for denominational educators to seek out distinctive principles in order to justify the expense of gaining an Adventist education.

In 1989 Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart also acknowledged the educational influence of White's restoration motif on the historical development of the Adventist school system. Bible teaching, manual labor, character improvement, and firm discipline provided the environment where "balanced, Godlike individuals who were fit ultimately for heavenly society" could be trained at school.<sup>305</sup> However, the authors note that in reality, White's nineteenth-century perspective currently plays a much smaller role in

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Georgia Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, a post he has held since 1977. Prior to that time he was a teacher and administrator in denominational schools.

<sup>303</sup>Charles B. Hirsch, "The Seven Pillars of Adventist Education," *Journal of Adventist Education* 40 (December 1977-January 1978): 26-27, 36, 41.

<sup>304</sup>Farr, 7.

<sup>305</sup>Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 2nd ed., 318.

informing the practices or goals of most Adventist institutions than it did in the past.<sup>306</sup>

Perhaps one reason for this apparent decline is the challenge of taking nineteenth-century language and applying it to twenty-first-century realities. In the quest for contemporary educational relevancy, the way things were done in the nineteenth century seems outdated. Nevertheless, as Farr pointed out, White's educational philosophy can still inform new, innovative approaches to educational questions from a contemporary perspective in much the same way as Adventist educational pioneers applied her counsels to their own educational realities.<sup>307</sup>

Reuben Hilde (b. 1922), writing in 1980, emphasized White's restoration motif as being the primary reason why Adventist schools were created.<sup>308</sup> "The Seventh-day Adventist school, with its mission, its supporters, and its Heavenly mandate, is growing and changing. Yet, its central task remains clear, 'To restore in man the image of His Maker.'"<sup>309</sup> Restoration, redemption, and renewal are all part of White's image-of-God motif and should provide the fundamental purpose for the denomination's educational pursuits.<sup>310</sup> Drawing directly on White's writings, Hilde stated that the fundamental task of Adventist education is to "reproduce the character of God in man." The character of God is reflected in "one who thinks and acts, and does not merely reflect the opinions or

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<sup>306</sup>Ibid., 333.

<sup>307</sup>The role of White's educational principles serving as guides to innovative educational practice will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>308</sup>Rueben Hilde, *Showdown: Can SDA Education Pass the Test?* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1980), 26.

<sup>309</sup>Ibid., 191.

<sup>310</sup>Ibid., 22, 24.

instructions of others.”<sup>311</sup> The idea of education is not to create a few prized thinkers as much as it is to teach every student to think independently.

Many denominational authors throughout the 1980s and ‘90s drew inspiration from White’s educational writings. Some focused on White’s interest in a “balanced education” that advocated the benefits of a practical hands-on approach to teaching students.<sup>312</sup> This was portrayed as the combination of intellectual, practical, and spiritual elements of a school’s curriculum.<sup>313</sup> Others cited White to support the thesis that the main goal of education is for community “service.”<sup>314</sup> Character, mission, spiritual teachers, free thinking, redemption, holistic development—all of these concepts frequently appear as important components of Adventist education advocated by Ellen White.<sup>315</sup>

Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation will focus on how all of these areas of emphasis were inspired by White’s openness to educational innovation. Restoring the image of God within students suggests continual advancement of all the dimensions of humanity (mental, physical, and spiritual). This illustrates the difficulty faced by those who claim that White advocated only one particular way of educating the young. The

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<sup>311</sup>Ibid., 23-24.

<sup>312</sup>Walton J. Brown, “What Is Balanced Education?” *JAE* 42 (April-May 1980): 5.

<sup>313</sup>Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>314</sup>Bernard W. Benn, “Is Our Education Truly Seventh-day Adventist?” *JAE* 43 (February-March 1981): 39.

<sup>315</sup>Keld J. Reynolds, “Why Seventh-day Adventists Conduct Schools,” *JAE* 45 (October-November 1982): 13; Akers, 36-37; Maurice Hodgen, “The Editor’s Stump,” *Adventist Heritage* 8 (Spring 1983): 2.

many ways that Adventist education can evolve is limited only by the educator's ability to innovate within these principles.

From this perspective, the counsels of Ellen White can still effectively guide Seventh-day Adventist educational ideals. Many Adventist educators have recently completed major research projects that have further explored White's thoughts on education.<sup>316</sup> These studies have acknowledged and even emphasized White's restoration motif—restoring the image of God in humanity. The major themes of yesteryear still remain, yet now they are couched within the restoration theme perhaps more frequently than in the past.<sup>317</sup> George Knight states that “what seems so obvious to Adventist educators—that education and redemption are one—may be the most unique contribution of Adventism to the world of educational philosophy.”<sup>318</sup> This dissertation seeks to further explore White's contribution to the educational debate by examining in depth her restoration motif. Perhaps in this way White's influence can continue to bless and edify the church and the world.

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<sup>316</sup>See the literature review for this dissertation which outlines this proliferation of recent research examining Ellen White's role in Adventist education.

<sup>317</sup>Linda B. Caviness dedicates a whole chapter to the restoration theme in her dissertation, “Educational Brain Research as Compared with E. G. White's Counsels to Educators,” 251-256. See also Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, which reiterates this throughout the book; Paulien, 227. Erling Snorrason's dissertation on the aims of Adventist education in the writings of Ellen White is one of the latest dissertations to reflect this trend (2005). As such, he places the restoration motif at the center of White's education philosophy.

<sup>318</sup>Knight, “The Devil Takes a Look,” 186. This concept is reflected in the most recent Philosophy of Adventist Education statement, published in 2003. See *Working Policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2005-2006 ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 227-229.

## CHAPTER II

### ELLEN WHITE'S CONTEMPORARIES AND THE IMAGE-OF-GOD MOTIF

#### **The Nineteenth-Century Environment from Which Ellen White Wrote**

##### Millerism and Antebellum Reforms

Ellen White's restoration motif—restoring the image of God in humanity—embraces an enthusiastic optimism of human ability. Like John Wesley (1703-1791) a century earlier, and to a lesser extent the Puritans before him, White saw the ability of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate heart to raise an individual to great moral heights. The revivalist preaching of George Whitefield (1714-1770) played a significant role in infusing Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Baptist, and other colonial religious groups with a dose of this enthusiastic optimism during what became known as the First Great Awakening in America (1700-1750).<sup>1</sup> The Second Great Awakening

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<sup>1</sup>See Noll, *History*, 85, 91. Millard Erickson places the date of the First Great Awakening at 1735-1743. He places the Second Great Awakening at 1795-1830. Millard J. Erickson, *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986). Mark Noll notes that the antebellum movements influenced reforms well into the 1860s, hence this is the date used in this dissertation (see Noll, *History*, 166). A major theme of this chapter will explore how Wesley's optimistic perspective of human ability influenced American Protestantism during the nineteenth century. Another section will briefly examine some of the roots of this perspective—the Protestant Reformation of Calvin and Luther, English Puritans, Mortalists, Moravians, Pietists, and their antecedents. The point of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive study of every nineteenth century influence that might have provided a context for White's image of God motif. This would require another dissertation. Instead, this chapter

(1795-1860), rising to maturity in antebellum America, built largely upon this optimistic Wesleyan anthropology.<sup>2</sup> During these years, movements emerged that sought to regenerate society through a multitude of reform strategies.

Many in the nineteenth century felt that human history was nearing the millennium, a one-thousand-year period during which they believed Christ would rule a perfect world.<sup>3</sup> These millennialists, as they became known, saw Christ as imminently returning to this earth to set up His kingdom—ushering in a time of peace and prosperity that would last a thousand years. Most believed that they could perfect society in preparation for the expected millennium. Optimistic religious movements characterized this revivalistic period with boisterous glossalalia, ecstatic camp meetings, and religious ferment.<sup>4</sup>

The Millerites were one of many religious groups that were spawned in this fertile soil of antebellum enthusiasm.<sup>5</sup> Based on William Miller's study of the apocalyptic time prophecies in the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation, his followers felt confident

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subjectively focuses on summarizing the overall religious fervor of Protestant America during this era. This was the religious environment from which Ellen White wrote.

<sup>2</sup>The Wesleyan connection to antebellum American reforms is examined later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup>For example, see Noll, *History*, 118, 151, 185, 193.

<sup>4</sup>For example, see Kennedy, Cohen, Bailey, and Piehl, 200-202; Noll, *History*, 167-169.

<sup>5</sup>A number of scholarly works outline the Millerite movement and its impact on Seventh-day Adventism. A short, concise summary can be found in Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 37-52. More thorough examinations include George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1993); Everett N. Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1994); Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan Butler, eds., *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1993).

that God would soon return to this earth—a premillennialist perspective.<sup>6</sup> At first they believed the Lord would come sometime between the spring of 1843 and early 1844, but when the expected date passed, leaders in the movement, after further study, rescheduled the Lord’s appearing to October of 1844. Ellen White’s family, as adherents to the views of William Miller, found themselves caught up in the expectation of preparing for the end of the world. Although the Lord did not come in 1844, creating significant disappointment and a substantial decrease in Millerite adherents, a small remnant maintained their faith. Within this optimistic and spiritually verdant environment, White began writing her prophetic counsels to these remnant Millerites.<sup>7</sup>

Historians Edwin Gaustad and Henry Steele Commager have each written extensively about the reform impetus that rocked America during White’s formative years.<sup>8</sup> Gaustad edited a book in which William McLoughlin stated that “reform progress and manifest destiny made many Americans feel the millennium would occur in

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<sup>6</sup>A major difference between premillennialist and postmillennialist eschatological perspectives deals with the timing of Christ’s second coming in relation to the thousand-year millennium. Postmillennialists believe that Christ will return following the thousand-year reign while premillennialists hold that Christ will return first, then the thousand years will commence. Both millennialist perspectives saw momentous changes in earth’s history rapidly approaching. See Erickson, 131, 132. Some premillennialists such as William Miller taught that the second coming of Christ would destroy the world, leaving a ruined planet, inhabitable only by Satan, for the duration of the millennium. See Knight, *Millennial Fever*, 17-21.

<sup>7</sup>Some of Ellen White’s earliest writings can be found in a small booklet written to the Advent Millerite followers shortly after the disappointment of 1844. James White, Ellen’s husband, compiled the articles. James White, *A Word to the Little Flock* (Brunswick, ME: n.p., 1847; reprint, Payson, AZ: Leaves-of-Autumn Books, 1985).

<sup>8</sup>Henry Steele Commager, *The Era of Reform: 1830-1860* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1960).

their lifetime.”<sup>9</sup> In consequence McLoughlin argued that antebellum reforms moved the country ever forward by following God’s commandments and “making way for His kingdom on earth.”<sup>10</sup> It was a widely held belief among these optimists that society could be perfected.<sup>11</sup> For example, antebellum President Andrew Jackson’s supporters boldly proclaimed that every person, all government institutions, and even the entire country could be redeemed to perfection. Humankind would continue to grow until the highest level of attainment was achieved.<sup>12</sup>

Millerism, emerging in the midst of this antebellum optimism, taught that human nature could be so cultivated as to be liberated from sin and social wrong—leading directly to holiness and individual perfection.<sup>13</sup> Other groups in addition to the Millerites were carrying messages of salvation through temperance, education, nonresistance, and abolition as well as through dramatic conversion experiences.<sup>14</sup> Various reforms,

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<sup>9</sup>William G. McLoughlin, “Revivalism,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), 145.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>11</sup>Timothy L. Smith, “Social Reform: Some Reflections on Causation and Consequence,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), 19.

<sup>12</sup>Winthrop S. Hudson, “A Time of Religious Ferment,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), 3.

<sup>13</sup>Jonathan Butler, “The Making of a New Order: Millerism and the Origins of Seventh-day Adventism,” in Numbers and Butler, 191.

<sup>14</sup>Ruth Alden Doan, “Millerism and Evangelical Culture,” in Numbers and Butler, 121. See also Edwin S. Gaustad, “Introduction,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), xv. Whitney Cross details a number of these New England reform movements. For example, see pp. 211-217 (temperance); pp. 217-226 (abolition); p. 233 (education); and pp. 238-251(perfection and sanctification).



motivated by a belief in individual and societal progress, were an integral part of the spirit of the age.<sup>15</sup> Timothy Smith quotes a newspaper article from 1851 which summarized this optimism: “All is progress. Christianity and culture seemed to be marching together onward and upward toward the grand consummation of prophecy in a civilized, an enlightened and a sanctified world.”<sup>16</sup> Nineteenth-century millennial thinking saw progress as constantly unfolding, culminating in the perfection of humanity.<sup>17</sup>

White blended the Millerite apocalyptic perspectives with the multitudinous reform movements of her day. Some scholars have suggested that progress and reform were sometimes seen as illusions by those in the Millerite movement as certain members in the sect believed that only God’s supernatural intervention would bring true peace.<sup>18</sup> For White, however, progress was not an illusion; genuine reform served to demonstrate the vitality of those who truly followed God’s laws. While the Millerite hope in the Second Coming was immediate, White also saw the importance of preparing a group of people (the remnant) who would vindicate the rational laws of God by demonstrating a better way of life. This optimistic belief in observable progress fit well with the spirit of the age—though still within the apocalyptic perspective of Millerism. The theme of

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<sup>15</sup>Joy Elmer Morgan, *Horace Mann: His Ideas and Ideals* (Washington, DC: National Home Library Foundation, 1936), 6.

<sup>16</sup>Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 226.

<sup>17</sup>Knight, *Millennial Fever*, chapter 1 passim.

<sup>18</sup>Gary Land examines these perspectives in his historiographical introduction to *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, by Everett N. Dick, xxvii.

White's book *Steps to Christ* outlines how Christ is immanent to the believer and how spirituality can make for a better Christian life in this world, rather than focusing solely on a sudden and explosive supernatural intervention.<sup>19</sup>

A number of factors that led to this optimism are worth noting as they provide the context for an understanding of White's rendition of the image-of-God motif. The undeveloped wilderness environment in antebellum America was especially primed for the rise of unabashed confidence. Historian Frederick Jackson Turner wrote early in the twentieth century: "The wilderness appealed to men as a fair, blank page on which to write a new chapter in the story of man's struggle for a higher type of society."<sup>20</sup>

For many, America was a land of new beginnings. The frontier served as the "great equalizer" where rich and poor alike had to wrest a living from the wilderness by the sweat of their brow. It was exciting to enter a land where the significant factor for success was one's own initiative and drive. Unfortunately, the frontier was also a rowdy place and was in definite need of the firm grip of civilization. Drinking, carousing, riots, gunfights, and other sorts of wild behavior were a common part of the American frontier.<sup>21</sup> Violence and corruption were often a way of life—yet the strong American

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<sup>19</sup>Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1997), 26-27, 31, 43-44. Ellen White states that people who through the grace of Christ keep God's laws "will make the world better for their stay in it" no matter how humble their life's vocation (*ibid.*, 77-78, 101). This concept will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 3 of this dissertation. See also *idem*, *Education*, 267-268, 278.

<sup>20</sup>Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1921), 261.

<sup>21</sup>Rudy Willis and John S. Brubacher, *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities, 1636-1968* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), 57. It would take a Civil War and another half-century before significant long-term strides could be made toward extending economic and social opportunities to Native Americans and the former

belief in continual progress led to the rise of many reform movements that sought to civilize the wild frontier.

From the American frontier and northeastern seaboard regions emerged a hodgepodge of “answers” to these challenges. As certainly as the American Constitution granted citizens the inalienable right to think and act for themselves, so a constellation of solutions to the problems of an uncivilized environment became a staple of the American experience. Many felt that humankind could be regenerated, revitalized, and civilized with social and Christian reforms leading the way.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout this era, it was usually militant Protestantism that drove the reforms, and saw itself as “marching to the conquest of America and [the] world.”<sup>23</sup> Revivalists, missionary societies, Bible societies, Sabbath reformers, religious educators, Sunday school societies, tract societies, anti-slavery movements, peace activists, seamen’s and temperance ministries, as well as physiological and moral reformers rounded out the

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slaves. Although reforms began in antebellum America and grew during the reconstruction, subsequent reverses minimized most long-term progress for minorities until the 1950s. See Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1990), 254-260.

<sup>22</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 148-149. The authors of *The American Pageant* colorfully capture the intensity of this era—a time when just about everyone seemed to have an idea for “a new utopia.” “Reformers promoted better public schools and rights for women, as well as miracle medicines, polygamy, celibacy, rule by prophets, and guidance by spirits. Societies were formed against alcohol, tobacco, profanity, and the transit of mail on the Sabbath.” Religion played a significant role in fueling this excitement. Kennedy et al., 200. William Gerald McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 130, quotes antebellum revivalist Charles Finney that if Christians would work together in harmony to further God’s work, the millennium could arrive in three years. Original source of Finney quotation was not given.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Samuel Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College: From Its Foundation Through the Civil War*, 2 vols. (Oberlin, OH: Oberlin College Press, 1943), 1:207.

diverse group of peoples attempting to correct the multitudinous evils they saw in society.<sup>24</sup>

Even after the Civil War the reform impetus continued to inspire mass movements. During this time, urban social issues such as poverty, worker's rights, liquor traffic, slum housing, and racial bitterness became the chief distinguishing concerns of American Protestant religions. These replaced the antebellum emphasis on perfectionist tendencies, salvation, millennialism, and the hereafter. Many sought to impose Christian social and economic patterns on this earth.<sup>25</sup>

The "white man's burden" of mission activity was also nourished by the fervor of the times.<sup>26</sup> "Winning souls" was seen as a significant duty for every Christian—and revivals led the way. Training students in the schools to do the same was part of the

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 207. For more information on these reforms and the boundless optimism that characterized them, see Henry Steele Commager's insightful introduction to *The Era of Reform: 1830-1860*, 7-17. Another interesting source that offers insights into the reform movements referred to by Fletcher is Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 174 (tract societies); 24-37 (missions); 123-143 (temperance and moral reform); 145-165 (health reform). Cf., fn. 13, p. 90.

<sup>25</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 148. This era also saw the rise of socialism as yet another way to construct an equitable society. Yet radical socialist reforms had a more difficult time in the American landscape than Christian initiatives, as moderate concessions to socialist concerns and the specter of foreign revolutions slowed the movement, especially after World War I.

<sup>26</sup>William Thomas Umbel, "The Making of an American Denomination: Methodism in New England Religious Culture, 1790-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1991), 126. Recent historians opine that this missionary endeavor was little more than a poorly cloaked western imperialist drive for territory. From the idealistic reformers' perspective, however, the entire world needed to be redeemed and improved—and many reformers felt they had the solutions to accomplish this task. See John P. McKay, Bennett D. Hill, John Buckler, and Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *A History of World Societies*, 6th ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004), 835-836.

spirit of the age.<sup>27</sup> Within this context, educational reforms became more significant as well. Reform was not limited to a few enthusiasts in the Midwestern frontier—it was simply part of the very fabric of American society.<sup>28</sup>

### The Regeneration Impetus

Some groups, while seeing reform and progress as important to Christian development and perfection, soberly took a millennialist stance that all this progress would culminate with the end of the world rather than unfettered social development. Many millennialists believed that God would intervene dramatically in human history to save the righteous.<sup>29</sup> A significant number of Christians from this era felt the millennium was fast approaching—some were excited by the prospect while others remained fearful of being unready to meet their God.

Emphasis was placed on character traits that demonstrated an active process of spiritual and social regeneration. Antebellum academic reformer Stephen Olin spoke for many of his time when he announced that the “sanctified intellect” was the “most powerful engine” for good in the world. Combined with preaching and teaching, mankind could elevate humanity’s intelligence and purity.<sup>30</sup> Many reformers felt that the

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<sup>27</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 46.

<sup>28</sup>The few exceptions to this reform fervor could be found predominantly in the deep American South where reforms prior to the Civil War were considerably rarer than in New England and the western frontier. After the Civil War, conservative movements quickly emerged to undo the changes thrust upon Southern society during the reconstruction era, further slowing changes in the South. Nevertheless, events were set in motion that eventually changed the fabric of Southern society as well. See Foner, xiv-xvi.

<sup>29</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 227.

<sup>30</sup>Umbel, 127.

Holy Spirit regenerated the soul and sanctified it, “flooding it with grace, and raising it to glory.”<sup>31</sup> Doing God’s will on earth meant overcoming the effects of sin on the human race—laboring to make the world a better place.

This regeneration theme abounded throughout the nineteenth century, encouraging Christians of all persuasions to move ever forward and always higher. George Combe, most famous for his role in popularizing nineteenth-century phrenology, noted that the moral powers needed to be elevated to the dominion of the higher intellectual powers.<sup>32</sup> The dominant animal propensities must be reduced to subjection. “Man must cease to be either a brute, or a demon.” Instead, man “must become human” by “allying himself to higher and holier beings.”<sup>33</sup>

Elevating oneself by moving to a higher plane was verbalized in more traditional Christian terms as well. Nineteenth-century educational historian Franklin Painter saw God as condescending to the lowliness of humanity “for the sake of the elevation of souls, the humblest and weakest as well as the mightiest and most exalted” for the regeneration and transformation of civilization.<sup>34</sup> For many Christians in the nineteenth century the great doctrines of the New Testament demanded that everyone should advance by regeneration and restoration. This concept was often expressed by using

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<sup>31</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 152-153.

<sup>32</sup>Phrenology is generally considered one of the early forerunners of modern psychology.

<sup>33</sup>George Combe, *The Constitution of Man: Considered in Relation to External Objects with an Additional Chapter on the Harmony between Phrenology and Revelation* (Boston: William D. Ticknor, 1841), 366.

<sup>34</sup>Franklin Verzelius Newton Painter, *A History of Education* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1901), ix.

words and phrases such as: repentance, sanctification, faith, holiness, redemption by Christ, humble dependence upon God, the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, the personal presence of Christ, and the unity of Christ's body.<sup>35</sup> This regeneration impetus is an example of the optimistic view of human ability that pervaded the spirit of the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup>

### Nineteenth-Century Optimism and the Transcendentalist Movement

Commager wrote that antebellum American reform was different from earlier reform movements for several reasons. First of all, these reformers "accomplished twice as much as any subsequent generation."<sup>37</sup> Second, antebellum reform movements shared a similar anthropology in regard to the nature of humanity. These movements often cherished a positive perspective of human nature while exploring in detail the relationship of the individual to nature and to God.<sup>38</sup>

So optimistic was this anthropology that some of the most vocal reformers subscribed to a perspective called "Transcendentalism" which celebrated the divine within humanity. Transcendentalism taught that there are great truths that are a priori—they transcend and are prior to the physical senses. Transcendental truth was very individualistic and private. No state, majority, or religion should control the individual's

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<sup>35</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 100.

<sup>36</sup>White's writings frequently emphasized regeneration and restoration as will be outlined in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>37</sup>Commager, flyleaf. Commager published his comments in 1960.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 8.

sovereign conscience. Self-reliance, self-improvement, optimism, and freedom were celebrated virtues in the movement.<sup>39</sup> Adherents held that God is benevolent, nature is beneficent, and man has certain godlike properties in his character. All this was mixed with a healthy regard for “natural law” and optimism toward humanity’s ability to move toward perfection through living morally, exercising temperance, and eating a healthy diet. Anything that stood in the way of this march toward perfectibility was seen as a sin because it diminished the divine within humanity.<sup>40</sup>

Several of the underlying ideas behind Transcendentalism were buttressed by popular nineteenth-century ideologies. Romantic conceptions of the goodness of nature, the divinity of man, and the infinite promise of the future were advocated by many thinkers of the day.<sup>41</sup> Nature itself encompassed the Divine Being and became the medium by which people could tap into their own divinity. Thus the natural world was seen as playing a vital role in human spirituality and the uplifting of humanity.<sup>42</sup> Numerous institutions of the time sought to demonstrate how they were in fact advocating some aspect of reform. Transcendentalists saw participating in various reforms as important ways to escape the bondage of the lower passions and lusts, thus actualizing the divine dimensions within.

Reformers offered a wide array of solutions to save the individual from the

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<sup>39</sup>See Ralph Waldo Emerson’s tract, “Self Reliance,” in *Essays: Second Series*, ed. Ralph Waldo Emerson (Columbus, OH: C. E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), 37-73.

<sup>40</sup>Commager, 8-11; Kennedy et al., 212.

<sup>41</sup>Commager, 16.

<sup>42</sup>See Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature, Addresses, Lectures” (1849), in *Essays and Lectures*, ed. Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York: Viking Press, 1983), 9-11.



ravages of the carnal nature. They warned against the “lower passions” and “animal propensities” that enslaved people by preventing their higher nature (the “divine nature” of the Transcendentalists) from elevating them to their true potential. Excessive marital relations, “self-abuse,” and indulging the appetite with flesh meats and spicy, stimulating foods were seen as carnal passions that suppressed the divine within.<sup>43</sup> Hence, diet was important to some reformers for transcendental reasons. The American Vegetarian Society stated around 1850 that “vegetarianism [was] a stepping stone to a higher stage of existence and . . . the inlet to a new and holier life.”<sup>44</sup> Adherents believed that a healthy lifestyle helped the individual more efficiently tap into the inner divine voice.

Reformers often spoke of moving society to a higher plane by minimizing activities that degrade the individual while advocating lifestyles that transported each person closer to the perfection embodied in the Divine.<sup>45</sup> Much of this fervor for nineteenth-century American reform found its roots in earlier movements both in and outside North America.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Commager, 10. See also Walters, 149; Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 150-159.

<sup>44</sup>T. L. Nichols, “American Vegetarian Convention,” *Water-Cure Journal, and Herald of Reforms* 10 (1850): 5-6, quoted in John B. Blake, “Health Reform,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1974), 44.

<sup>45</sup>See Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “New England Reformers,” in *Emerson’s Essays*, ed. Ralph Waldo Emerson (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1961), 338-344.

<sup>46</sup>White was also concerned with saving individuals from their lower passions while strengthening their higher nature (see chapter 3 below). Her perspective on lifestyle and diet reform is discussed in both chapter 3 and chapter 4 of this dissertation. Although White shared some concerns with the transcendentalist reformers of her day, many of her views differed from transcendentalism.

## Wesley and the Methodist-Arminian Connection to Nineteenth-Century Optimism, Thought, and Reform

Nathan Hatch, in *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture*, outlines the meteoric rise of Methodism in the United States between the American Revolution and the Civil War. He claims that this movement “fueled the fiery furnace of democracy in American culture.”<sup>47</sup> There is abundant evidence to suggest that Methodism played an important role in the reform impetus of the nineteenth century as well.<sup>48</sup> Historian Mark Noll notes that the American response to Wesley’s perspectives “transformed the Christian landscape of early America.”<sup>49</sup> Ellen White, prior to joining the Millerite movement, was a member of the Methodist church. Aspects of this faith provided a context from which she wrote.

By the end of the first third of the nineteenth century, Methodism was growing at a “rate that terrified other more established denominations.”<sup>50</sup> A number of reasons contributed to this dramatic growth, casting additional light on the spirit of the times and ultimately on White’s theological perspective. First, Methodists believed in an immanent and accessible God of love. This was a fairly new concept of God for many Christians at

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<sup>47</sup>Nathan O. Hatch and John H. Wigger, eds., *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2001), flyleaf.

<sup>48</sup>The following pages will offer an argument outlining Wesleyan influence on the optimistic reform movements of the nineteenth century in America.

<sup>49</sup>Noll, *History*, 167, 172-173. Note that initially Wesley himself had a rather limited influence on America. American Methodists created their own singular form of Methodism based on Wesley’s writings and American independence from British Methodism. See also Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 49-52.

<sup>50</sup>Hatch, *Democratization*, 3-4.

that time. Traditionally, old-world magisterial Protestantism viewed God as an almighty Sovereign who punished evil deeds while demanding a penitent demeanor.<sup>51</sup> He was a righteous yet ruthless judge who lived afar off and made decisions based on His own will with little interaction with humanity. The Methodist concept of a God of love appealed to many liberty-loving Americans and lessened the influence of the traditional reformed churches and their sober portrayal of an arbitrary sovereign God.<sup>52</sup>

Another major attraction to Methodism was the Wesleyan-based optimistic theism that permeated the denomination's perspective. John Wesley's coordination of justification and sanctification created a unique Protestant outlook that could offer a reasonable confidence in one's salvation while simultaneously emphasizing the salvational necessity of Christian growth. Hatch writes, "Methodist theology emphasized God's free grace and the responsibility of each person to embrace that grace—a message that fit well in the cultural context of post revolutionary America."<sup>53</sup>

John Wesley's concept of grace was couched in easy-to-understand "relational terms"—a theme later emphasized in Ellen White's restoration motif. For Wesley, "grace is the Holy Spirit at work in our life, initiating and sustaining our recovery of

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<sup>51</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 25, 27-29, 89-90.

<sup>52</sup>See Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 18, 45; Maddox, 19; Hatch, *Democratization*, 170-179.

<sup>53</sup>Hatch and Wigger, *Methodism*, 15. See also Albert C. Outler, ed., "The Marks of the New Birth," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984-1991), 1:418-419, and *ibid.*, "The Lord Our Righteousness," 1:449-465. This sermon is especially relevant because Calvinist charges had compelled Wesley to clearly enunciate his views on the relationship between justification and sanctification.

Christ-likeness.”<sup>54</sup> This concept of grace combines both pardon and power. God’s love was first extended to the sinner, which then enabled freedom of choice—Wesley’s “prevenient grace.”<sup>55</sup> Then God’s grace (power) enables the individual to perform, through God, what was once well-nigh impossible—a regeneration of the soul after His likeness.<sup>56</sup> Daily victories over sinful tendencies now become an expression of God’s renewed presence in one’s life; thus God works in and through the individual. Wesleyan scholar Randy Maddox calls this “responsible grace,” where “[grace] empowers our response [to God’s love] but does not coerce that response.”<sup>57</sup> Grace is a gradual process

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<sup>54</sup>Maddox, 86. White writes, “Transformation of character is wrought through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which works upon the human agent, implanting in him, according to his desire and consent to have it done, a new nature. The image of God is restored in the soul and day by day he is strengthened and renewed by grace, and is enabled more and more perfectly to reflect the character of Christ in righteousness, and true holiness.” Ellen G. White, “Have You Oil in Your Vessels with Your Lamps?” *Review and Herald*, September 17, 1895, 593. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 391.

<sup>55</sup>Maddox explains that Wesley defines “prevenient grace” not in terms of God’s sovereignty, but rather as an example of His love in allowing a “continuing (weakened) influence of the grace of creation even after the fall.” Maddox also notes that “Wesley was convinced that no one had access to God apart from the gracious restoration of divine self-revelation.” Maddox, 29, 75, 84-86. Reformed theology sees the new birth as God’s irresistible gift to those chosen for salvation—immediately changing sinners from fallen (can only sin) to redeemed (righteousness is natural). By contrast, Wesley saw the new birth as the initial step to sanctification that began as a regeneration impulse prior to the new birth via prevenient grace. Although this is similar to the Reformed idea of prevenient grace, Wesley applies it to everyone—not just the elect. Maddox, 159-160. Cooperation between God and the responding person characterizes Wesley’s soteriological perspective—a divergence from traditional Reformed theology. The basic thrust of the first two pages of the chapter “Consecration” in Ellen White’s *Steps to Christ* reflects a similar concept as Wesley’s, minus the theological term “prevenient grace.” White, *Steps to Christ*, 43-44, 47-48.

<sup>56</sup>See John Wesley’s Sermon, “The Witness of our Spirit,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 1:309-310, 313.

<sup>57</sup>Maddox, 86. See also Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 490-491, 564-565. Several other Wesleyan scholars corroborate this interpretation of Wesley’s writings. See Albert C. Outler’s introduction to *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 33, and Mildred Bangs

that deepens or weakens over time depending on one's response.<sup>58</sup>

In America, Wesleyan Methodism, with its Arminian perspective, fit in well with the optimistic spirit of the age.<sup>59</sup> Individuals, exercising personal initiative, could commit their life to an immanent God, consecrate themselves wholly to Him, and then reap a transformed life. The redeemed individual could thus work with God in transforming the world through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the "exaltation of Christian love."<sup>60</sup>

This "hands-on" faith reverberated positively with an egalitarian American culture that saw effort and hard work as key to accomplishing just about anything. Within this spiritual dimension Methodism tactfully combined holiness, sanctification, and service to others into one convenient package. Humans, while fully dependent on

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Wyn Koop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Publishers, 1972), 155.

<sup>58</sup>White explains her perspective on this concept in the chapter "Growing up into Christ" in *Steps to Christ*, 67-75. A detailed explanation of grace as it relates to White's restoration motif is found throughout chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>59</sup>See Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 80. Note that Arminianism relates to the theology of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) and his followers "who believed that predestination was conditioned by God's foreknowledge of human free choices." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed., s.v. "Arminianism," CD-ROM (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992, Microsoft Bookshelf 1994 Multi Media Reference Library). Arminianism allows for freedom of choice even though God in His great foreknowledge can see (but does not foreordain) who will be saved and who will be lost. It also holds that those who have once accepted Christ can lose their salvation, contradicting Calvinism's "preservation of the saints." Erickson, 15.

<sup>60</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 154. The importance of personal choice and its relationship to grace is illustrated in an unattributed poem (probably by Charles Wesley) quoted in Wesley's sermon "Free Grace," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 3:559-563. Wesley, in his sermon "National Sins and Miseries," emphasizes that the lack of social and moral responsibility leads to many of humanity's problems. Repentance is the key to moving forward spiritually and morally ("National Sins and Miseries," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 3:575-576).

God's freely offered grace, became responsible for putting that grace into action in their personal lives.<sup>61</sup> This is a very pragmatic religion, one in which an individual's choice has real consequences, a perspective that celebrates the "self-made man" who can rise to ever higher levels of spirituality. Sin, though heinous, is like a sickness that God can heal—if an individual chooses to cooperate with Him.<sup>62</sup>

Wesley emphasized the therapeutic nature of God's grace, grace which plays an integral role in the healing of the sin problem. He first noted that only through a dynamic relationship with God's grace could spiritual wholeness ever be restored. Adam's sin severed this uplifting relationship as man sought to be independent of God. This led to spiritual death and the loss of the likeness of God through the corruption of human faculties. As a result, every human being comes into the world already separated from God and thus spiritually dead. Yet, like Adam and Eve, individuals only become guilty of sin when they reject the offered grace of God and fail to grow in that grace.<sup>63</sup>

In this context, Jesus was understood to be the Great Physician who sought to begin a "gradual restoration of humanity to God-likeness" even though individuals were in a fallen state. The emphasis was not exclusively on the inherited guilt of original sin, a belief rooted in Augustinian Western Christianity that sees the individual incapable of avoiding sin apart from a juridical imposition of God's grace. Instead, Maddox posits

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<sup>61</sup>Maddox, 39.

<sup>62</sup>John W. Prince, *Wesley on Religious Education: A Study of John Wesley's Theories and Methods of the Education of Children in Religion* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1926), 81.

<sup>63</sup>Maddox, 74, 81. See Wesley's comments in his sermons "Justification by Faith," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 1:185, and "The New Birth," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 2:189-190.

persuasively that Wesley was indirectly influenced by his readings of the early Eastern Church Fathers who advocated the process of renewing the soul after the image of God as a way to overcome the sin problem.<sup>64</sup> Without God's regenerating grace, however, people would be unable to save themselves.<sup>65</sup> There was not a stratified and predetermined elect who only could gain salvation. Instead, equalitarianism—salvation open to all—and perfectionistic optimism became the American “spiritual inheritance” from men like John Wesley and George Whitefield. Everybody was equal in the sight of God.<sup>66</sup> A significant number of nineteenth-century Americans cited Wesley's ideas as being an authoritative source for the optimistic social movements of the day.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Maddox, 67, 81. Maddox emphasizes that this was probably not a conscious integration of Eastern and Western theology in Wesley's thinking. Instead Wesley was trying to reconcile his readings of the early church fathers with the contemporary Protestant belief of being saved by grace. Maddox documents some of these influences in *Responsible Grace*, 285-286. Note also that Western and Eastern branches of Christianity developed some significant differences over time after the fall of the Roman Empire. This eventually led to two distinct expressions of Christianity along with some significant theological variations by A.D. 1000. Of interest to this dissertation are the two differing views on the concept of original sin. Western Christianity emphasizes the inherited guilt of Adam's sin. The result is that the fall renders humans so depraved that sinning becomes a part of humanity's very being. Contrarily, Eastern Christianity argues that the fall leads to our inner tendency to sin as the moral image of God is severely damaged, but this marred image does not render humans incapable of cooperating with God's offering of healing. “We become guilty when we reject the offered grace of God.” *Ibid.*, 74, 137-139, 198-200.

<sup>65</sup>Maddox, 82. See also “Advice to the People Called ‘Methodists,’” in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 9:124-125; “Sermon on the Mount I,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 1:477; “Letter to John Fletcher, 22 March 1771,” in *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, 8 vols., ed. John Telford (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 5:231. God's healing potential is discussed in Wesley's sermon “Original Sin,” in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 2:183-185.

<sup>66</sup>See Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 9.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, 146. Smith devotes a chapter of *Revivalism and Reform* to discussing writers who advocated societal reform through varying interpretations of revival and perfectionism—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Phoebe Palmer, Hannah More, Thomas Upham, William Boardman, Andrew Peabody, and others. Smith then notes that “every book on the subject cited in the foregoing pages refers to Wesley.” *Ibid.*, 135-147.

Eventually, many American Protestant persuasions adopted views similar to Arminianism.<sup>68</sup> This Arminianism allowed many American Calvinists to share with the Methodists an emphasis on divine grace and human freedom.<sup>69</sup> When sinfulness is perceived in the heart, one has the ability to choose to enact deliberate and authentic steps to fix the problem.<sup>70</sup> This enthusiasm blended well with the realities of the American scene. Methodism, at the expense of authority and tradition, “dignified the convictions of ordinary people on important matters—whether religious, political or economic. It elicited choice and participation by people long ignored.”<sup>71</sup>

Eventually American Methodists completely dropped the complicated theological aspects of Wesley’s “prevenient grace” and chose instead to emphasize the idea of “free will” independently. Methodism, with its optimistic emphasis on spiritual regeneration and the free exercise of the will, illustrates important teachings germane to the religious environment in which White lived.

#### Wesley, Methodism, Education, and the Restoration Theme

As noted in the previous section, portions of John Wesley’s writings advanced the notion that God’s healing work upon the soul initiates the process of restoring the image of God in humanity. Yet the question remains, did Wesley or the Methodists incorporate this restoration theme directly into their educational schemes as White later did?

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<sup>68</sup>See Umbel, iii.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>John Wesley, “The Image of God,” in *John Wesley’s Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Outler and Heitzenrater, 19.

<sup>71</sup>Hatch and Wigger, *Methodism*, 16.



Early in the twentieth century, John W. Prince, a leading authority on Methodist education, published a book that explored in detail Wesley's concepts of religious education while casting light upon how Wesley's educational ideas were interpreted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prince noted that for Wesley, "Salvation from sin is the main purpose of life."<sup>72</sup> Repentance leads to change—the regenerative new-birth experience. Justification conditioned by faith is the "redemptive work of Christ" which leads to a "growing experience in the love of God and mankind, maintained and nourished by the use of the means of grace."<sup>73</sup> Prince then asserts that this perspective on salvation had a logical impact on Wesley's view of education. According to Prince, Wesley emphasizes that leading students to salvation through a personal religious experience is the main reason for schooling. "The purpose of religious education is to instill in children true religion, holiness, and the love of God and mankind, and to train them in the Image of God."<sup>74</sup>

Wesley's educational rationale was based on the concept that our God-given liberty to choose initiated the capacity to act one way or another on our desires and inclinations. In this way Wesley could affirm the role of right habits, education, and human action without being limited by the determinism of the magisterial reformers.<sup>75</sup>

Henry D. Rack, citing Wesley as one of the fifty major thinkers in education in the last

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<sup>72</sup>Prince, 81.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 10, 88.

<sup>75</sup>Maddox, 69-70; John Wesley, "The First Fruits of the Spirit," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 1:241; idem, "On Divine Providence," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 2:540-541.

2000 years, pointed out that Wesley's concern for education was to see it as a vehicle to prepare children for salvation.<sup>76</sup> Prince noted that for Wesley, "The true Christian school will first make Christians, and then teach other matters."<sup>77</sup> Students were to be prepared for heaven first, teachers were to be responsible for the souls of their students, and instruction in the Bible was paramount.<sup>78</sup>

Wesley believed, as Palmer stated, that "the only end of education is to restore our rational nature to its proper state. Education, therefore, is to be considered as reason learned at second hand, which is, as far as it can, to supply the loss of original perfection."<sup>79</sup> Again, Wesley emphasized the ability of education to play a role in restoring what was lost through Adam's fall. He also agreed with those who stated that the "grand end of education is to cure the diseases of human nature."<sup>80</sup> His anthropological emphasis on human nature saw education as being integral to setting right the "bias of nature." By the grace of God, education can "turn the bias from self well [*sic*], pride, anger, revenge and the love of the world, to resignation, lowliness,

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<sup>76</sup>Quoted in Joy A. Palmer, *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education: From Confucius to Dewey* (New York: Routledge Publishers, 2001), 53.

<sup>77</sup>Prince, 89. See John Wesley, "Letter to Mrs. Bishop," in *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M.*, 14 vols., ed. John Wesley (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book-Room, 1831), 13:37.

<sup>78</sup>Prince, 89.

<sup>79</sup>Palmer, 51. See John Wesley's sermon "On the Education of Children," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 26 vols., ed. Outler, 3:348-349.

<sup>80</sup>Wesley, "On the Education of Children," 3:348-349. See also Prince, 95.

meeekness and the love of God.”<sup>81</sup> This work, begun by parents, was to be continued in the schools.

Although Wesley’s conception of schooling seemed primarily concerned with the spiritual and mental dimensions of individuals, he also cited the mind-body connection and took steps to relieve sickness and restore health. He believed that curing the body of its ailments assisted in cleansing the body of sin. Therefore, anything that could be done to make people healthier would further the cause of salvation.<sup>82</sup> A healthy environment was one in which the promptings of the Holy Spirit could be better discerned.

Accordingly, Wesley saw the public schools in his community as being “nurseries of all wickedness” and recommended that the pious not study in such environments. Instead they should attend religiously oriented schools. Correct educational instruction was to expand one’s knowledge and appreciation for the love of God; public education simply did not fill this need.<sup>83</sup> Both health and the school environment were important to Wesley’s concept of education, a concern later reflected in White’s writings as well.<sup>84</sup>

Wesley’s view of Christian education remained fairly traditional in regard to his curriculum and methodology. His curriculum tended to be austere, formal, classical, and encyclopedic, with an emphasis on mental and moral discipline. Games, recreation, and even the third meal of the day were frequently denied to a student in an attempt to assist

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<sup>81</sup>Prince, 96. See John Wesley, “A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children,” in *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M.*, 14 vols., ed. John Wesley, 13:476-477.

<sup>82</sup>Prince, 24.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>84</sup>White’s attitude toward education, health, and environment is outlined in chapter 3, 244-249, and chapter 4, 283-288, of this dissertation.

the child in conquering the will.<sup>85</sup> Schoolwork was predominantly classical in orientation, fortified with a strong religious instructional component. Wesley even edited

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<sup>85</sup>Prince, 91.

and designed his own textbooks in order to ensure that they were moral and religious in nature.<sup>86</sup> He was primarily concerned with providing a traditional curriculum set within a highly protective and spiritual environment.<sup>87</sup>

Wesley's writings occasionally promoted a connection between restoration and education. However, it does not appear that later Methodist educational movements built on Wesley's restoration theme or incorporated it into their standard educational philosophy.<sup>88</sup> The American Methodist educators, like Wesley, were not preoccupied with developing an original plan to justify their school's existence. Instead, their educational energies were directed toward providing a quality traditional curriculum that included study of the Bible within a protective environment. Virtue, uplifting habits, and character building were the desired characteristics of a good Methodist education.<sup>89</sup>

To a certain extent Ellen White emphasized themes similar to Wesley himself—

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 138-139.

<sup>87</sup>Wesley would not allow students older than twelve to attend his schools because they had already gained too much exposure to bad habits that would be difficult to overcome. Ibid., 140. Note that early Adventist educational attempts at Battle Creek College through the 1890s followed a similar curriculum to Wesley's. Chapter 1 of this dissertation examines the early years of Battle Creek College.

<sup>88</sup>See Francis Ireland Moats, "The Educational Policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church prior to 1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1926), 122. Methodist education in America began as early as 1784 with the founding of Abingdon College, yet little growth was experienced until the "golden age" of Methodist seminaries and colleges, 1822-1860. See Charles E. Cole, ed., *Something More than Human: Biographies of Leaders in American Methodist Higher Education* (Nashville, TN: United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 1986), 128; and Umbel, 195-196.

<sup>89</sup>Umbel, 125-126; Moats, 56-63, 66. Some Methodist schools, primarily in the western frontier regions, promoted a manual labor component in their curriculum. However, these innovations did not survive long. See Umbel, iii, 132. Note that Methodism in America initially had an anti-intellectual bent, limiting serious attempts at schooling in the denomination. Hofstadter, 95-98.

the primary reason for the existence of denominational schools is to restore the image of God in the life of every student through a regenerating and sanctifying conversion experience. Even though it does not appear this legacy was continued by the Methodist schools of White's day, the idea of restoring the image of God in students persists in the educational philosophy of Seventh-day Adventist schooling as advocated by Ellen White—the former Methodist.<sup>90</sup>

### **Restoring the Image of God, Ellen White, and the Reformation Educational Tradition**

Throughout her book, *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White placed special emphasis on religious movements emerging from the Protestant Reformation of Martin Luther and John Calvin.<sup>91</sup> A major thesis of this book ties the Seventh-day Adventist denomination she helped found directly to the Protestant Reformation. From this perspective, she spoke highly of the educational innovations of both Luther and Calvin.<sup>92</sup> The vast majority of Protestant educational institutions in America through the nineteenth

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<sup>90</sup>White's first exposure to the idea of restoring the image of God in humanity might have come through her readings of John Wesley's writings. Although she attended formal school for only three years early in life, this education was steeped in the New England brand of Christianity which possessed a strong Methodist component by the 1830s. The Methodist concerns with righteousness, sanctification, and general godliness might also have embraced the restoration of the image-of-God motif. See White, *Life Sketches*, 25, 28; Arthur White, *The Early Years*, 26. Although there is little evidence Methodist education consciously advocated the restoration theme as one of its primary aims, the idea nevertheless was part of the educational language of antebellum America as is noted throughout this chapter.

<sup>91</sup>This section is a brief overview highlighting specific similarities and differences between White's educational perspective on the restoration of the image of God and the reformation of Calvin and Luther. This is not an attempt at a comprehensive examination of primary sources concerning Lutheran or Calvinist theology or educational heritage.

<sup>92</sup>For example, see White, *Great Controversy*, 144, 148-149, 335, 343, 357, 397, 611; see also her book, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:237; Delafield, 226, 261; Arthur White, *The Early Years*, 374.

century emerged from within the reformed denominations (primarily Congregationalists and Presbyterians)—but also included Lutheran influences, especially west of the Appalachians. One purpose of this chapter is to observe the “spirit of the age” in nineteenth-century America, a perspective that saw education as a means to restore and perfect humanity. Within this context, did the educational traditions of Martin Luther or John Calvin advocate a restoration motif similar to Wesley’s or White’s? This next section will examine how the reformation educational heritage of Calvin and Luther led to the first educational institutions in America.<sup>93</sup>

#### Ellen White, Restoring the Image of God, and the Lutheran Philosophy of Education

White admired many of Martin Luther’s theological and educational perspectives. Luther’s central role in bringing about the Protestant Reformation garnered more space in White’s *Great Controversy* than any other Reformer.<sup>94</sup> He was celebrated as instilling a desire for a “purer faith” in contrast to the formalism, superstition, and corruption that characterized much of late medieval Christianity. He fulfilled a “great work for the reformation of the church and the enlightenment of the world.”<sup>95</sup> White was especially impressed by Luther’s emphasis on using the Scriptures alone to identify salvational truth

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<sup>93</sup>Throughout the pages of the *Great Controversy*, Ellen White includes the following reformers as part of the Reformation tradition: Martin Luther, Phillip Melanchthon, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, Jacques Lefevre D’etaples, William Farel, Menno Simons, Hans Tausen, Olaf and Laurentius Petri, Oecolampadius, John Huss, Jerome, John Wycliffe, William Tyndale. This section will focus on Lutheran and Calvinistic educational perspectives as representative of this broader Reformation movement.

<sup>94</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 120-170; 185-210. Luther’s ideas are frequently mentioned in the context of other reformers throughout the book.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, 132.

and justify ecclesiastical doctrine. On many occasions she upheld the study of the Bible as the “vital principle of the Reformation.”<sup>96</sup> The reformers’ soteriological emphasis on repentance, faith, and grace versus penance, relics, and works was seen by White as a positive contribution to Christian theology.<sup>97</sup>

White especially appreciated Luther’s interest in classroom education. She tells how Luther’s own parents instilled in him a love of learning while he was very young, pressing upon him the importance of gaining the highest level of intellectual and moral excellence.<sup>98</sup> Luther himself became a competent scholar in the universities of his day—a point White took care to note.<sup>99</sup> Not only was Luther competent academically, but he also had a firm grasp of the Scriptures—two critical elements that White adopted into her own educational perspective. Luther taught his students to “think and act as responsible human beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation.”<sup>100</sup>

A number of concepts emerged over the years that characterized Luther’s educational heritage, concepts that were similar to White’s. First, the dynamic nature of both educational philosophies acknowledges the importance placed on relevant, practical classes and the holistic development of students.<sup>101</sup> Both see the concept of “love” as the

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., 120, 126, 139, 148-149, 186.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>101</sup>See Paul Bretscher, “Toward a Lutheran Philosophy of Education,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 14 (1943): 94. See also “Freedom to Grow” in chapter 3 of this dissertation, for Ellen White’s perspective on holistic growth. The comparison of White to Luther may be



sustaining norm of all human relations and hence vital to the environment of educational endeavors.<sup>102</sup> The egalitarian nature of education—the concept that every child should have an opportunity for a Christian education regardless of gender or race—is a concept integral to both perspectives. Luther and White felt that the parents were best situated to be responsible for a child’s initial education.<sup>103</sup> The Reformation heritage understood education as an important avenue to lead students to Christ and to strengthen the students’ Christian walk.<sup>104</sup> Protestant educational reform movements were closely tied to the Reformation ideal of properly training one’s young people to continue one’s denominational heritage.<sup>105</sup>

Tendencies that downplayed the need of Christian education for every student were faced by both Luther and White. Some revivalists and reformers saw education as lessening one’s spirituality by leading to an over-reliance on intellect at the expense of following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>106</sup> On the contrary, both Luther and White felt that a holistic curriculum that educated individuals intellectually, physically, emotionally, and volitionally best served the needs of students. Hence, learning a trade, home

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corroborated by referring to chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation where the details and applications of White’s educational philosophy are given in detail.

<sup>102</sup>Kenneth O. Gangel and Warren S. Benson, *Christian Education: Its History and Philosophy* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 139; White, *Education*, 16.

<sup>103</sup>Erwin L. Lueker, ed., *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), 164. See also White, *Counsels to Parents*, 150, 158.

<sup>104</sup>Bretscher, 92; Lueker, 164.

<sup>105</sup>Lueker, 164-165.

<sup>106</sup>Gustav Marius Bruce, *Luther as an Educator* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1928), 156; see chapter 1 of this dissertation, pages 15-17, for more on the challenges of starting an educational system in early Adventism.

economics, and instruction in the “practical duties of life” were integrated into both educational systems.<sup>107</sup> Luther’s many writings on education influenced schooling in all Protestant countries, including the United States.<sup>108</sup>

Luther grounded his educational philosophy on a scriptural model. Individuals were originally created perfect, but Adam chose to disobey God, rendering humans helpless except to sin and thus unfit to be saved. Christ came to this earth and died on the cross, providing a way for humans to regain salvation through His sacrifice. When a person believes in Jesus’ redemptive work, the individual is pardoned (justified) of their sins. Thus, Christ is the only way to salvation for all humanity. Luther strongly emphasized the point that humans do not gain their salvation through any work that they themselves do—salvation comes only by the grace of Christ. This was doubly important to Luther because not only did he believe it was the only scripturally sound perspective, but it was also one of the primary doctrines that separated Lutheranism from Catholicism. Understandably then, Martin Luther emphasized this doctrine of salvation as being the primary reason for schools.<sup>109</sup> Luther’s goal for education was to instruct students on

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<sup>107</sup>Gangel and Benson, 138, 140, 141; Lueker, 165. Luther advocated a curriculum that downplayed the need for a classical education for most students. He favored practical areas of training especially during a student’s primary years of schooling. For the perspectives of White on work education and practical leaning see chapter 4 of this dissertation, “Experiential Education and Active Learning.”

<sup>108</sup>Lueker, 164.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 165; Bretscher, 92-93; “The Aims of Christian Education,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 7 (November 1937): 847.

how to accept Jesus Christ—the only way to salvation, while also teaching them how to make a living on this earth.<sup>110</sup>

The editors of *Christian Cyclopaedia*, an encyclopedia of Lutheranism, have emphasized that Lutheran education seeks to restore the image of God in students—a theme similar to White. Luther himself emphasized the potential regenerative influence of education by writing, “We have, alas! lived and degenerated long enough in the darkness; we have remained German brutes too long. Let us use our reason, that God may observe in us gratitude for his mercies, and that other lands may see that we are human beings, capable both of learning and of teaching, in order that through us also the world may be made better.”<sup>111</sup> Under the heading, *Aims and Objectives of Christian Education*, the Lutheran encyclopedia states, “The ultimate aim of Christian education is the perfect restoration of the image of God which was lost in the fall of man.”<sup>112</sup> This restoration is partially received when a believer accepts Jesus Christ, but is not fully experienced until the believer reaches heaven. “The purpose of Christian education for life on earth is to restore the Christian to his former blessed state as completely as possible; it is to train men and women who know God as well as he can be known by sinful man, men and women who are sure of their faith in Jesus Christ and of their salvation, and who find their greatest joy in serving God and their fellow man. In short,

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<sup>110</sup>Lueker, 165.

<sup>111</sup>Martin Luther, “Luther’s Letter to the Mayors and Aldermen of All the Cities of Germany on Behalf of Christian Schools,” in *Luther on Education*, ed. and trans. Franklin Painter (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1889), 202.

<sup>112</sup>Lueker, 166.

the aim is an ever-increasing degree of sanctification.”<sup>113</sup>

In many ways, this is similar to White’s perspective of restoring the image of God in every student. Nevertheless, there are some significant differences. White takes a more optimistic view of human nature and the role individual choice plays in salvation.<sup>114</sup> White also avoids emphasizing limitations to individual restoration; instead, she focuses on the growth process that continually occurs as one cooperates with Jesus in restoring the image of God. Even sinless Adam at creation was to “more fully reflect the image of God,” thus it is unlikely that White would suggest that the image, even in heaven, could ever be fully achieved because this would entail a perfect understanding of God.<sup>115</sup>

On this earth, we are continually in a battle to choose between Christ and Satan—with Satan seeking to mar the image of God in humanity and Christ seeking to restore it. In White’s perspective, humans are active participants in this struggle, daily choosing to move in one direction or the other. Perhaps for this reason, White applies the restoration theme even more broadly than Luther did by focusing on health and lifestyle issues in addition to work, education, spiritual development, and service.<sup>116</sup> Restoring the image of God is not exclusively God’s work, but the product of a cooperative effort between an

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>See chapter 3 of this dissertation, “The Restoration of the Image-of-God Motif and Ellen White’s Optimistic Anthropology.”

<sup>115</sup>See chapter 3 of this dissertation, “Restoring the Image of God and Perfection: How Optimistic Is Ellen White’s Anthropology?”

<sup>116</sup>Chapter 4 of this dissertation analyzes in-depth White’s restoration theme and its educational implications in the various dimensions of humanity: Spiritual, Mental, and Physical.

empowering Christ and a faith-filled believer.<sup>117</sup>

Ellen White, Restoring the Image of God,  
and Calvin's Philosophy of Education

John Calvin did not write nearly as much as Luther on education, in part because he faced little opposition from the radical anti-intellectual reformers who were more prevalent in Lutheran territory.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, Calvinist denominations became well known for their emphasis on scholarly intellectual pursuits and as a consequence played an integral role in the development of American education.

White highlighted Calvin's role in spreading the Reformation to England, France, and other areas of Europe. Teachers, publications, and moral support for Reformed ideals emanated from Calvin's stronghold in Geneva, Switzerland, while the city itself provided comfort and protection to persecuted members of the fledgling movement.

White emphasized his vital role in advocating the study of the Bible. She also found

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<sup>117</sup>Lutheran educator Paul Bretscher complained that John Dewey and other "modernist" secular educators charged that Reformation Christians are hobbled in their ability to improve humanity through education because of the latter's beliefs in total depravity. As such, secular educators saw "faith in God" as hampering human progress. This perception stems from the Reformation belief that restoration is exclusively God's work, not man's (Bretscher, 85). Gustav Marius Bruce, while confirming that Luther saw original sin as remaining in the soul (although baptism removed the guilt), nevertheless argued that "the power of original sin is gradually overcome in the regenerate through the process of sanctification" (Bruce, 118). Luther himself was not necessarily averse to the concept of human-initiated progress, but wanted to emphasize that only through Christ could humans experience the positive benefits of regeneration. Goodness did not come from within, it came from above. In Lutheran doctrine, salvation is the work of God alone—cooperation between God and man in the salvation process was impossible because man lacks the ability to come to God. Sanctification occurs as a symptom of being saved, not as part of the process to being saved (see "The Aims of Christian Education," 848). John Wesley and Ellen White tend to refer to the restoration of the image of God and the process of salvation in more cooperative terms—indicative of their more optimistic anthropology.

<sup>118</sup>Ivan L. Zabilka, "Calvin's Contribution to Universal Education," *The Asbury Theological Journal* 44 (Spring 1989): 77.

much to praise in his promotion of thrift, simplicity, and purity of life. White saw Calvin as instrumental in protecting Protestant truths against the vigorous response of the Catholic Reformation.<sup>119</sup> His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was, as at least one historian stated, “the strongest weapon of the Reformation against the Roman church.”<sup>120</sup>

If White favored a more optimistic anthropology than Luther, then this difference is even more apparent when compared with the writings of Calvin. His emphasis on the “frightful deformity” of the image of God in humanity after Adam’s fall and his concept of the sovereignty of God was even more pessimistic than Luther’s.<sup>121</sup> White’s concept of freedom of choice, combined with her emphasis on cooperating with Christ in the process of sanctification, embodied a more positive view of human capabilities than Calvin held.

Calvinistic predestination was a concept especially distasteful to White for several reasons. Most importantly, some advocates of predestination minimized the need to keep God’s law, “since those whom God had elected to salvation would, by the irresistible impulse of divine grace, be led to the practice of piety and virtue, while those who were doomed to eternal reprobation did not have the power to obey the divine law.”<sup>122</sup> Others, who believed that the elect’s divine favor rendered them incapable of sinning, felt that

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<sup>119</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 236.

<sup>120</sup>De Lamar Jensen, *Reformation Europe: Age of Reform and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Company, 1992), 134.

<sup>121</sup>Irving Hexham, “Calvinism and Culture: A Historical Perspective,” *Crux* 15, no. 4 (December 1979): 16.

<sup>122</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 261.

“they cannot do anything that is either displeasing to God or prohibited by the law.”<sup>123</sup>

White strongly opposed the concept of arbitrary divine election by arguing that Christ died for everyone and therefore anyone could receive the grace of Christ. Simply stated, Christ died for all.<sup>124</sup> In this way, as has been noted earlier, White sides with John Wesley’s perspectives of freewill, unlimited atonement, and the relationship between justification/sanctification.<sup>125</sup> Citing Wesley’s writings for support, White emphasized that every person can choose to follow God.<sup>126</sup>

Wesley himself carried on a long-standing controversy with the Calvinist-oriented George Whitefield over these very issues. Nearly every aspect of their disagreement could be traced back to the Calvinistic notions of irresistible grace, limited atonement, unconditional election, reprobation, the preservation of the saints, and whether or not these doctrines of election could lead to antinomianism.<sup>127</sup> White, writing about Wesley’s optimistic anthropology, noted that by honoring the law of God through the empowering grace of Christ, Wesley had lifted “more than half a million souls” from the “ruin and degradation of sin to a higher and purer life . . . [and a] deeper and richer experience” in their walk with God.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>See White, *Manuscript Releases*, 6:388; idem, “Chosen in Christ,” *Signs of the Times*, January 2, 1893, 134.

<sup>125</sup>See White, *Great Controversy*, 261-264.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 262.

<sup>127</sup>See Heitzenrater, 120-122, for a convenient summary of the disagreement between Wesley and Whitefield.

<sup>128</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 264.

In light of these contrasts, the anthropological nature of restoring the image of God serves to highlight some of the differences between Calvin's concepts and those of White. A cursory comparison between the two seems to reveal that restoration occurs *through* Christ from Calvin's perspective rather than *with* Christ as White implies. But this generalization is not entirely accurate. It is clear that Calvin places the restoration process exclusively in God's hands. However, White does not necessarily celebrate human ability to the exclusion of the essential need of God's grace. Like John Wesley, she refers to a cooperative effort where Christ provides the grace and empowerment to the helpless sinner who then must choose to accept it.<sup>129</sup> The individual chooses to cooperate in the process of restoration—yet the choice to come to God in itself would not take place except by God's unmerited grace.<sup>130</sup>

Calvin portrays the image as imprinted on an individual solely by God's action—essentially a forensic spiritual event.<sup>131</sup> It is "God's action on man." White, on the other hand, sees restoring the image of God in more holistic terms—spiritual yes, but involving one's mental and physical characteristics as well. In White's view, education can play a significant role in this restoration process by holistically transforming individuals. The restoration of the image of God is not just limited to justification with full restoration being completed in heaven. Instead, White sees the process of restoring the image of

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<sup>129</sup>See chapter 3 of this dissertation, "Steps to Individual Restoration of the Image of God: The Role of the Will and Cooperating with the Divine."

<sup>130</sup>For example, see White, *Steps to Christ*, 17, 20-21, 72.

<sup>131</sup>Nythamar de Oliveira, "Calvin's Philosophical Anthropology of the Imago Dei," *Theophilos* 1/2 (2001): 385-404, <http://www.geocities.com/nythamar/calvin.html> (accessed August 1, 2008).



God beginning in the present and continuing throughout eternity.<sup>132</sup>

Calvin would probably have been uncomfortable linking the restoration process to human action, especially action that could be stimulated through proper schooling. Education for Calvin would be more concerned with transmitting the correct theology of a student's restored status as decreed by God to the elect.<sup>133</sup> "For Calvin, education was not a panacea for solving the ills of the race, but it was still necessary to educate children concerning their evil state and their obligations to God."<sup>134</sup> Because students possessed absolutely no goodness, being totally depraved, instruction in school could have little effect on the process of producing transformed characters. To claim, as White does, that the aim of education is to restore the image of God in students would be illogical from a Calvinist perspective, as restoration is exclusively God's prerogative. No educational method or curriculum can foster restoration because humanity in its earthly state has an inherent bias against the doctrines of God.<sup>135</sup>

Calvin's concept of restoring the image of God was more passive than White's, Wesley's, or even Luther's. For Calvin, school provides an environment to inform students of the theological reality of their salvation rather than playing a significant role in actualizing this reality.<sup>136</sup> The students do not exercise their will in imitating Christ to

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<sup>132</sup>This growth process is a significant theme in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>133</sup>Zabilka, 79.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>135</sup>Peter Ymen De Jong, "Calvin's Contributions to Christian Education," *Calvin Theological Journal* 2, no. 1 (1967): 189, 201.

<sup>136</sup>De Jong, 199-201. Jensen clarifies that Calvin stressed both "mutual responsibility" and "action" as results of regeneration, justification, and the process of sanctification. Accordingly, Calvin saw the Christian life as "overcoming the flesh and glorifying God." God

develop their character as much as they are “animated by the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>137</sup> Instruction from Scripture can only call forth a restored character insofar as an individual is already chosen by God.<sup>138</sup> The role of education is thus limited, serving primarily to didactically inform and encourage students to grow in understanding what has already been secured.

Although Calvin’s soteriology limits the role education can play in the regeneration of individuals, one of the legacies of Calvinism is indeed a strong emphasis on Christian education. Calvin, himself university educated, made schooling a priority in Geneva. Transmissive in nature and strict in discipline, his well-crafted, tightly focused system of education produced scholarly students that played an important role in keeping the ideals of Protestantism alive. Whereas Luther was specifically concerned with teaching students practical things and even implemented some physical education, the Calvinist perspective was less holistic, emphasizing a classical curriculum that, according

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implants the desire in the elect via faith to renounce self and the world and to begin this process of sanctification. Jesus cuts the “shackles” of sin, leaving humans free from its impediments to direct all their energies towards carrying out His will. In this way, all human regeneration emanates from God to the elect—individuals demonstrate the reality of their election by their sanctified living (Jensen, 146).

<sup>137</sup>George A. Taylor, “Calvin and Religious Education,” *Christianity Today*, July 22, 1957, 16.

<sup>138</sup>De Jong, 201. Calvinist scholar Irving Hexham notes, however, that even the reprobate can learn to abide by civic laws so that order can be maintained on earth. Nevertheless, keeping the laws of the land does not mean an individual is chosen by God. It is important for the elect of God to participate in government to enforce morality by promoting “general peace and tranquility” (Hexham, 16). Dutch minister and scholar Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) modified Calvin’s views to emphasize a Christian transformation of society. According to his view, God bestowed “preserving common grace” to both the elect and reprobate which restrained sin and maintained order in the world. In this way, the whole world shared to a certain degree Christ’s regenerative power. School, therefore, can fulfill a role in teaching students to be good, productive citizens in an orderly world, regardless of their eternal destiny (Hexham, 17-18).

to at least one author, started at 5:00 a.m. and did not finish till 8:00 p.m.<sup>139</sup> Because of the transmissive nature of Calvin's curriculum, the teaching of proper doctrine was critical—no error could be tolerated.<sup>140</sup>

Calvin's and Luther's educational ideas helped shape much of Protestant education—especially in the United States prior to the Revolutionary War. The desire of the English Puritans to transmit their own beliefs to their children as well as to educate the young to read the Bible served as significant motivators for early educational efforts in America.<sup>141</sup> Another reason cited for Calvin's success was his effective integration of church and state—foundational to Calvinist schooling efforts in both Europe and America. Both entities would work cooperatively in the education of the young.<sup>142</sup> Ironically, another reason for this success occurred as subsequent generations of Calvinists liberalized under the constant stream of anthropological optimism that characterized the age of enlightenment in the eighteenth century. Starting as early as the time of Comenius, strict Calvinistic Protestantism was giving way to an active concept of education that was more hospitable to restoration motifs similar to what would emerge in America after the Wesleyan revivals.<sup>143</sup> Hard-line Calvinists nursed a certain degree of

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<sup>139</sup>Zabilka, 81-82.

<sup>140</sup>Taylor, 17.

<sup>141</sup>See Gangel and Benson, 223, 229-230, 238. Notice that these early American efforts were largely situated in New England where the English Puritan settlers were Calvinist separatists. Their efforts eventually led to the first common school for their children—the earliest forerunners of today's American public schools. *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>142</sup>John Theodore Mueller, "The Influence of Calvinism on the American System of Education," *Theological Monthly* 5 (1935): 227, 230-231.

<sup>143</sup>Zabilka, 90. Comenius' role in this process is discussed in more detail on pages 132-135 of this chapter.

suspicion towards Protestant enlightenment-era educators who seemed to be relaxing their views of total depravity and its educational ramifications—individuals such as Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebell, and Herbart.<sup>144</sup>

Educational historian James Reed has noted how enlightenment-era anthropological optimism believed that through science, education, and applied reason, people could actually heal the world of its many faults. This contributed to antebellum optimism—the belief that the discovery of God’s natural laws would lead to a reformation of society. Many of these perspectives were put forth by American Presbyterian and Congregationalist reformers—“soft Calvinist” views that embodied a more optimistic expression of human ability than traditional Calvinism.<sup>145</sup>

Paradoxically, antebellum American education, emerging from its Calvinist roots in Puritanism, combined a pessimistic distrust of human nature with an enlightenment-informed optimism concerning what regenerate humans could accomplish. The Enlightenment, the Second Great Awakening, the introduction of Arminian thought to American religion, the Methodist influx, and American boundlessness all contributed to developing a new, more anthropologically optimistic brand of Calvinist education. In summary, New England Calvinists established the foundation of American education, a context from which later educational movements would emerge and compete. This Calvinist emphasis on education was not abandoned so much as it was broadened by

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<sup>144</sup>Jan Waterink, “Calvinistic Theory of Education,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 1 (1929): 407-408. In this article, Waterink laments the watering down of traditional Calvinism as a consequence of liberal-Arminian trends creeping into Calvinism. See page 102, 14-105 of this chapter for more on Arminianism.

<sup>145</sup>See James E. Reed and Ronnie Prevost, *A History of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1993), 241 for a discussion of this development.

subsequent movements—a number of which will be examined throughout the rest of this chapter.

### The Reformation Heritage, Restoring the Image of God, and the Pietist/Moravian Movements

The restoration theme in education primarily sprouted in “soft Calvinist” and Lutheran educational ideas which were then nourished by enlightenment perspectives through the writings of Comenius, Pestalozzi, Milton, and others whose ideas are explored later in this chapter. These views eventually matured within the optimistic ideas of Wesley and the antebellum secular reformers.<sup>146</sup> Common conceptions of total depravity, or “hard Calvinism,” often had the effect of diminishing human effort and hence the role of education in shaping that effort.<sup>147</sup>

Richard Hofstadter describes this evolution, stating that originally the Puritans, as Calvinists, saw revival and reform as predominantly “God’s work”—beyond the control of human will. One hundred and fifty years later, American revivalist George Whitefield “had more than an inkling that human will had something to do with it.” Even at this time, however, “the preferred theory, nonetheless, was that divine intervention was the

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<sup>146</sup>In America, certainly by the dawn of the nineteenth century, most schools were only “mildly reformed”—established primarily by liberal Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Methodists and Baptists established very few schools and seminaries at this time as the anti-intellectual tendencies of many Americans did not perceive a need for an educated clergy. Reed and Prevost, 304. See Hofstadter, 95-98, on Methodist anti-intellectualism.

<sup>147</sup>See Gangel and Benson, 199-200. A number of Christian persuasions saw the nineteenth century as the culmination of Protestant thought and reform—a time when Christian Protestant influence peaked. Some strict Calvinists, on the other hand, saw the nineteenth century as a period of Christian decline—a time when various and sundry reforms and secular beliefs concerning the goodness of man fostered a false conception of humanity’s true nature. This in turn led to “an inner decay” of Christianity—and a retreat of Christian influence and power (Hexham, 17).

essential active agent and that the human will was relatively passive.” Fifty years later, by the time of Finney, a more optimistic “volunteerism” existed—“religion is [now] the work of man.” God’s spiritual influence was seen as the constant, while human response was the variable. Therefore, from Finney’s antebellum revivalistic perspective, restoration and revival occur primarily when humans rise to the occasion. The individual has to respond to God’s invitation of grace and then God cooperates with man in bringing about revival and reformation.<sup>148</sup>

Two other groups with roots in the Protestant Reformation are also worthy of note because they assisted in this transformation away from a strict Calvinist interpretation. The Moravians and Pietists, emerging primarily from Lutheran stock and soft Calvinism, embraced a reforming heritage that hearkened back to the times of the Waldenses and Albigenses.<sup>149</sup> Rather than practice religion based on systematic theological propositions, Moravians and Pietists sought a simple understanding of the Bible’s

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<sup>148</sup>Hofstadter, 109. Mark Noll has written an informative article for the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* where he briefly traces this evolution of American Calvinist thought from Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans to the nineteenth-century revivals. In “New England Theology,” he writes that “Jonathan Edwards’ nineteenth-century heirs reversed his convictions on many important particulars. They were rather united in their fascination for common issues, including the freedom of human will, the morality of divine justice, and the problem of causation behind the appearance of sin.” Eventually, soft and moderate Calvinists adopted freedom of the will, free choice, and a stronger emphasis on the role of the Ten Commandments in the Christian life. The “optimistic spirit of the age” which led many Presbyterian and Congregationalists to adopt these perspectives on human nature was vigorously attacked by old-school reformed Calvinists. Noll concludes by stating that “a country convinced of the nearly limitless capabilities of individuals in the new world had increasingly less interest in a theology which had its origin in the all-encompassing power of God.” Mark Noll, “New England Theology,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 760-762.

<sup>149</sup>Gangel and Benson, 171-172; Ellen White spoke highly of the Waldenses and Albigensian movements. See White, *Great Controversy*, 61-78.

teachings. As a consequence, they refused to risk limiting the development of their beliefs within the parameters of preestablished creeds.

The Pietists reacted against what they saw as the formalism and traditional nature of Lutheranism and Calvinism. They felt that theologians unnecessarily complicated the simple-to-understand process of salvation. They believed a better course would be for individual members to study the Bible for themselves and then live what they read, rather than relying on the church's theologians to determine truth.<sup>150</sup> A number of these views later influenced the nineteenth-century reformers. The Pietists' "doctrine of separation" was an attempt to provide an environment suitable for spiritual growth. Hence, various "sins" were to be avoided—cards, dances, theater—as well as any external behaviors that might be seen as a stumbling block to others.<sup>151</sup> Wesley, the American Methodists, and later White were impressed by the Pietists' emphasis on a proper environment for spiritual nurture.

The Pietists also believed that Christian education should be separate from the state. Most important to the context of this dissertation, they seemed to favor a more optimistic concept of human nature. Thus, personal growth that led to societal improvement was an important component of their beliefs.<sup>152</sup> Auguste Francke, a major thinker in the Pietist movement, upheld Christian regeneration, development, and progress as important aspects of Christian living.<sup>153</sup> His interpretation of Lutheranism

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<sup>150</sup>Gangel and Benson, 176. See also Heitzenrater, 19-20.

<sup>151</sup>Gangel and Benson, 176.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 177-180.

furthered Luther's model of practical education by advocating the integration of the "head, heart and hands."<sup>154</sup>

Freedom and individualism were also hallmarks of the Moravian church. The educational perspectives of Nicholas Zinzendorf, a prominent Moravian leader, further eroded the determinist edges of the reformed tradition.<sup>155</sup> Both the Moravians and the Pietists influenced Wesley—the reformer whose theology was perhaps most responsible for awakening an interest within English Protestantism for an optimistic free-will theology as an alternative to Calvinist determinism.<sup>156</sup>

### **The Image-of-God Motif and Selected Historic and Contemporary Influences in the Nineteenth-Century World of Ellen White**

In attempting to contextualize Ellen White's writings concerning the image-of-God motif, it is helpful to observe a number of individual authors and movements that historically appear to have voiced a perspective similar to that of White's. While this dissertation is not a comparative study between White and her contemporaries, examining a selection of the historical influences that led to nineteenth-century perspectives on restoring the image of God via education can shed some light on the origins of her educational philosophy.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>154</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>155</sup>Gangel and Benson, 184. Zinzendorf's theology was significantly influenced by the Pietist movement; hence there are many similarities between the two groups. See Heitzenrater, 20.

<sup>156</sup>Heitzenrater, 31, 69, 73, 85.

<sup>157</sup>The main goal of this section is to illustrate the breadth of interest in the idea of regeneration through education in the nineteenth century. Due to space constraints, only select



## John Milton and the English Puritans

Brian Ball, discussing John Milton (1608-1674) and the English Puritan reformers, observed that they provided the intellectual and spiritual foundation that “profoundly affected the course of Western civilisation.”<sup>158</sup> Undoubtedly, the Wesley brothers were also aware of these earlier English Protestant reformers whose dissenting heritage gave rise to significant changes in England politically and spiritually in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>159</sup> White herself admired the sometimes controversial yet thought-provoking writings of Puritans Richard Baxter, John Flavel, Joseph Alleine, John Milton, and others. White implies that the foundation set by these Puritan writings prepared the way for the great Wesleyan and Whitefield revivals in England and America, which ultimately led to the Second Great Awakening from which Adventism emerged.<sup>160</sup> The question arises, Did any of these authors, to whom White referred, express themes similar to her restoration motif?

In the mid-seventeenth century, Englishman John Milton opened his *Tractate on Education* with the following: “The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him, as we may [be] the nearest [like Him] by possessing our

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individuals are briefly discussed. A more thorough examination of these individuals and the educational movements they spawned is prime material for future research.

<sup>158</sup>Brian Ball, *The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Cambridge: James Clark and Company, 1981), 1.

<sup>159</sup>Heitzenrater outlines the historical context of Wesley’s religious perspective noting the role Puritan “non-conformists” and other dissenting heritages had on the eighteenth-century English religious conscience (Heitzenrater, 11-17).

<sup>160</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 252-253.

souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection.”<sup>161</sup> Commenting on this quote, literary historian Oliver Morley Ainsworth noted in his foreword to Milton’s *Tractate* that Milton was seeking to explain the process of recovering “the health and power of the human soul that was lost through the fall of man.”<sup>162</sup>

A number of English Puritans in Milton’s day emphasized the idea of “restoration and reconciliation” within the concept of Christ’s restoring work.<sup>163</sup> Some saw humanity as given the responsibility to respond and cooperate with the power of God. This would then lead individuals toward “counteracting the effects of sin in human nature,” thus regenerating the individual to new life.<sup>164</sup> There was a need for a response to the divine initiative in order to reap a changed life.<sup>165</sup> This concept that sees education as playing a significant role in “repairing” or restoring humanity’s lost relationship with God is similar to White’s restoration motif. Ainsworth asserts that Milton’s acknowledgment of

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<sup>161</sup>John Milton, *Milton on Education: The Tractate of Education with Supplementary Extracts from Other Writings of Milton*, ed. Oliver Morley Ainsworth (New Haven, MA: Yale University Press, 1928), 52. See also John Milton’s “De Doctrina Christiana,” in *The Works of John Milton*, 20 vols., ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1940), 17:373.

<sup>162</sup>Milton, *Tractate of Education*, 43. Milton was also interested in a holistic form of education, noting that motivating students toward perfection by uplifting them is what education is all about. Schooling should not ignore the mental and physical elements of humanity—even diet was to be carefully monitored to foster growth. For example, see Milton, *Tractate of Education*, 56, 61, 63. See also idem, “De Doctrina Christiana,” 17:373.

<sup>163</sup>Ball, 46.

<sup>164</sup>*Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.*, 72.

the need of human nature for repair and restoration is simply following the ancient Hebraic tradition.

Seventh-day Adventist theologian Jon Paulien has traced White's restoration motif through the pages of Scripture, arguing persuasively that she was simply reemphasizing a significant biblical educational principle.<sup>166</sup> White asserts that "the central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God."<sup>167</sup> As Ainsworth implied, and Paulien confirmed, the process of restoring the image of God in humanity is "a major subtext of the Biblical witness" and as such is hardly an original concept of the Eastern Church fathers, Milton, Wesley, or White.<sup>168</sup> Each of these writers, however, brings a unique approach to the restoration motif, applying it to his or her distinct circumstances and culture.

At least one author has suggested that Milton's opening quotation in his *Tractate on Education* is very similar to White's restoration motif.<sup>169</sup> If this is the case, then it is somewhat disappointing to find that Milton does not overtly emphasize this theme anywhere else in his *Tractate on Education*. White, on the other hand, came to utilize the restoration motif as a major anchor for her mature educational philosophy. It could be said, then, that White played a role in resurrecting this ancient principle by placing it

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<sup>166</sup>Paulien, 227-257.

<sup>167</sup>White, *Education*, 125.

<sup>168</sup>Paulien, 250.

<sup>169</sup>Benn, 39.

squarely at the center of her *educational* philosophy—something few others had done before her day.<sup>170</sup>

### John Amos Comenius

An innovative Czechoslovakian contemporary of Milton's, John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), is often considered to be "the founder of modern education."<sup>171</sup> Comenius scholar Sook Jong Lee observes that Comenius's theory of education was "constructed to achieve a close approximation of the image of God in man."<sup>172</sup> This motif was an important component of his educational philosophy. Comenius delved into the educational implications of the doctrine of man by granting humanity a significant position in the cosmos.<sup>173</sup> Although not as elaborate as White's great controversy theme, the anthropological importance of humanity became a focal point for his educational

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<sup>170</sup>Ainsworth notes that Milton saw the goal of education as fostering a "right knowledge of God with its consequent power to regenerate the soul and invigorate the will." A similar regeneration theme permeates the writings of White, which is not surprising, as they both identify a similar starting point in their educational philosophy. Oliver Morley Ainsworth, foreword to Milton, *Tractate on Education*, 44.

<sup>171</sup>Comenius was a bishop in the early Moravian church (Unitas Fratrum) whose writings and followers greatly influenced Count Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), a Moravian convert and member of the German Pietist movement mentioned earlier. John Wesley spent considerable time with Zinzendorf and was especially impressed with the Pietist "theology of the heart." Heitzenrater, 19-25, 201. Comenius sought to integrate learning, spirituality, and education into a unified package. His views also reflected a moderate, more optimistic form of Calvinism. See Gangel and Benson, 157.

<sup>172</sup>Sook Jong Lee, "The Relationship of John Amos Comenius' Theology to His Educational Ideas" (Ed.D. dissertation, Rutgers University, 1987), abstract. See Johann Amos Comenius, "The Pampaedia," in *John Amos Comenius on Education*, ed. Jean Piaget, trans. Iris Irwin (New York: Teachers College, 1967), 179; Johann Amos Comenius, *The Way of Light*, trans. E. T. Compagrac (Liverpool, England: University Press, 1938), 10.

<sup>173</sup>Lee, 124.

discussions.<sup>174</sup> Comenius is of special interest to this dissertation because he uses the image-of-God motif in much the same way as Ellen White does—as a central component of educational philosophy.

In *The Great Didactic*, Comenius states that God’s grace has provided the potential to restore the lost image of God despite sin’s corruption.<sup>175</sup> It is even more relevant to find that Sook Jong Lee calls this perspective “new and optimistic.”<sup>176</sup> It is *optimistic* because Comenius taught that humans retain the potentiality of a restored image of God within themselves—through the word and spirit of God. It is *new* because Lee was unaware of any other author who had used the image-of-God motif in a philosophic educational context as Comenius did. Comenius’s ultimate educational objective, according to Lee, was the “restoration of the image of God to man and the achievement of Christian unity of the whole society by means of a fully unified system of all knowledge and a unified means of universal education.”<sup>177</sup> Rudolph K. Krempel commented on Comenius’s views by stating that “if education was to improve each individual to approach perfection and freedom in the image of God, then the universal education of all mankind was to facilitate and accelerate the progress of the entire human race toward God.”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 121.

<sup>175</sup>Johann Amos Comenius, *The Great Didactic of John Amos Comenius*, 2 vols., trans. M. W. Keatinge (London: A and C Black, 1921-1923), 2:48.

<sup>176</sup>Lee, 131. See also, Comenius, *The Great Didactic*, 2:48; idem, *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*, ed. Count Lutzow (London: Aldire House, 1900), 218.

<sup>177</sup>Lee, 314. See Comenius, *Pampaedia*, 122, 135.

<sup>178</sup>Rudolph K. Krempel, “The Trinitary System in the Words of Comenius,” in *Comenius*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 58.

This perspective, while utilizing an anthropological approach to the image-of-God motif strikingly similar to that which White used later, differs with regard to the level of perfection humanity can achieve through this process. Both advocate the role of freedom of choice and the responsibility that comes with it.<sup>179</sup> Comenius, however, seemed to emphasize the perfectibility of humanity on this earth more than White did.<sup>180</sup> In his understanding, the process of restoring the image of God can fully perfect individuals, and by extension, can also perfect the whole social structure of society.<sup>181</sup> Education would then play a critical role in this process.<sup>182</sup>

White, on the other hand, evidenced a certain degree of suspicion toward some types of societal regeneration. Her reading of religious history made her especially concerned with the potential abuses the majority could inflict on minority views. The right of an individual to differ from the majority was very important to her.<sup>183</sup> In White's perspective, we are not redeemed *by* education per se, but are brought into a closer relationship with Jesus *through* education. Comenius and White, however, would agree on the importance education can play in fostering conversion in the life of the student.

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<sup>179</sup>Lee, 132-133. White's views on freedom of choice are discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>180</sup>See Lee's comments on Comenius and perfection in Lee, 309. See also Comenius, *Pampaedia*, 169, 179; idem, *The Way of Light*, 10; idem, *Orbus Pictus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 6. See pages 228-236 in chapter 3 of this dissertation for a discussion of Ellen White and perfection.

<sup>181</sup>Lee dedicates an entire section of his dissertation to exploring this concept in Comenius's writings. See Lee, 277, 297-308. Cf., Comenius, *Pampaedia*, 117.

<sup>182</sup>Lee, 132.

<sup>183</sup>See pages 220-222 in chapter 3 of this dissertation for a discussion of White's advocacy for individual freedom.

Comenius also perceived the process of restoring the image of God as being a mysterious or mystical experience. He argued that pansophy (the knowledge of God) can infuse an egalitarian change into all individuals and society—all can become unified under God.<sup>184</sup> Comenius taught that religion itself is a distinct reality, rather than a reflection of reality. Pragmatically, true religion should prove its usefulness through its results. Therefore, “religious education must be the foundation of understanding the deepest mysteries of salvation and rediscovering the Image of God.”<sup>185</sup> This then became a process of “instilling knowledge of the innermost constitution of things into the soul of human beings.”<sup>186</sup>

As students would delve deeper into this understanding, society would be regenerated to usher in the millennium one student at a time.<sup>187</sup> In this way education was an evangelistic tool—“to spread the word of God to every corner of the world.”<sup>188</sup> It is interesting that both Comenius and White utilize the image-of-God motif to buttress their educational philosophy and especially their anthropological concepts of humanity; yet despite these similarities, significant differences exist between the two.

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<sup>184</sup>Lee, 277. This is the theme behind Comenius’ book, *The Way of Light*. See also Johann Amos Comenius, *The Angel of Peace*, ed. Miles Safranek (New York: Pantheon Books, 1944), 11.

<sup>185</sup>Lee, 251. See Comenius, *The Great Didactic*, 2:225.

<sup>186</sup>Lee, 298. See also Comenius, *Pampaedia*, 118, 171.

<sup>187</sup>Lee, 311-312.

<sup>188</sup>*Ibid.*, 312-313; Comenius, *Pampaedia*, 136.

## Jonathan Edwards and Timothy Dwight

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), who was eventually influenced by the Arminian tendencies that characterized American religion by the time of the Second Great Awakening, originally believed that God alone decides who will be converted.<sup>189</sup> In his view, there is not a Wesleyan-style prevenient grace that enables everyone, if they so desire, to initially choose God.<sup>190</sup> Education can only lead to conversion in the lives of those whom God has already chosen.<sup>191</sup> Hence, for Edwards, the process of education was primarily transmissive—focusing on the role of proper preaching, Bible study, and catechizing in bringing about the realization of salvation in the hearts of the elect.<sup>192</sup>

Although Edwards emphasized that the image of God cannot be restored through any inherent action or choice of the individual, his perspective was already starting to show signs of a more optimistic outlook toward human ability than traditional Calvinism.<sup>193</sup> While agreeing with the Reform assertion that salvation was exclusively

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<sup>189</sup>Mark Noll notes that even Edwards during the First Great Awakening was beginning to advocate a theology that would set the stage for Timothy Dwight's position on human nature and the free operation of the will. Noll, *History*, 233.

<sup>190</sup>Refer to page 101 of this dissertation for more on the concept of prevenient grace.

<sup>191</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2 vols. (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1881, 2:513-546. Grady Temp Sparkman discusses this concept in detail on pages 35-36 and 47-48 of his dissertation, "The Influence of Two Theological Concepts—The Image of God in Man and Fallen Man—On the Thought of Selected American Education Theorists" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1980). The Calvinist perspective on education is discussed on pages 117-125 of this chapter.

<sup>192</sup>Sparkman, 47.

<sup>193</sup>See the many references Jonathan Edwards makes toward restoring the image of God in humans as part of the plan of redemption. Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2 vols. (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 2:532-619. Edwards writes, "The design of God was, to restore the soul of man to life and the divine image in conversion, to carry



God's work, Edwards also seemed comfortable emphasizing that individuals needed to act on that work by consciously hearing and receiving the Word of God. When the chosen individual accepts God's free gift, God affects "a great and universal change of the man, turning him from sin, to God."<sup>194</sup> White and Wesley, as noted elsewhere, held a more optimistic perspective—the process of restoring the image of God should happen in the life of each person; and this process was a continual cooperative relationship between God and humanity.

Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), a "soft Calvinist" Puritan and grandson of Jonathan Edwards, played a significant role in developing a more optimistic perspective of human nature and the ability of education to reform individuals.<sup>195</sup> He emphasized that sin stemmed largely from sinful acts rather than from a sinful nature inherited from Adam, as hard-line Calvinists believed.<sup>196</sup> This "New Haven theology," a late form of New England Theology, emphasized human ability and freedom of choice, fitting in well with the revivalist enthusiasm dominating antebellum America.<sup>197</sup>

Dwight, writing early in the Second Great Awakening, noted that the primary end

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on the change in sanctification, and to perfect it in glory." Ibid., 2:535. This restoration, of course, was available only to the chosen elect.

<sup>194</sup>See John E. Smith, ed., *Religious Affections*, The Works of Jonathan Edwards 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 340.

<sup>195</sup>Note that many American Puritans (such as Timothy Dwight) became known as Congregationalists after the Revolutionary War. Dwight's influence was not only significant within Presbyterian and Congregationalist circles but within the broader Protestant world as well.

<sup>196</sup>See pages 117-125 in this chapter for a more detailed examination of Calvinism, the reformed tradition, and restoring the image of God.

<sup>197</sup>Noll, *History*, 233. "New England Theology" is summarized in fn. 148, page 126, in this chapter. See Erickson, 113.

of education is to take the depraved “by the hand and to lead him back to real virtue; and to heaven its glorious reward.”<sup>198</sup> Only conversion can relieve this depravity within humanity. Through meditation, proper training, and conversion, individuals can break the chains of depravity. This process leads to what Dwight called “the sanctified mind.”<sup>199</sup> Therefore, the primary aim of education is to lead the student to a conversion experience, so that this depravity can be overcome. This is similar to the antebellum restoration themes so prevalent in White’s day.<sup>200</sup>

### Perfecting Society through Education: Selected Eighteenth-Century Influences

In the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries there was a growing effort to perfect society through the medium of education. This dissertation has already noted some early efforts toward this direction exemplified in the seventeenth-century writings of Milton and Comenius. However, as the timeline draws closer to nineteenth-century America, it becomes evident that thinkers (both religious and secular) were more frequently viewing education as a cure-all for society’s ills. Edward Mansfield claimed Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) illustrated this optimism when the latter stated that the object of education was “to develop in each individual all the perfection of which he is

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<sup>198</sup>Timothy Dwight, “An Essay on Education,” *Christian Spectator* 2 (July 1820): 350. For more on the context of this quote, see Sparkman, 79.

<sup>199</sup>Sparkman, 80, 85.

<sup>200</sup>While it could be said that White accepts a form of “original sin,” she did not embrace the Calvinist concept that original sin brings about total depravity. See White, *Education*, 29. Woodrow W. Whidden has examined this conundrum in his book, *Ellen White on Salvation* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), 41-46. Chapter 3 of this dissertation also examines aspects of White’s conception of sin.

susceptible.”<sup>201</sup> Kant emphasized the “elevation of the world” while noting that “behind education lies hidden the great secret of the perfection of human nature.”<sup>202</sup> Education is part of the process that brings individuals and societies toward perfection.<sup>203</sup>

Influential writers preceding those in the nineteenth century approached this ideal of perfection from at least two different perspectives. For example, Comenius, Milton, the Puritans, Wesley (and later White) saw human nature as fallen, hence in need of God’s regenerating grace as a prerequisite to human progress. Other scholars of the period such as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) believed that humanity was basically good and hence the goals of education were to regenerate and perfect society by building on this goodness. Regardless of how the question of human nature was approached, both groups possessed optimistic views about what could be accomplished through education. This optimism helped prepare the way for nineteenth-century reformers to press for public education as a way of uplifting society.

Pestalozzi was also concerned with bettering his fellow Swiss citizens through innovative educational reforms and is representative of this growing movement. According to nineteenth-century educational historian, Robert Herbert Quick, Pestalozzi had an enthusiasm for people and saw education as the tool “to make them what their

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<sup>201</sup>Mansfield, 55. See also Immanuel Kant, *Kant on Education*, trans. Annette Churton (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1906), 11.

<sup>202</sup>Unattributed quotation in Samuel G. Williams, *The History of Modern Education: An Account of the Course of Educational Opinion and Practice from the Revival of Learning to the Present Decade* (Syracuse, NY: C. W. Bardeen, 1892), 281. See also Kant, 10, 15.

<sup>203</sup>Palmer, 63.

Creator intended them to be.”<sup>204</sup> He believed that every individual had certain universal powers and endowments which could be awakened no matter what their social level happened to be. Pestalozzi, upon citing the maxim that “man is created in the image of God,” noted that every individual might experience the truth of this statement by “virtue of the divine power that is within him, so that he may be raised, not only above the ploughing oxen, but also above the man in purple and silk who lives unworthily of his high destiny.”<sup>205</sup>

Quick pointed out that a key to understanding Pestalozzi’s philosophy was his emphasis on early physical and intellectual education. This leads to a “higher aim, to qualify the human being for the free and full use of all the faculties implanted by the Creator, and to direct all these faculties toward the perfection of the whole being of man, that he may be enabled to act in his peculiar station as an instrument of that All-wise and Almighty Power that has called him into life.”<sup>206</sup> Pestalozzi advocated the victory of the spirit over the flesh by establishing “the empire of reason over the senses by the development of the purest feelings of the heart.”<sup>207</sup> Hence, “the essential principle of

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<sup>204</sup>Robert Herbert Quick, *Essays on Educational Reformers* (1868; reprint, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), 355. This portion of the dissertation is not to analyze precisely what Pestalozzi taught from today’s perspective. Instead, the focus is more on how scholars in Ellen White’s day perceived the importance of his writings. From this perspective, Robert Quick, being a contemporary of White, offers a valuable window into what was seen as Pestalozzi’s contribution to nineteenth-century education.

<sup>205</sup>*Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>206</sup>*Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid.*, 311.

education is not teaching, it is love.”<sup>208</sup> Growth based on love was for Pestalozzi the significant aspect of his educational ideal.<sup>209</sup>

A number of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writers would agree with Pestalozzi’s optimistic view about what schooling could accomplish in society.<sup>210</sup> Though White lived at least a generation later, the hope of what humanity could accomplish through the civilizing and regenerating influence of education characterized her writings as well.

### Nineteenth-Century Educational Reforms in Antebellum America

Despite many similarities, one of the greatest differences between White and the nineteenth-century American writings of Charles Finney, Horace Mann, Stephen Olin, and the antebellum Oberlin reformers was that White’s optimistic anthropology did not share the “Manifest Destiny” approach that advocated the use of governmental power to civilize the world.<sup>211</sup> Stephen Olin (1797-1851), for example, stated that fostering an

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<sup>208</sup>Ibid., 358. See also Johann Pestalozzi, *The Education of Man: Aphorisms*, trans. Heinz Norden and Ruth Norden (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 3-4, 31.

<sup>209</sup>White utilized a similar concept in her restoration theme. This is a significant point in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>210</sup>Pestalozzi’s writings played an important role in influencing those working to consolidate a system of public education in America. See Gangel and Benson, 202-203.

<sup>211</sup>“Manifest destiny” was a patriotic phrase coined by newspaper editor John L. Sullivan (1845) that defended American expansion across North America (and later “the world”) as a benevolent means of expanding the uplifting influence of Christian civilization to those who were considered barbaric, backward heathens. Kennedy et al., 230, 234-235. White was suspicious of overt attempts by national governments to enforce a certain set of beliefs on anyone, fearing a loss of individual freedom. See chapter 3 for a discussion of individual freedom and her restoration theme on pages 219-221 of this dissertation. Millennial tendencies sought the divine rule of God on this earth by perfecting society. Although White was a millennialist, she was

environment that would lead students toward perfection and a deep sense of American patriotism was to be the driving motivation for a quality education.<sup>212</sup> Horace Mann (1796-1859) advocated the progressive nature of the human race, suggesting that every citizen could be educated to move ever forward as a conquering, civilizing power for good.<sup>213</sup> Mann encapsulated this thrust by stating: “Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.”<sup>214</sup> He believed that public education should teach health, morals, religious tolerance, republicanism, and, above all, it should unite Americans in a common direction.<sup>215</sup> Restoration through education was perceived by

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uncomfortable with the potential of majority denominations enforcing on others their interpretation of God’s laws.

<sup>212</sup>Stephen Olin, *College Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1867), 52. Stephen Olin was an American Methodist preacher who later became a college professor and president. His interest in educational reforms extended to incorporating the Bible, mission service, community outreach, and health reform into the curriculum of the various schools with which he was affiliated—most notably Wesleyan University (1839-1851) in Middletown, Connecticut.

<sup>213</sup>Merle Curti, *The Social Ideas of American Educators: Part X, Report of the Commission on the Social Studies* (New York: Charles Scribner’s & Sons, 1935), 104. Horace Mann was an American educator who as head of the Massachusetts Board of Education introduced reforms and ideas that greatly aided the American public school movement, often referred to as the common school movement.

<sup>214</sup>Horace Mann, *The Republic and the School: On the Education of Free Men*, ed. Lawrence A. Cremin (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1957), 27.

<sup>215</sup>*Ibid.*, 5, 8. Although Ellen White agreed with many of Horace Mann’s educational ideas listed above, her great controversy perspective nursed a certain distrust of social movements that aspired to unite all Americans under the dictates of a moral majority (for example, see White, *Great Controversy*, 615, 695). She was especially provoked by reformers who claimed to be “promoting the highest interest of society” yet discriminated against those who saw things differently (*ibid.*, 587). White believed God never forces one’s conscience, whereas evil powers do (*ibid.*, 591). God’s plan was to redeem and restore His image in individual students—the most important reason for education from her perspective. Within this context, other reforms found their place (for example see Snorrason, 180-182). Public education, such as that which Horace Mann advocated, did not acknowledge this model, leading White to perceive a particular need for Adventist schools at all levels. See also White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:18.

Mann to be a societal or national endeavor rather than just an individual choice.

Stephen Olin believed that the formation of Christian character would lead to the improvement and salvation of the human race. Christian education was a critical component in this development.<sup>216</sup> Olin taught that the Christian educator must make the student's salvation the number one priority of education. "The cause of Christ and humanity calls for men—needs men—cultivated, sanctified, self sacrificing, brave men, and it really wants nothing else to the completeness of its triumphs."<sup>217</sup> Horace Mann spoke of the need for men who were capable of deciding on principle, detecting sublime truth and standing for character.<sup>218</sup> White sounded a similar theme when discussing the merits of a "noble character." "The greatest want of the world is the want of men—men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."<sup>219</sup> The development of a Christian character was a significant component of the educational reforms of Olin, Mann, and White.

Diet, health, hygiene, mission service, and a healthy lifestyle were also common themes amidst these antebellum reformers. Olin pointed out that "true education" pays

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<sup>216</sup>Olin, *College Life*, 161, 210.

<sup>217</sup>Stephen Olin, "An Address Delivered at the Opening of Genesee Wesleyan Seminary, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, 1843," in *The Works of Stephen Olin: Lectures and Addresses*, 2 vols., ed. Stephen Olin (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1852), 2:323.

<sup>218</sup>Morgan, 94.

<sup>219</sup>White, *Education*, 57.

“utmost attention” to general health, habits of labor, recreation, rest, diet, and dress.<sup>220</sup>

He taught that true education combines religion and high intellectual excellence by reforming individuals of all “degrading passions, appetites, and tendencies.”<sup>221</sup> Horace Mann saw the best education as instructing every student in the “proper care of the body.”<sup>222</sup> A generation later White also focused on the relationship between lifestyle and education. For White, all of these reforms were part of restoring the image of God in humanity.<sup>223</sup>

The goal of the early reforms instituted at Oberlin College (established in 1833) reflected similar concerns.<sup>224</sup> Students at Oberlin sought to hasten the coming of the Lord by restoring or perfecting humanity through domestic, missionary, and health endeavors.<sup>225</sup> Many of the religious reformers of this time took such a positive view of

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<sup>220</sup>Olin, *College Life*, 53.

<sup>221</sup>*Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>222</sup>Morgan, 92.

<sup>223</sup>See chapter 3, 244-249, and chapter 4, 276-283, for a discussion on lifestyle and the image-of-God motif in White’s writings.

<sup>224</sup>Oberlin College is located in Ohio. Some think that the early reforms at Oberlin College might have influenced White, possibly via Goodloe Harper Bell who was rumored to have attended Oberlin. For example see Cadwallader, *History*, 17; Vande Vere, *Wisdom Seekers*, 16; Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 122. However, Bell’s historian Allen Gibson Lindsay and Adventist historian George Knight have both found little evidence supporting the concept that any of the early Adventists attended Oberlin as full-time students during a standard school year. There is a possibility, however, that Bell might have attended a short “institute” held at Oberlin during the winter. See Allan G. Lindsay, ““Goodloe Harper Bell: Pioneer Seventh-day Adventist Christian Educator” (Ed.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1982), 8-13, and George R. Knight, “Oberlin College and Adventist Educational Reforms,” *Adventist Heritage* 8 (Spring 1983): 3-9. Nevertheless, nearly all agree that Goodloe Harper Bell and Ellen White would be in harmony with many of the early reforms at Oberlin College.

<sup>225</sup>James H. Fairchild, *Oberlin: The Colony and the College—1833-1883* (Oberlin, OH: E. J. Goodrich, 1883), 12, 16.



what humanity could accomplish that they seemed to border on perfectionism. Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875), a dramatic revivalist and an influential professor and president at Oberlin, advocated a type of sanctification that led to a sinless perfection in which the “moral movements of the mind” could be so tightly controlled by God that individuals could be as Adam before the fall.<sup>226</sup> Gaustad suggests that these ideologies were influenced by Wesley’s optimistic anthropology and then eventually found root in the Oberlin reforms.<sup>227</sup>

Finney believed that all men possessed a natural ability to choose the right. Like Wesley, Finney saw sin as a disease of the moral nature in need of divine grace for healing. In this paradigm, once a person is healed, perfection is bound to be the result. Historian Timothy Smith noted that this line of thinking was most responsible for the perfectionism that ran rampant through the campus of Oberlin in the 1830s and 40s.<sup>228</sup>

Oberlin historian John Bernard wrote that one of the goals of the curriculum in the early years of the college was the “desire to glorify God and mold man in His image.”<sup>229</sup> Robert Fletcher, an earlier writer on the history of Oberlin, noted that the entire “man”—

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<sup>226</sup>William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism* (New York: n.p., 1959), 103-104, quoted in McLoughlin, “Revivalism,” in *The Rise of Adventism*, 146. Charles G. Finney, who was originally an unorthodox Presbyterian who later converted to Congregationalism, began working at Oberlin’s theological seminary in 1835. He was president from 1851-1866 and remained active with the school till his death in 1875.

<sup>227</sup>*Ibid.* See pages 99-105 of this chapter for an examination of Wesley’s optimistic anthropology. Oberlin was founded by liberal Presbyterians, illustrating how Arminian-influenced American Protestant denominations moved in similar directions.

<sup>228</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 28.

<sup>229</sup>John Bernard, *From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866-1917* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1969), 35.

spiritual, mental, and physical—must be sanctified by the regenerating power of Christ.<sup>230</sup> He stated that what was often encouraged at the school was the consecration of the will to Christ. This, in turn, led to complete faith in Christ followed by the Holy Spirit’s baptism which would ultimately guide humanity to an elevated “good life.”<sup>231</sup> Fletcher downplays any tendency to interpret the Oberlin reformers as suggesting that one would never sin again, even though some might charge that this is what Finney was suggesting with his theology of “perfect sanctification.”<sup>232</sup>

Although quotations that tie the antebellum Oberlin reforms with the image-of-God motif appear rare, some have argued that Oberlin’s program might have inspired some aspects of early Adventist education—in which White was the preeminent participant. George Knight argues that just about every reform advocated in her concept of Adventist education was first advanced at Oberlin. This includes manual labor, health reform, an optimistic spiritual emphasis, uplifting the Bible, decrying the classics, forbidding the reading of novels, and an agrarian orientation.<sup>233</sup> Yet despite all these similarities, the Oberlin reforms do not seem to have overtly incorporated an educational philosophy based on a theological imperative such as White’s restoration motif.<sup>234</sup> Perhaps this lack of a philosophical and theological justification is one reason why the

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<sup>230</sup>Fletcher, 230.

<sup>231</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>232</sup>Ibid., 432.

<sup>233</sup>Knight, “Oberlin College,” 3-9.

<sup>234</sup>There were several references to regenerating the entire man to live a more fulfilled life (as noted earlier), but there does not appear to be as distinct a connection between educational philosophy, theology, and restoring the image of God as Ellen White’s great controversy theme provides.

Oberlin reforms were short-lived. By the time guns began booming at the opening of the Civil War, Oberlin had all but turned its back on its antebellum reforms in favor of a more traditional classical curriculum with some biblical emphasis.<sup>235</sup>

Was Ellen White's Restoration Motif a Singular  
Perspective? The Case of Ira Mayhew  
and Edward Mansfield

At the height of the antebellum reform movement in the northern United States, Ira Mayhew and Edward Mansfield wrote separate books that used language similar to White's restoration motif. Though both volumes were written with universal public education in mind, optimistic Christian themes of morality, character development, and societal and personal regeneration were common in each. This illustrates how regeneration themes seemed to be a part of the common discourse of many antebellum reformers.

**Ira Mayhew**

In 1850 Ira Mayhew wrote a book supporting the idea of universal public education. Writing at the height of northern antebellum optimism, he believed that education could serve an important role in regenerating and moving society toward higher and greater things.<sup>236</sup> Mayhew listed a number of arguments for universal public education that would serve to demonstrate how education could uplift civilization and

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<sup>235</sup>By the 1860s, nearly all the reforms at Oberlin College had died out. Knight, "Oberlin College," 8-9.

<sup>236</sup>Ira Mayhew's book was originally titled *Popular Education* and by its second printing in 1857 it assumed the title, *The Means and Ends of Universal Education*.

create a better world. Even though his emphasis was on public education, Christian themes were prevalent throughout the text.

Of most interest to this dissertation is his connection between education and the restoration of the image-of-God motif. Mayhew argued that one of the major reasons for public education was to restore that which was lost when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. He subscribed wholeheartedly to the aforementioned Arminian perspective of Adam's fall, while shunning the concept of total depravity that characterized many of the older Protestant Reformed traditions. "Terrible was the shock which his moral nature received by the fall, [yet] it was not wholly buried in the ruins. Though blackened and crushed to the effacing of that glorious image in which he was created, his moral susceptibilities were not destroyed. The capacity of being restored, and of infinite improvement in knowledge and virtue, was left."<sup>237</sup>

Mayhew, in the opening pages of his book, graphically describes the fall of humanity in Eden which led to the degradation of the race. Manifested through "unbridled passions" and lower propensities, the effects of Adam's sin negatively influenced the lives of many. Yet, despite all this ruin, "a light has shined upon his dark pathway, pointing him to a brighter country, and beckoning him thither. Under these adverse circumstances, it becomes the duty of the Educator to unfold the opening energies of his youthful charge; to mold their plastic character, and to assist their efforts in the recovery of that which was lost, and in the attainment of immortality and eternal

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<sup>237</sup>Ibid., 195.

life.”<sup>238</sup> Mayhew continues to challenge readers with the thought that the reality of humanity’s fallen nature and the redeeming potential of education (the “fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”) should motivate students to progress in the cultivation of physical, intellectual, and moral virtues while growing in grace through a knowledge of Jesus Christ.<sup>239</sup>

For White, restoring the image of God in humanity is also one of the most important tasks of the educator. She too speaks of the importance education plays in the “recovery of that which was lost” and enthusiastically narrates how the effects of the fall can be reversed through the process of restorative education.<sup>240</sup> “To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of the body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in His creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.”<sup>241</sup>

Mayhew suggests that this restoration theme embodies “strong views,” yet they are “fully sustained” by nearly every writer of distinction in Europe and America.<sup>242</sup> According to Mayhew, restoring the image of God in humanity was not an original concept he developed. Instead, he saw it as being part of the optimistic language of

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<sup>238</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid., 436.

<sup>240</sup>This idea is prevalent in White’s educational writings. For example, see White, *Manuscript Releases*, 8:257. See also chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>241</sup>White, *Education*, 15-16.

<sup>242</sup>Mayhew, 16.

antebellum America and Europe. To substantiate this claim, Mayhew quoted a number of contemporary authors who advocated this theme.<sup>243</sup> One such author was “Dr. William Alcott” who wrote a volume of “prize essays” on the role of education which was published in England. In flourishing nineteenth-century prose, Alcott writes:

Education includes all those influences and disciplines by which the faculties of man are unfolded and perfected. It is that agency that takes the helpless and pleading infant from the hands of its Creator, and, apprehending its entire nature, tempts it forth, now by austere, and now by kindly influences and disciplines, and thus molds it at last into the image of a perfect man; armed at all points to use the body, nature, and life for its growth and renewal, and to hold dominion over the fluctuating things of the outward. It seeks to realize in the soul the image of the Creator. Its end is a perfect man. Its aim, through every stage of influence, is self renewal. The body, nature, and life are its instruments and materials. Jesus is its worthiest ideal—Christianity its purest organ. The Gospels are its fullest textbook—genius its inspiration,—holiness its law—temperance its discipline—immortality its reward.<sup>244</sup>

Mayhew asserts that all parents are “apostate parents.” He observes that nearly every educator agrees that young impressionable students demonstrate an early bias in the wrong direction. “If left to grow up without moral culture and restraint, the great majority would go far astray and become bad members of society. . . . The evil bias [of children] must be counteracted [through education].”<sup>245</sup> To substantiate his claim that “everyone” saw the importance of restoring the character of students, Mayhew quoted the following 1812 report of the school commissioners in New York. Sentiments such as these were common during those years:

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<sup>243</sup>In typical nineteenth-century fashion, Mayhew did an incomplete job documenting his sources. I have included his original sources when I have been able to locate them.

<sup>244</sup>Mayhew, 17; Amos Bronson Alcott, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Human Culture* (Boston: James Monroe and Company, 1836), unpaginated.

<sup>245</sup>Mayhew, 197.

Education as a means of improving the moral and intellectual faculties is, under all circumstances, a subject of the most imposing consideration. To rescue man from that state of degradation to which he is doomed unless redeemed by education; to unfold his physical, intellectual and moral powers, and to fit him for those high destinies which his Creator has prepared for him, cannot fail to excite the most ardent sensibility of the philosopher and philanthropist.<sup>246</sup>

If the restoration theme was known in antebellum educational circles, then we might logically expect such ideas eventually to find their way into White's writings. Although she anchored her educational philosophy on the restoration motif, she differed markedly from other restorationists of her time by cherishing a healthy skepticism of unifying ecumenical themes in Christianity.<sup>247</sup> She saw such community aspirations as having the potential to infringe on an individual's right to interpret the Bible personally.<sup>248</sup>

It is also of interest to note how Mayhew connected the restoration motif with physical health and spirituality. He charged that only through the medium of the five

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<sup>246</sup>Ibid., 224.

<sup>247</sup>See fn. 131, p. 218, of this dissertation for a brief discussion on White's concern with the potential of some Christians enforcing their religious views on others through the civil government. She even spoke against intolerant Adventists who tried to force others to believe exactly as they did (see White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:397). Restoring the image of God was a process based on individuals choosing to follow Christ of their own free will. For White, societal regeneration is never an experience that can be forced or legislated. Instead, it is an exemplification of Christ's love—one individual at a time (ibid, 398; idem, *Evangelism*, 69). White did not oppose the civil government but rather taught respect and obedience to the laws of the land—except on the rare occasion when civil government infringed on individual conscience (idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:402). Religious liberty was an important freedom for White. A civil government that is acceptable to God is “a government that protects, restores, relieves, but never savors of oppression. The poor especially are to be kindly treated. . . . Aid is to be given to the oppressed, and not one soul that bears the image of God is to be placed at the footstool of a human being. The greatest possible kindness and freedom are to be granted to the purchase of the blood of Christ.” White, *Manuscript Releases*, 3:37-38.

<sup>248</sup>Douglas Morgan offers a thoughtful examination of the historical context behind White's concern for individual freedom and religious liberty in his book, *Adventism and the*

senses operating in a fit and healthy state could the “knowledge of God, as manifested in the material world . . . be communicated to, and his likeness daguerreotyped upon, the mind.”<sup>249</sup> Alcott is again quoted, stating that “if any man is ever to be elevated to the highest and happiest condition which his nature will permit, it must be, in no small degree, by the improvement—I might say, the redemption—of his physical powers. But knowledge on any subject must precede improvement.”<sup>250</sup>

Mayhew argues that it is only through the cultivation of an uplifting education that humanity can become truly temperate. Education must “enable men to subdue the passions” and make men “habitually temperate.” The uncultivated person, on the other hand, develops a growing appetite for intoxicating drinks by experiencing a weakening resistance to such temptations. Mayhew explains that within every teacher the “beastly” appetites must be reigned in—tobacco (a “filthy habit”), alcohol consumption, Sabbath breaking, profanity, and gambling.<sup>251</sup>

Mayhew’s restoration theme examines how the body affects the mind and vice versa by emphasizing the connection between mental and physical training—education for the “whole man.”<sup>252</sup> It is this process of education that seeks holistically to give both mind and body all the power, beauty, and perfection possible. The mental, physical, and

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*American Republic: The Public Involvement of a Major Apocalyptic Movement* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 45-53.

<sup>249</sup>Mayhew, 8.

<sup>250</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>251</sup>Ibid., 417-419.

<sup>252</sup>White’s link between health, restoration of the image of God, and education is discussed in chapter 3, pages 244-249, and chapter 4, pages 276-283, of this dissertation.



moral powers must be equally exercised to avoid unbalancing the student.<sup>253</sup> Balance is an important educational concept for Mayhew because “all the happiness of man is derived from discovering, applying, or obeying the laws of his Creator; and all his misery is the result of ignorance or disobedience.”<sup>254</sup>

Another similarity between the sentiments of Mayhew and White is the shared concern of fitting the child for heaven as the ultimate end of education.<sup>255</sup> If education is to restore the image of God in the life of the student, then it seems logical to assume that such an education would be life-long and eternal. Throughout his book, Mayhew often complained that of all the works on education, not one of them acknowledged the truth that education is a “preparation for immortality.” Educational books and theories simply did not take, as their primary goal, the training of students for the “employments of their everlasting abode.”<sup>256</sup>

This concept ties in closely with his “life-long learning” theme. Throughout the pages of his book Mayhew challenged the common perception that education ends when one graduates from school and commences the lifework. At this point, he suggests,

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<sup>253</sup>Mayhew, 24-27.

<sup>254</sup>Francis Wayland, “Intellectual Education—Its Objects and Methods: Introductory Discourse before the American Institute of Instruction at Boston, MA, in August, 1830,” in *American Journal of Education*, ed. Henry Barnard (New York: F. C. Brownell, 1863), 13:807. See also Mayhew, 311.

<sup>255</sup>Ellen White writes that the “work of education and the work of redemption are one” (*Education*, 30). She also sees education as learning that “cannot be completed in this life, but that will be continued in the life to come: an education that secures to the successful student his passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher grade, the school above” (*ibid.*, 19). See also *idem*, *Fundamentals*, 191-192.

<sup>256</sup>Mayhew, 20-21.

education has hardly begun. “Man is a progressive being” with faculties capable of infinite expansion and the ability to rise to the highest point of moral excellence. Indeed, Mayhew saw learning as extending into eternity, building upon the basics laid on this earth.<sup>257</sup> Thus, the regeneration that begins on this earth will continue forever.

### **Edward Mansfield**

In 1855 Edward Mansfield wrote a similar book outlining an optimistic view of what American public education could accomplish. In *American Education: Its Principles and Elements*, Mansfield celebrates humanity’s capacity for inexhaustible and perpetual growth. He taught that the “ultimate object” of education was to “develop all the faculties of the human soul to the utmost extent of which they are susceptible in this temporal life and condition.” For Mansfield, all aspects of the soul needed education—the physical, mental, and spiritual, not just one component.<sup>258</sup> He laments that all too often traditional educational endeavors take “far too limited and narrow views of that

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<sup>257</sup>Ibid., 18-19. White wrote often of the need for lifelong learning, even into eternity. “Let the youth be taught to take eternity into their reckoning.” Tapping into the eternal truth of God is the “best possible preparation for life in this world.” White, *Education*, 145. “A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next. Those who are under the instruction of Christ in this world will take every divine attainment with them to the heavenly mansions. And in heaven we are continually to improve.” Idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 332. She also advocated climbing to the “highest round of the educational ladder,” while to those who do not have such opportunities she exhorted to “make the most of the knowledge they have” by conscientiously learning more every day. Idem, *Fundamentals*, 192-193; idem, *Education*, 145. She also writes, “Through all eternity the chosen of God will be learners.” Idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 413.

<sup>258</sup>Mansfield, vii, 55-56.

most important subject.”<sup>259</sup> In his worldview, we are all made in the image of God, so our attainment potential is limitless.<sup>260</sup>

Mansfield, in discussing the virtues of the Bible, outlines how humanity has fallen by departing from the “divine law.” This in turn has led to a broken relationship with God and those around us, a relationship that needs to be restored. Obedience to the law of God—represented as love to God and love to others—is the only way this restoration process can occur. As individuals are restored, society progresses closer to God’s own ideals.<sup>261</sup> Therefore, the “fundamental principle” of Christian ethics is love—the “active principle of Christian morals.”<sup>262</sup>

White, Pestalozzi, Mansfield, and others share similar perspectives that identify perfect love as being foundational to education. White wrote that “love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education.”<sup>263</sup> Mansfield noted that as

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<sup>259</sup>Ibid., 55. White opened her 1903 book on education with similar words. “Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range.” She goes on to express that the faculties of the soul—the whole being—need to be redeemed, revitalized, and restored in the image of God. White, *Education*, 13, 28-29; idem, *Prophets and Kings* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1917), 233. This leads to a holistic emphasis—developing the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions—an emphasis found both in the writings of Mansfield and in the writings of White. See also idem, *Manuscript Releases*, 9:13. White’s interest in the “harmonious development of the physical, mental and spiritual powers” forms the primary outline for chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>260</sup>Mansfield, 56-57. White, speaking of the ennobling benefits of “vital religion,” suggests that there “is no limit to the height[s] you can reach, for it will be like swimming in waters where there is no bottom.” White, *Manuscript Releases*, 20:73. She is careful to emphasize that this power is not humanly generated, but is generously dispensed from God. Idem, “Lights in the World,” *Review and Herald*, February 18, 1904, 8.

<sup>261</sup>Mansfield, 286-287.

<sup>262</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>263</sup>White, *Education*, 16. White goes on to write that “to love Him . . . with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well the soul—the image of God is to be restored.”

this love in action changes society, the common push is toward “something better.”

Scripture presents for our imitation the “character of God, the beauty of excellence, and the loveliness of a holy society . . . to struggle for a pure and higher character.”<sup>264</sup> White echoes this ideal by noting that “something better is the watchword of education, the law of all true living.”<sup>265</sup>

It appears that there were certain phrases and commonalities that served to inform and inspire antebellum educators in their quest for a perfect education. Understandably, then, White employed similar language in articulating and anchoring her own educational philosophy in the restoration motif.<sup>266</sup> Even though much of White’s writing took place a generation later than that of the antebellum reformers, she seemed reluctant to leave this optimistic anthropology behind. Many of these nineteenth-century sentiments, though generally abandoned by most postmodern educators of the late twentieth-century, still markedly influence Adventist education through the writings of Ellen G. White.

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White’s linking of the restoration of the image of God with the principles of love is analyzed in chapter 3 of this dissertation, pages 235-238. Note that White speaks more favorably of personal regeneration than societal regeneration, as opposed to Mansfield and Mayhew. She sees the Holy Spirit readying the heart of the individual student, which then brings a transforming influence that restores the image of God. The regenerated students then go out to change the world by making it a better place through their Christian service. White, *Fundamentals*, 526-527, 543.

<sup>264</sup>Mansfield, 60.

<sup>265</sup>White, *Education*, 296.

<sup>266</sup>As noted in chapter 1 of this dissertation, some experts on White suggest that she was also well read in the literature of her day. It is possible that she or someone with whom she conversed had access to some of the key works of antebellum educational literature. It should be noted, however, that neither Mayhew nor Mansfield were found in her library according to a list provided by the White Estate. She did, however, possess several books by William A. Alcott in her library. Johns, Poirier, and Graybill, comp., *A Bibliography of Ellen G. White Private and Office Libraries*. She also read the works of Horace Mann who was well versed in the educational literature of Europe and the United States. Her adoption of a number of the early

## **Trends in Nineteenth-Century Education Compared with Ellen White's Restoration Motif**

### The Role of Education in Reform

Schooling in America from the Puritan era through the nineteenth-century generally had Christian overtones.<sup>267</sup> This became most apparent in the wake of the revivals surrounding the Second Great Awakening. Historian Merle Curti underscores this point by stating: “No great educational leader before the Civil War would have denied that intellectual education was subordinate to religious values. None would tolerate any non-Christian beliefs in the schools.”<sup>268</sup> This opinion seemed to hold sway throughout most of the century.

As one preeminent Oberlin historian stated, “Reformers have always recognized that the surest way of changing society was through the education of the young.”<sup>269</sup> Nineteenth-century intellectual Thomas Chalmers wrote in his *Bridgewater Treatise* that the most likely tool for “regenerating” the world is the power of education “to the

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antebellum Oberlin reforms lends additional support to the idea that she was exposed to earlier Christian educational reform ideas.

<sup>267</sup>At least two authors suggest that prior to the French and American revolutions, American education passed through a secular or deistic phase, but this phase proved to be relatively short-lived (Noll, *History*, 166; Rudy Willis and Brubacher, 45).

<sup>268</sup>Curti, 20. Some revivalists of this time, especially in the frontier and urban areas, found education to be out of touch with the realities of their lives and hence of little practical value. This ultimately contributed to a significant reaction against a traditional classical curriculum, leading to a growing practical hands-on approach in many aspects of American education. The demise of the traditional classical curriculum will be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>269</sup>Fletcher, 341.

perfecting of which so many minds are directed at this moment.”<sup>270</sup> Other antebellum educators advocated the benefits universal Christian education could play in teaching children how to progress ever upward in reforming and improving humanity.<sup>271</sup> Even secular intellectuals such as the preeminent phrenologist George Combe, who disliked the exclusive Christian rhetoric in educational circles, lamented that “everyone” saw universal Christian education as the best route for elevating humanity above the depravity found in the masses.<sup>272</sup>

These authors applied educational reform to nearly every aspect of life. Mansfield, for example, flatly stated that America stands for improvement—moral, intellectual, and physical.<sup>273</sup> Similarly, Mann mirrored the thoughts of many antebellum reformers by advocating a host of suggestions where the reform impetus could be applied to schooling. He promoted a healthy classroom environment, complete with adequate ventilation, sunlight, and fresh air. He celebrated individual thought and denounced those students who merely reflected the thoughts of others. Mann cherished the romantic notion that the mother alone should be the child’s first teacher, instilling a love of truth in

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<sup>270</sup>Thomas Chalmers, *Bridgewater Treatise: On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as Manifested in the Adaptation of External Nature, to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man*, 2 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1833), 1:186.

<sup>271</sup>See Alonzo Potter, *The School and the Schoolmaster: A Manual for the Use of Teachers, Employers, Trustees, Inspectors, etc., of Common Schools* (Boston: William B. Fowle and N. Capen, 1843). This sentiment was clearly stated in an advertisement by Horace Mann for Potter’s book. The ad was included in the unpaginated preface to *The School and the Schoolmaster*.

<sup>272</sup>Combe, 324. “The masses” were often less enthusiastic about education than were the intellectuals who wrote about education during these years. When Combe, Mansfield, Mann and others refer to “everyone,” they are usually referring to fellow intellectual writers on education.

<sup>273</sup>Mansfield, 53.

her children. Manual labor was uplifted as the best method for developing self-discipline, as were habits of frugality and industriousness which led to a practical, useful character. Thousands answered Mann's call by climbing aboard the temperance bandwagon even after the Civil War. Many of the antebellum reformers considered an ignorance of God the most significant problem in education.<sup>274</sup>

Wilbur Fisk (1792-1839) advocated a type of pragmatism that celebrated practical education.<sup>275</sup> He saw education as including the "perfection of the physical, intellectual, and moral powers of persons who then brought about the political, intellectual, and spiritual regeneration of the world."<sup>276</sup> Fisk also noted that true education goes beyond grades and creates students "filled with zeal for active service to the world."<sup>277</sup>

Women found a voice in the reform movements with many tirelessly advocating

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<sup>274</sup>Joy Morgan, 63-120 passim. Especially after the Civil War, science-informed perspectives began to compete with Christianity as being the "knowledge of most worth." Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), for example, saw science and evolutionary progress as the answer to this question, whereas White argued that a knowledge of God was of most worth. See Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (New York: D. Appleton Publishers, 1891), 93-94; White, *Education*, 14. Spencer approached education from a social Darwinist perspective, yet ironically the lack of a scientific emphasis in the classical curriculum caused him to advocate educational reforms similar to those of the Christians. Hence, he too advocated health, useful labor, moral education, and hands-on learning. Erling Snorrason has offered an excellent summary of Spencer's ideas in his dissertation, "The Aims of Education in the Writings of Ellen G. White," 32-44. Interestingly, this new evolutionary perspective shared the antebellum reformers' optimism toward societal progress. Gary Land noted that "the evolutionary view of reality taught that because nothing was fixed or absolute, society could be changed through human effort." Gary Land, "Ideas and Society," in *The World of Ellen G. White*, ed. Land, 223.

<sup>275</sup>Wilbur Fisk was an antebellum Methodist clergyman, educator, founder, and first president of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut (1831-1839). About 1818, while attending one of the camp meetings popular during the Second Great Awakening, he experienced a "supernatural work of grace" that led him to a higher Christian walk.

<sup>276</sup>Umbel, 126.

<sup>277</sup>Ibid.

the elimination of various “evils” in society: liquor, tobacco, tea, coffee, dancing, and theatrical amusements. They also advocated dress reform, frowned upon novel reading, and outlined rules for courting and marriage while discouraging inappropriate gender relationships.<sup>278</sup> This “feminization of religion” opened up a significant number of opportunities for women to assume leadership roles in religious and reform organizations, contributing to a heightened interest in women’s rights after the Civil War.<sup>279</sup>

### Educating the Character

Leading up to the nineteenth-century, some prominent educational reformers saw character education as the primary reason for schooling. Character education was popularized in Europe with the writings of the Swiss reformer Phillip Emanuel von Fellenberg (1771-1844).<sup>280</sup> Other German and Swiss reformers such as Pestalozzi and Froebel enthusiastically supported the role education could play in regenerating people’s characters.<sup>281</sup>

American reformers, many of whom saw the European educational movement as “cutting edge,” were quick to follow the European lead.<sup>282</sup> The potentially uplifting benefits of character education became popular in the thinking of thought leaders in

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<sup>278</sup>Fletcher, 290, 308; see also Knight, “Oberlin College,” 3-9 passim for comments along these lines.

<sup>279</sup>Kennedy et al., 202.

<sup>280</sup>Fletcher, 346-348.

<sup>281</sup>Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel (1782-1852) advocated education’s role in developing within the student a faithful, pure, inviolate, and holy life (Quick, 399). Pestalozzi is briefly discussed in this chapter (pp. 139-141).

<sup>282</sup>Commager, 15-16.



America. In 1850, Ira Mayhew quoted one “Dr. Howe” who confidently wrote that “perfect specimens” of humanity would be found not many years hence. Underscoring his assertion, Howe suggested that “education should have for its aim the development and greatest possible perfection of the whole nature of man—his moral, intellectual and physical nature.” The best education was that which enlightened the intellectual faculties, dignified the moral sentiments, and kept the physical countenance healthy.<sup>283</sup> Mann felt that character education would instill within students such habits of body, mind, and spirit that they would become capable of comprehending greater truths than any previous generation.<sup>284</sup> Proper education, the reformers felt, could solve all problems—moral, intellectual, physical, and social.

#### Educational Reformers, Educating the “Whole Man,” and the Classical Curriculum

Significant numbers of nineteenth-century educational reformers proclaimed the importance of advancing the “whole man”—body, mind, and heart.<sup>285</sup> Interest in the idea of developing all the dimensions of a person accelerated after the Protestant Reformation, especially among English Puritans as will be seen. Pragmatic American demands for practical education coupled with the Darwinian-inspired interest in the physical sciences significantly reshaped the American educational landscape. These controversies and

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<sup>283</sup>Mayhew, 13, 17.

<sup>284</sup>George Allen Hubbell, “Horace Mann in Ohio: A Study of the Application of His Public School Ideals to College Administration” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1900), 31.

<sup>285</sup>David Perkins Page, *Theory and Practice of Teaching* (New York: E. L. Kellogg & Company, 1894), 84. Oberlin College in Ohio was involved in these reforms as well. See Fletcher, 119.

debates are especially relevant to understanding Adventist education by providing insight into the background of White's educational writings.

### **The Puritans and Educating the Entire Being**

The Mortalist branch of the Puritans, suspicious of the pagan Greek platonic dualism that perceived a mortal body and eternal soul as separate entities, included Richard Overton (1599-1644), John Milton (1608-1674), and Henry Layton (1670-1706).<sup>286</sup> Many Mortalist views were espoused even earlier, for example, in the writings of William Tyndale (1494?-1536) and John Wycliffe (1328-1384).<sup>287</sup>

Mortalists held that humans did not possess an immortal soul apart from the body, a significant departure from mainline Catholic and Protestant theology. The idea that the body is not the corrupting prison of the eternal soul inevitably led these Mortalists into appreciating the body as a vital component of man's entire being. Thus, rather than perceiving the body as something wicked to flagellate, starve, mortify, and mutilate—as medieval ascetics did—they instead believed that the well-being of the body affected not just the physical and mental dimensions, but most importantly, the spiritual.<sup>288</sup> Diet, health, temperance, and a positive lifestyle were worthy methods of glorifying God because the body was now seen as the “temple of God.”<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup>Ball, 161, 170.

<sup>287</sup>The Mortalist view held sway in early Christianity until approximately the time of Origin of Alexandria (185?-254) when the church “capitulated to the pressure of Platonic dualism” (ibid., 170).

<sup>288</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>289</sup>Ibid., 174.

In the mid-nineteenth-century, the Seventh-day Adventist branch of the Millerites eventually adopted a number of similar beliefs. The fact that the vast majority of early Adventists converted from a variety of Protestant persuasions adds credence to the assertion that an undercurrent of Mortalist beliefs persisted in many different denominations—perhaps even contributing to the antebellum interest in health reform. Accordingly, Ellen White, who spoke highly of certain Mortalist works, advocated a strong relationship between religion, health, and educational reform.<sup>290</sup>

### **The Battle over the Classical Curriculum**

It was common educational practice up through the nineteenth-century to utilize a classical style of education—an education that focused almost exclusively on the mental dimension of humanity.<sup>291</sup> This was a rigorous mode of study that emphasized copious amounts of mental exercises. Faculty psychology, which was a popular perspective in the nineteenth-century, saw the mind as a muscle that needed to be exercised. It mattered little what one was thinking about, just as long as complex thinking was taking place. Mental discipline worked the mind, so the more complex and theoretical the subject matter, the greater the benefits for intellectual development.<sup>292</sup> Except in the case of

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<sup>290</sup>The long-term influence of the Mortalist movement on certain sects of Protestantism and Seventh-day Adventism is part of Bryan Ball's thesis in his book, *The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventism*, 1-3, 14. See also White, *Great Controversy*, 253. Milton and other Puritan Mortalists are discussed in this chapter (pp. 129-132).

<sup>291</sup>Medardo Marroquin briefly examines the dominance of the classical curriculum in nineteenth-century American schools. He later traces how the classical curriculum was eventually abandoned in Adventist education at Battle Creek College in favor of a Bible-based liberal arts curriculum. Marroquin, 2-8.

<sup>292</sup>Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 3rd ed., 55. See also Hodgen, *School Bells*, 17-19; Gutek, Introduction, 97 passim.

some of the youngest students, this emphasis left little time for physical exercise as part of the formal curriculum.

Eventually, however, reformers constructed gymnasiums in an attempt to fight off the “pale glow of consumption” that seemed aggravated by the sedentary lifestyle of some students.<sup>293</sup> Educating the “whole man” expanded schooling to include the physical and moral realms as well.<sup>294</sup> Healthful living, diet, exercise, bathing, and other physiological aspects were emphasized primarily because they had been so neglected.<sup>295</sup>

Manifest destiny, Darwinism,  
and pragmatism

Possibly as a result of this lack of holistic schooling, some reformers took aim at the corpulent structure of the offending classical education scheme. The strongest reactions against it evolved in the Northeast and frontier regions of America even before the Civil War. By 1900, progressive reformers had launched significant assaults against classical education.<sup>296</sup> The rise of pragmatism in American thought also contributed to

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<sup>293</sup>Rudy Willis and Brubacher, 51.

<sup>294</sup>Wilbur Fisk noted that a good education gave “energy” to the mind and the whole man. In his view, understanding and exercising the physical dimension was very important. He also believed that fashion should never dictate the nature of education. Wilbur Fisk, *The Science of Education: An Inaugural Address, Delivered at the Opening of the Wesleyan University, in Middletown, Connecticut, September 21, 1831* (New York: McElrath and Bangs, Printers, 1832), 10.

<sup>295</sup>Cole, 59. White wrote in favor of exercise as part of an active learning environment in school. This is discussed more thoroughly in chapter 4 of this dissertation (pp. 289-295).

<sup>296</sup>Charles A. McMurry, *The Elements of General Method: Based on the Principles of Herbart* (Bloomington, IL: Public-School Publishing Company, 1901), 21. Progressive education, building on the heritage of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, and maturing in the writings of John Dewey (1859-1952) embraced vocational training, hands-on/laboratory experiences, agricultural training, social/holistic education, innovative

the decline of the classical curriculum.<sup>297</sup> In light of the realities of an industrial society, it became increasingly difficult for educators to justify spending large amounts of time reciting from memory lines written by Latin and Greek philosophers who had died hundreds or thousands of years earlier.<sup>298</sup> Learning now had to be justified by its practical value.<sup>299</sup>

The rise of scientific inquiry and Darwinism also contributed to weakening the original classical curriculum in America. The writings of individuals such as Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Francis Bacon (1561-1626), and Rene Descartes (1596-1650) assisted the decline of supernatural-based philosophy in favor of the naturalistic science of modern times.<sup>300</sup> Educational historians Kenneth Gangel and Warren Benson note that these ideals were further propagated in the American writings of William Penn, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. William Penn decried the unpractical nature of the classics while suggesting that students would do much better by studying the physical

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pedagogical strategies, and a pragmatic curriculum. *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia*, 1995 ed., s.v. "Progressive Education."

<sup>297</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 92-93. The late-nineteenth-century popularization of the scientific method with its emphasis on experimental proofs influenced Charles Pierce (1838-1914) and William James (1842-1910) to develop the philosophical method of pragmatism. In pragmatism, "the truth of a proposition is measured by its correspondence with experimental results and by its practical outcome." *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia*, 1995 ed., s.v. "Pragmatism."

<sup>298</sup>Rudy Willis and Brubacher, 82.

<sup>299</sup>See Mansfield, 19.

<sup>300</sup>Ronald L. Numbers, "Science Without God," in *When Science and Christianity Meet*, ed. David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 266-272. See also Gerald Gutek, *Education and Schooling in America* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Publishers, 1992), 85.

world around them through “applied sciences.”<sup>301</sup> Thomas Jefferson expressed similar sentiments, believing that modern language, history, and English courses, combined with science, made for a more relevant education than classical studies alone.<sup>302</sup> Franklin felt that if an education did not have a significant hands-on component, then a graduate’s usefulness in solving practical real-life challenges would be limited.<sup>303</sup> By the nineteenth-century, many felt that developing useful, productive citizens demanded a curriculum which included scientific and practical components. This emphasis on natural causes, culminating with Darwin’s evolutionary theory, had its roots in these earlier movements.

As the nineteenth-century wore on, educators, preachers, politicians, and scientists began railing against the impractical classical education in light of the emerging Manifest Destiny society that demanded trained workers such as surveyors, artisans, architects, engineers, and technicians.<sup>304</sup> Colleges and universities were accused of doing a poor job training students skilled in these much needed vocations and sciences.<sup>305</sup> Classroom instruction now needed to emphasize practical ways of solving real-world

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<sup>301</sup>Gangel and Benson, 245.

<sup>302</sup>Ibid., 252, 269.

<sup>303</sup>Ibid., 245.

<sup>304</sup>For example, see George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 103; Timothy L. Smith and Donald E. Pitzer, *Indiana Historical Society Lectures, 1976-1977: The History of Education in the Middle West* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana Historical Society, 1978), 33.

<sup>305</sup>Akers, 8. See also Combe, 208. Nineteenth-century phrenologist George Combe advocated the teaching of the physical sciences as a means to more fully explore the intricacies of God’s natural laws. He later complained that most traditional educators found his ideas “absurd and ridiculous.” The sciences he advocated included physiology, anatomy, and political economy.

problems.<sup>306</sup> Laboratories were created to develop scholars who were adept in the scientific method.

Those who preferred the American democratic way of thinking advocated a type of elective system where students could choose for themselves their area of emphasis. Other reformers challenged the length of study necessary to obtain certain classical degrees. A long period of study seemed to be impractical in light of the desperate need for trained workers. Horace Mann, for example, though still delighting in the study of the classics, increasingly advocated nature study and practical methods of learning as he matured in his career. He defended a curriculum that was full of these “practical studies” including arithmetic, drawing, surveying, nature studies, physiology, industrial labor, field studies, shop, and farming.<sup>307</sup> Calls went forth to expand the curriculum into areas of business, music, and even female education.<sup>308</sup>

Eventually, science and technology, combined with a Darwinian conception of origins, emerged as the new arbitrators of truth. A practical education for specific roles in society—known as “social efficiency”—was advocated by growing numbers of educators as an important element in propelling society forward. Through this social Darwinism, society could streamline itself and evolve into a more efficient world.

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<sup>306</sup>Commager, 27.

<sup>307</sup>Curti, 103.

<sup>308</sup>Fletcher, 346, 360, 363. The broader curriculum that Mann advocated rapidly gained momentum after 1860.

Education needed to provide a real-life curriculum for students to gain experience and training in solving real-life problems.<sup>309</sup>

Darwinism offered a viable metaphysical alternative to God in regard to origins—one in which religion was no longer needed to explain the world’s existence and its complex biological organisms. Instead, human intellect, free from traditions, religious taboos, and authoritarianism, could delve into the open book of science to discover the truths that would make for a more efficient society.<sup>310</sup> The new elements of Darwinian pragmatism emphasized the “practical questions of how we can understand and control the world instead of the metaphysical question of how we can know reality.”<sup>311</sup> Colleges and universities were to be free from the limitations of doctrinal orthodoxy because the only reliable road to truth was empirical investigation.<sup>312</sup>

Along these lines, John Dewey perceived the quest for truth as transcending the need for a literal divine being. He saw the ability to discover truth as latent within each individual—truth’s incarnation. “God” is revealed as human society searches for truth. Hence, democracy and freedom exemplify God’s truth and the opportunity each

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<sup>309</sup>Wayne Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner Jr., *American Education: A History* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 222. The “usefulness” of science was upheld by some nineteenth-century educational reformers as more beneficial to society than the theoretical postulates that characterized classical education. For example, see Snorrason, 35, 37-38, 46-47, 68; Adolphe Meyer, *Education in Modern Times* (New York: Avon Press, 1930), 117.

<sup>310</sup>Marsden, *Soul of the American University*, 174.

<sup>311</sup>John D. Pulliam, *History of Education in America* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Publishing Company, 1999), 141.

<sup>312</sup>Urban and Wagoner, 130-131.



individual has to search for that truth.<sup>313</sup> These developments contributed to tipping the balance away from a classical curriculum by emphasizing practical, naturalistic, and nonreligious education for the common people.<sup>314</sup>

Ellen White, though favoring a practical, holistic education, did not support perspectives that ignored the role of God in creating humanity. The center of her educational theory dealt with restoring the image of God in every student and this concept relies heavily on the authority of Scripture. If the scriptural perspective of origins is no longer valid as secular scientists advocate, then the foundation for her restoration motif would be weakened. White was not against scientific learning, but held all aspects of the curriculum subservient to the scriptural perspective.<sup>315</sup>

#### Christian colleges and the classical curriculum

Even in the reform environment of antebellum America, most Christian colleges and universities utilized the traditional classical curriculum.<sup>316</sup> Nevertheless, a few administrators sought to modify the curriculum to reflect the new ideas emerging in

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<sup>313</sup>See John Dewey, "Christianity and Democracy," in *Religious Thought at the University of Michigan*, ed. Students Christian Association (Ann Arbor, MI: Inland Press, 1893), 60-69.

<sup>314</sup>Snorrason, 26; Robert Freeman Butts and Lawrence A. Cremin, *A History of Education in American Culture* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1953), 443, 445-446. Gangel and Benson note that Spencer believed education should proceed from empirical to rational. Therefore a scientific curriculum was considerably more useful to society than the rote-memory emphasis of classical education (Gangel and Benson, 218).

<sup>315</sup>See White, *Education*, 128-134; idem, *Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, 425.

<sup>316</sup>The Yale Report of 1828 helped to defend the classical curriculum against attacks launched by educational reformers who sought to bring more science and electives into the curriculum. This served to prevent serious attempts at educational reform in both Christian and secular colleges during the first half of the nineteenth century. Reed and Prevost, 301.

education. For example, in the 1830s Oberlin's first president Asa Mahan (1800-1889), a Congregationalist clergyman and educator, began favoring some of the "new education" styles that minimized the traditional use of the classics.<sup>317</sup> He even advocated vegetarianism and other "radical" health reform ideas, but these unpopular changes quickly faded out.<sup>318</sup>

Methodist colleges, most of which were established to train church leaders, occasionally added Bible classes to the classical curriculum, but oftentimes these courses were optional or rarely taught.<sup>319</sup> Some Methodist *seminaries* even relegated Bible study to Sunday alone or consigned the study of the Scriptures to one's own personal leisure time.<sup>320</sup> Interestingly, although the Bible was utilized as part of the curriculum at Finney's Presbyterian Oberlin, the Bible was almost completely excluded from the formal curriculum of many early Methodist schools. At least one author suggests that this trend did not begin changing significantly until the 1840s and 50s.<sup>321</sup>

It must be noted, however, that men such as Wilbur Fisk attempted to insert the

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<sup>317</sup>Note that Oberlin was founded by Presbyterians, yet had a significant representation of Congregationalists in the student body and faculty as well.

<sup>318</sup>Fairchild, 71, 84-85. Many denominational colleges of this era went to great lengths to regulate nearly every aspect of a student's life. A conscious attempt to avoid the many sins of the city led schools to locate in rural environments. Parental-like control sought to produce a virtuous and religious student body. See William J. Shoup, *The History and Science of Education: For Institutes, Normal Schools, Reading Circles and the Private Self-Instruction of Teachers* (New York: American Book Company, 1891), 119; Rudy Willis and Brubacher, 52-53, 72.

<sup>319</sup>Cole, 3. It should be noted that even though Bible classes were not always a part of the *formal* curriculum, Bible study and revival were often a part of the campus culture.

<sup>320</sup>Moats, 128.

<sup>321</sup>*Ibid.*, 129.

Bible as a major element of study within the classical curriculum, although in reality such change seemed to affect only a few institutions.<sup>322</sup> This rigid following of a classical curriculum by the educated Methodist “elite” baffled many of the denomination’s adherents—especially those members living on the frontier.<sup>323</sup> In response, Stephen Olin, among others, clung tenaciously to the traditional program and found the public’s questioning of its value “an evil omen.”<sup>324</sup>

Manual labor, agriculture,  
and vocational education

A number of reforms illustrate the reactions of Christian educational reformers to the alleged rigidity of the classical curriculum.<sup>325</sup> Some were radical, like throwing the entire curriculum out, while others were more accommodating, combining the classical curriculum with the realities of American frontier life. Another approach sought to incorporate more science and laboratory-style classes. For example, the first attempt of the Methodists at higher education in America, Cokesbury College (1787-1796), utilized “public utility” activities as “recreation” for their students—agriculture, various trades, and construction. Meanwhile, as was the case in Methodist schools since the days of John Wesley, the bulk of the day was spent studying the classical curriculum.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>322</sup>Umbel, 144.

<sup>323</sup>Moats, 183-184.

<sup>324</sup>Olin, *Works*, 2:276.

<sup>325</sup>Many of these arguments were later reiterated and debated in the early days of the Seventh-day Adventist school system that White helped establish, making these developments especially relevant to the student of Adventist educational history. See chapter 1 of this dissertation for more information on the struggles of early Adventist education.

<sup>326</sup>Moats, 48-49.

Manual labor in Methodist education, from Wesley's own schools to the mid-nineteenth-century, was often looked upon as the best recreational outlet for students. Wesley probably received many of his manual labor ideas from the German Lutheran Pietists whom he greatly admired. The Pietists forbade play, while preferring walking, manual labor, and gardening for exercise.<sup>327</sup> Wesley similarly believed that play might engender a multitude of evils: pride, selfishness, love of the world, and focusing on self rather than God.<sup>328</sup>

Due in part to the realities of the American frontier that demanded practical problem-solving skills and hard work, some American parishioners perceived highly educated people as impractical theorists, unable (or unwilling) to work with their hands like "normal" people. In consequence, school administrators began giving in to parishioners' demands for a manual labor component in the schools' curriculum.<sup>329</sup> A number of Methodist schools experimented with having the students work half the day in the fields and the other half in studying the classics. Despite the popular enthusiasm for such programs, most administrators chafed at having their students spend so much of their valuable study time hoeing weeds in the garden. Still less attractive to them was the anti-intellectual undercurrents that fed such reforms. Yet, despite these misgivings the

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<sup>327</sup>Palmer, 48, 52. Even as early as the time of John Locke various groups were advocating manual labor as part of educational training. The manual trades—carpentry and gardening—for example, were seen as a benefit to society by guarding against laziness and impracticability.

<sup>328</sup>Prince, 145.

<sup>329</sup>Cole, 62, 104. See also Wilbur Fisk's (1792-1839) comments on the importance of manual labor in Fisk, 7.

manual labor movement continued to grow throughout the first third of the nineteenth-century.

A similar development occurred with the Presbyterians at Oberlin College. Robert Fletcher, in his *History of Oberlin College*, argues that the manual labor reaction to traditional education was bound to take place because of the very nature of American society in those days. Raw materials, forest products, and agricultural land were cheap, whereas labor was expensive. The ideal of the self-made man emphasized “working with one’s hands” and self-sufficiency, so manual labor fit in well with such sentiments.<sup>330</sup> For a time at Oberlin, the manual labor department became the most important force at the school. It was believed that this was the future of a distinctly American form of education.<sup>331</sup>

Oberlin’s agricultural program was not just manual labor. There was a significant learning element involved in many of the work stations—educational coursework that helped justify the agricultural program’s inclusion in the academic curriculum. Thus, students would study geology, mineralogy, and chemistry when they were well digging, draining swamps, developing fertilizers, or choosing what crops to grow on particular soils. When tending the fields and gardens, students would examine vegetable physiology and botanical characteristics of plant growth. When working with livestock, students learned about comparative anatomy, physiology, and pathology. The natural sciences and engineering were studied when students needed to predict the weather, tend

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<sup>330</sup>Fletcher, 347.

<sup>331</sup>Ibid., 42, 320.

a hive of bees, or when they were fixing the farm equipment.<sup>332</sup>

Even some utopian societies found themselves supporting the manual labor reform bandwagon. For example, Brook Farm created just such a community, isolated in the country so as to be free from the distractions of the world. Members sought to live a religious and moral life that was free from competition and the corrupting influences of the vile cities. Adherents followed a strict regimen that was largely agrarian-based and served as the foundation of their community life. They believed that working in the wholesome garden gave them a direct link to nature and nature's God. Yet they did not abandon their minds to idleness. Half of each day was spent exercising the physical dimension through labor in the fields, and the other half of the day was spent in exercising the mind through intellectual pursuits.<sup>333</sup>

Eventually, however, the antebellum manual labor programs and utopian societies stalled as the harsh realities of the frontier became a distant memory. The relevance and popularity of these work programs retreated before the cordial embrace of civilization—muting the egalitarian spirit of the frontier. Steven Olin, looking back on his experience in the manual labor movement, flatly stated in the 1840s that it was an “entire failure” even though it was conceived from great aspirations.<sup>334</sup> Judging by the fact that many manual labor schools had closed their doors decades before the Civil War, it could be safely stated that most school administrators tended to agree with Olin's assessment.

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<sup>332</sup>Ibid., 356-357.

<sup>333</sup>Commager, 44-46.

<sup>334</sup>Olin, *Works*, 2:303-304.

## The Morrill Act and the end of the classical curriculum's dominance

Despite the fact that most of the “original” manual labor schools eventually abandoned the idea, a renaissance of manual labor reemerged for a time in the waning years of the American frontier with the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862.<sup>335</sup> About this time, small Christian colleges in Indiana and Illinois began promoting a vocational preparation that would offer quality training for the “common men” in their trades—training that would be on par with those who received a professional education. Progressive styles of education began emerging—emphasizing the practical benefit of college-level education for everybody.<sup>336</sup> During this time many colleges were adjusting the curriculum in order to accommodate rapidly changing perspectives on what should be taught in schools.<sup>337</sup> The Morrill Act led to the founding of many state colleges on the American frontier with a curriculum that focused primarily on the applied sciences and mechanical arts. Historian Willis Rudy noted that these colleges “fostered the

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<sup>335</sup>Rudy Willis and Brubacher, 90. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided public (government-owned) lands to land-grant schools. Combined with the Hatch Act of 1887 (which extended and amplified the Morrill legislation) funding was provided for agricultural experimental stations as part of the land-grant colleges. In 1890, the Morrill Act was expanded, offering better funding options for land-grant schools. The schools abandoned classical education in favor of practical training and scientific programs of study (Kennedy et al., 351). These led to land-grant-funded Agricultural and Mechanical schools (A&M) that initially specialized in practical training, elective courses, and a scientific curriculum. The United States Congress hoped that more young people would become educated in this way and thus strengthen the democratic integrity of the country. Gutek, *Historical Introduction*, 145. This latest renaissance of interest in manual labor occurred just a decade before White began advocating a manual labor component in Adventist education.

<sup>336</sup>Timothy Smith and Pitzer, 36. See fn. 296 on p. 164 of this chapter for a brief definition of progressive education.

<sup>337</sup>*Ibid.*

emancipation of American higher education from a purely classical and formalistic tradition” and its denominational religious focus.<sup>338</sup>

Christian colleges experienced a similar pull toward the practical. The realities of increasing urbanization, extensive immigration, and missionary zeal demanded an education that was more sensitive to the needs of the day.<sup>339</sup> Industrial training schools that focused on Bible instruction and practical skills were now more important to denominational aspirations than classical courses. Methodist education, for example, was unable to produce enough classically educated preachers, so they had to rely more on “self-educated” itinerant preachers who had little sympathy with the intangible values of an extended classical course of study. They taught themselves to read using a simple pragmatic method and rarely felt a desire to adopt an “educated” lifestyle different from that of their parishioners. They read practical, religious, and other works that related directly to the people and their daily lives. Fancy robes, rich vocabulary, and Latin homilies were largely ignored whereas simple Bible-based preaching, common speech, and practical sermons characterized a clergy that could “chop their own wood.”<sup>340</sup>

Because the parishioners needed to learn to read the Bible, small primary schools were founded that cared little for the impracticalities of the classical curriculum, further eroding its relevance. Subsequently, the curriculum evolved toward a liberal and practical education of the industrial classes rather than reserving education to serve the leisure interests of a sedentary elite. The compounded effects of these developments

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<sup>338</sup>Rudy Willis and Brubacher, 66.

<sup>339</sup>Cole, 9.

<sup>340</sup>Hatch and Wigger, *Methodism*, 121-122.



minimized the role of the classical curriculum and led to a greater practical emphasis in American education, an emphasis that continues on many campuses into the twenty-first-century.<sup>341</sup>

As noted in chapter 1 of this dissertation, White's writings uphold a holistic educational curriculum that included manual labor, physical exercise, health, and Bible study integrated into the formal curriculum. She also advocated a more practical approach to schooling than what was offered in the classical curriculum of her day. This interest in innovative and progressive educational reform will be explored more fully in the ensuing chapters of this dissertation.

### **Ellen White, Adventist Education, and Nineteenth-Century Reforms**

Henry Steele Commager noted that the antebellum years in America could best be described as “passionate” and “tempestuous.” It was “an era of reform unlike any other in our history.”<sup>342</sup> Many of these reforms emerged from New England and the frontier regions of the country. For example, the western New York portion of this region became known as the “burned over district” because of the area's flair for religious fervor and multitudinous reforms.<sup>343</sup> With this in mind, it is not surprising to find that White participated in a number of the reform movements in her day—health, temperance, dress,

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<sup>341</sup>Knight, “Oberlin College,” 8-9.

<sup>342</sup>Commager, flyleaf.

<sup>343</sup>An excellent description of this phenomenon can be found in Whitney Cross's *The Burned-Over District*.

abolition, education, and religious liberty.<sup>344</sup> Although the bulk of her literary career—including her educational writings—were written after the latter third of the nineteenth-century, it seems that many of her ideas were firmly rooted in the New England antebellum optimism that saw the upward progress of humanity as “higher than the highest human thought can reach.”<sup>345</sup>

Although some of her educational writings were published near the end of the reform era, it was still more than a decade after she wrote her classic educational text *Education* that World War I broke out, its horrors spelling the death knell of American reform optimism. With this in mind, White’s views seem especially relevant to the times in which she lived; indeed, it seems that many people throughout her life were looking forward to the perfecting of the human race. Ronald Numbers emphasizes this phenomenon by observing that Seventh-day Adventists were in fact a part of the American millennial dream.<sup>346</sup> In regard to the Millerism from which White emerged,

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<sup>344</sup>Herbert Douglass has written extensively about White’s involvement in health and temperance reform. Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 278-342. A more critical examination of her views on health can be found in Ronald Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*. For dress reform, see Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 97, and Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 43-44, 129-145. White’s involvement in the abolition movement is documented in Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 214-216; Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 47. More lengthy examinations include Ronald Graybill, *E. G. White and Church Race Relations*, and Ciro Sepulveda, ed., *Ellen White on the Color Line: The Idea of Race in a Christian Community*. White’s interest in educational reform is a sub-theme of this dissertation. In addition, see Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 354-361, and Greenleaf, 16-25. Finally, White’s ideas about religious liberty are discussed in Douglas Morgan, 41-44, 47-49, 106-123.

<sup>345</sup>White, *Education*, 18.

<sup>346</sup>Numbers and Butler, xix.

Numbers notes that such enthusiasm was actually mainstream rather than the expression of a fringe group of optimistic fanatics.<sup>347</sup>

It is within this context that White cherished an optimistic anthropology concerning what humanity could accomplish through the regenerating power of God. She seemed to emphasize a preference for individual development and physical, mental, and spiritual transformation rather than blindly joining popular social reform movements. She always seemed to have a healthy skepticism of any movement that might infringe on an individual's right of conscience. The right of all individuals to think for themselves, to disagree with the "group," and ultimately to stand as individuals before the judgment seat of God were key concepts of White's perspective.<sup>348</sup>

White also blended this individualism with the concept of a societal remnant—a group of transformed individuals who would welcome the coming kingdom of God. For White, truth could never be politicized and reduced to forced social regeneration. In her worldview, restoring the image of God in humanity happened one person at a time with little interference from the state or church—a belief also shared by many other nineteenth-century thinkers.<sup>349</sup> Later, White advocated certain social reforms as well—health reform, welfare ministries to the poor, religious liberty, education, and others—yet

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<sup>347</sup>Ibid., xi.

<sup>348</sup>Although the push for social reforms that characterized the latter part of the nineteenth century ran an inherent risk of enforced conformity (as earlier noted), other thinkers of the period would have been comfortable with White's admonition to respect the right of each person to determine truth and the way of salvation for themselves. For example, Commager noted that from the perspective of a number of early nineteenth-century leaders, "nobody was asked to subordinate his mind (or still his voice) to the common will." Commager, 11.

<sup>349</sup>Ibid., 12.

these were often framed within the context of individual liberty.<sup>350</sup> Perhaps this is the reason White saw the Seventh-day Adventist Church as continuing the quest for individual thought and accountability, beliefs that she perceived were continuing the legacy of the Protestant Reformation.<sup>351</sup>

Yet even this philosophy was not without precedent, as the rise of free-choice Arminianism and the practical reforms embodied in the “Scottish Common Sense” movement illustrate.<sup>352</sup> Adherents to these two perspectives held that America was to play a special role in ushering in God’s kingdom and in establishing a “new reliance upon human measures to hasten the dawning day.”<sup>353</sup> Individual thought, coupled with freedom of choice, rightly exercised, would propel humanity ever upward. By reforming individuals, society would be reformed as well.

Despite the similarities between some of White’s writings and the reforms of her day, there are areas of differences. Adventist historian George Knight notes that White and the denomination she helped found did not mindlessly join every reform movement

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<sup>350</sup>Some have suggested that White adhered to a rather pessimistic perspective of the temporal world and accordingly avoided social betterment reforms. However, she rarely opposed social betterment as long as it was properly balanced with a concern for the rights of the individual. See Masao Yamagata, “Ellen G. White and American Premillennialism” (Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1983), 287.

<sup>351</sup>For example, White, *Great Controversy*, 200-201; 204-205. Note how White quotes Merle d’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation* and James Aitken Wylie, *The History of Protestantism* which illustrates the interest other scholars shared concerning the need for freedom of thought and expression.

<sup>352</sup>Scottish Common Sense philosophy was an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century movement that claimed (contrary to naturalism) that humans could “genuinely know truth outside of their minds.” Common sense reasoning upheld pragmatic solutions to many problems facing civilization—real problems that could be solved through applying common sense. See Noll, *History*, 154.

<sup>353</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 229.

that came along—there was a healthy amount of picking and choosing. Sometimes Adventists would adopt a reform yet disregard the theology or philosophy that precipitated the movement. Although White advocated manual labor, health reform, and recreational stances similar to that of Oberlin, she disagreed with the latter’s excessive emphasis on perfectionism and postmillennialism, ideologies that originally prompted these reforms.<sup>354</sup> She also never favored the traditional classical curriculum. In many cases White developed her own philosophical reasons to justify certain reforms and educational ideals—such as restoring the image of God in humanity. White certainly wrote within a historical context, but at the same time she developed a distinct philosophy that reaches beyond her own era.<sup>355</sup>

Another significant difference between other nineteenth-century reformers and White was her distinctive philosophy of combining the general orientation of the Reformers—restoring the image of God in humanity—with the overarching great controversy theme that saw Christ and Satan locked in conflict over the loyalty of the world. The role of education was framed within this overarching theme and would lead

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<sup>354</sup>Knight, “Oberlin College,” 9. While at Oberlin, Charles Finney advocated the idea of “entire sanctification” or “Christian perfection.” He believed that a “permanent stage of higher spiritual life was possible for anyone who sought it wholeheartedly.” This led to an emphasis on perfect obedience as a requirement of God’s law and the postmillennial “promise of a perfect Christian kingdom on earth.” See Noll, *History*, 177, 235, and Kennedy et al., 202. Ellen White’s view on perfection is discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>355</sup>Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation will examine in detail her contribution to this educational philosophy. Chapter 1 briefly examines her views on the classical curriculum in the context of Seventh-day Adventist educational history.

to uniquely focused educational applications.<sup>356</sup> In this context, the teacher's primary aim is to lead students to Christ through facilitating the regeneration process in the physical, mental, and spiritual realm of each individual.<sup>357</sup>

White viewed education as the medium for teaching the way of sanctification—that is, restoring the image of God in humanity. Adventist education and White, in particular, actually subscribed to a view closer to that of Wesley by emphasizing the process of sanctification instead of focusing on instant perfection as later branches of Methodism did.<sup>358</sup> Bull and Lockhart note that White's idea of perfection means a transformation or an orientation toward "purposive self-improvement" until an individual is fit to be part of the heaven-bound remnant.<sup>359</sup> Through self-control, education was critical in fostering this fitness and as such would lead toward the renunciation of all earthly distractions that might inhibit this upward transformation. Thus White's concept of restoring the image of God within a great controversy theme seems to be a distinct educational philosophy as will be discussed in the next several chapters.

The nineteenth century and its reforms have been described by a number of scholars as the climax of Christian thought in America and even the world.<sup>360</sup> As the ravages and utter destruction of World War I and World War II intruded, people came to

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<sup>356</sup>This will be thoroughly discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation. See Knight, *Ellen White's World*, 45, 141-142. Educational applications of her theme will be examined in chapter 4.

<sup>357</sup>White, *Education*, 14-16, 29, 30.

<sup>358</sup>Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 25.

<sup>359</sup>Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 2nd ed., 249-250.

<sup>360</sup>For example, see Noll, *History*, 221-222, 287.

view the nineteenth-century as a period of great naivety for its boundless optimism, despite its reputation as “the Protestant Century.” Mark Noll traces this waning influence by noting how the Civil War, immigration, Darwinism, and religious pluralism led Protestant America into the “wilderness once again.”<sup>361</sup>

In many ways White’s writings captured key highlights of the nineteenth-century by encapsulating and codifying certain beliefs of that era into a relevant package that survives in Seventh-day Adventist thought to this day. A significant proportion of American thinkers during those years were in fact *Christian* thinkers.<sup>362</sup> Hence, the thoughts spawned during those times are still of special significance, for that was the era when Christianity defined and informed the national debate in many different ways—political, religious, economic, and social. This was a period in history when Christianity in America flourished, reached a zenith, and expressed a tremendous optimism for humanity’s potential. Consequently, the ideals of the nineteenth-century could be seen as unequalled in producing extensive Christian-based educational reforms. These reforms still bear a certain degree of relevance for Christians today.

Ellen White’s philosophy of Christian education and the maturation of her restoration theme were developed within this invigorating context. Key practices of the Seventh-day Adventist church and its educational institutions, all reinforced by White, give continuing evidence of the lasting influence of these nineteenth-century reforms. Reforms in diet, dress, lifestyle, temperance, civil rights, and education that developed in

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<sup>361</sup>It is especially interesting to note this sequence by reading the table of contents in Noll’s *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, vii-xiv.

<sup>362</sup>For example, see Numbers, *Science*, 265-285.

this era are still preserved in certain aspects of Adventist thought and practice. As an educational voice from that time, Ellen White's optimistic and enthusiastic writings challenge today's reader to continually reach for "something better."



## CHAPTER III

### ELLEN WHITE AND THE IMAGE OF GOD

#### **Ellen White's Great Controversy Theme**

##### Ellen White's World View

To comprehend the educational context of Ellen White's image-of-God motif, one needs to understand the universe as she saw it—a worldview that perceived a cosmic struggle between good and evil taking place within every aspect of earth's history. A number of scholars who have studied her writings see this great controversy theme as “central to her work.”<sup>1</sup> Joseph Battistone, for example, shows how the great controversy theme influences White's hermeneutics, exegesis, and homiletical values derived from her study of the Bible. Her historical perspective is also informed by this theme as is her philosophical worldview. Hence, White's philosophy of education is closely tied to her understanding of the great controversy.<sup>2</sup>

Because this is the lens through which she perceives her philosophical perspective, it is logical to assume that the image-of-God motif would also be closely tied

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 256; Leroy Moore, “Righteousness by Faith,” 64; Knight, “The Devil Takes a Look,” 184, 190.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Battistone, *The Great Controversy Theme in E. G. White Writings* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978), iii.

to her great controversy worldview. The first portion of this chapter will examine the great controversy theme and its connection to her educational perspective. This analysis is limited to an overview of the great controversy theme with the specific goal of more fully understanding her image-of-God motif.<sup>3</sup>

Another issue that needs to be considered is the absence of any claim by White to be a formal theologian. As such, she was not attempting an objective theological analysis in her writings, but was interpreting religion in the context of her understanding of the great controversy theme.<sup>4</sup> To impose theological terminology and strict exegetical methods on her analysis of the image-of-God motif could be misleading and will not be attempted in this study. Theologian Herbert Douglass suggests that her great controversy theme transcends the “tensions, paradoxes, and antinomies of conventional theology and philosophy.”<sup>5</sup> He goes on to note that it should not be surprising to find that White’s writings probably will not fit into a perfect theological or philosophical box precisely because of their unorthodox nature.<sup>6</sup>

#### Selected Illustrations of a Great Controversy Concept in History and Its Influence on Nineteenth-Century American Thought

The idea of a cosmic controversy is a theme that has existed since the days of

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<sup>3</sup>A more thorough discussion of the great controversy theme can be found in Battistone’s, *Great Controversy*. See also Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 256-260, 344-346.

<sup>4</sup>See Battistone, 112; and Daniells, “The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy,” 34.

<sup>5</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 260. White had little, if any, formal training in either philosophy or theology, though she did read widely as noted in chapter 1.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 345.

antiquity.<sup>7</sup> Zoroaster, born around 1100 B.C.E., taught that there is a constant battle between good and evil in every person. According to this perspective, a good god is locked in a heroic conflict with an evil god as each struggles to control as many people as possible. Every individual, exercising personal choice through free will, must of one's own conscience choose which side one will join. Decisions to follow the way of truth while shunning the temptations of evil will lead to a glorious reward in the hereafter. Ultimately the good god will triumph over evil and then judge the decisions of every person during a cosmic tribunal. A heavenly reward will bless the righteous while the wicked will be condemned to a horrible hell.<sup>8</sup>

Hinduism shares a similar perspective, but emphasizes that good and evil have coexisted eternally. Hindu mythology has many examples of good gods battling evil gods. Some human beings choose to join with the good gods, while others join the forces of evil. Roy Jemison, a faculty member in the Department of Religious Philosophy at Spicer Memorial College in India, wrote that “the Hindus’ sacred epics, The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are classical [*sic*] examples of the ongoing controversy between the good and evil forces.”<sup>9</sup> In both of these epics, the good god eventually triumphs.

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<sup>7</sup>It is not the purpose of this section to offer a comprehensive history of beliefs pertaining to a cosmic controversy between good and evil. Instead, I am introducing the topic by briefly noting some historical contexts wherein a cosmic controversy theme existed—especially cases that might have influenced a nineteenth-century American writer. A thorough examination of this theme throughout history would make for an interesting research project in its own right.

<sup>8</sup>McKay et al., 46.

<sup>9</sup>Injety Roy Jemison, *The Great Controversy Theme in the Book of Daniel: A Backdrop for a Christian Worldview in Faith-Learning Experience*, unpublished document prepared for the Faith and Learning Seminar held at Southern Asia Division, Hosur, Tamil Nadu, India, May 1990, [http://www.aiias.edu/ict/vol\\_06/06cc\\_149-164.htm](http://www.aiias.edu/ict/vol_06/06cc_149-164.htm) (accessed 1 June 2008).

Greek mythology is well known for its anthropocentric gods and fanciful telling of conflicts between good and evil. Human beings are often portrayed as unwitting recipients of good and bad results stemming from cosmic conflicts of gods. A number of these myths are roughly the pagan equivalents of the Christian creation, fall, and redemption story.<sup>10</sup>

The Hebrew biblical record contains illustrations of a great controversy theme as well.<sup>11</sup> In the ancient Hebrew story of Job, for example, Satan engages in an argument with God over whether or not Job (a wealthy nomad) serves God out of righteous principle or because of the material blessings from God (Job 1:11). God eventually prevails as Job remains faithful through a number of tests (Job 42:10-12).

The Old Testament apocalyptic book of Daniel contains a number of stories and visions that illustrate the great controversy theme. In the first six chapters the virtuous lives of Daniel and his friends are chronicled. In each story a choice has to be made whether to be on the side of God or to take the way of popularity, fame, and disloyalty to God.<sup>12</sup> In the last half of the book of Daniel, four visions are narrated. The *Seventh-day*

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<sup>10</sup>For example, Thomas Bulfinch outlines the Promethean Myth in *Bulfinch's Mythology: The Age of Fables or Stories of Gods and Heroes* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1948), 12-20. Note that the various renditions of this story vary in detail (as is the case with many of these myths), but the basic story line seems consistent among authors. More information on the Promethean myth and similar stories can be found in Helene Adeline Guerber, *Myths of Greece and Rome* (New York: American Book Company, 1893).

<sup>11</sup>White dedicates about 1,400 pages in her Conflict of the Ages series to biblical stories illustrating her Great Controversy theme in the Old Testament.

<sup>12</sup>Dan 1: The challenge whether or not to eat food offered to idols. Dan 2, 4: Accurately interpret the king's dreams even if the true interpretation might anger the king. Dan 3: Choose loyalty to the Hebrew God even if it means being thrown into a fiery furnace. Dan 5: Predict the king's immediate demise in the presence of the king and courtiers. Dan 6: Daniel must worship God publicly even if it means being thrown into a lion's den.

*Adventist Bible Commentary* notes that “all four visions of the book of Daniel are concerned with the struggle between the forces of good and evil on this earth from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Christ. Inasmuch as Satan uses the powers of earth in his effort to thwart God’s plan and destroy God’s people, these visions introduce the powers through which he has been most active.”<sup>13</sup> The writer of the book of Daniel emphasizes the ultimate triumph of good over evil while encouraging the faithful to remain loyal to God.

In the New Testament, Satan, disguised as an angel, attempts to thwart the plan of salvation by confronting Jesus in the wilderness.<sup>14</sup> Jesus, who has just spent forty days fasting and praying, is starving. Satan takes advantage of Jesus’ emaciated state by offering temptations of food, power, and glory. Jesus, His character fortified by Scripture, prayer, and a relationship with the Father, successfully resists Satan and goes on to redeem the human race. This well-known confrontation is yet another example of the dramatic and ongoing controversy between Christ and Satan within the pages of Scripture.

John Milton, influenced by these biblical records, wrote two epic poems in the seventeenth century that focused on a controversy between Lucifer and God over the fate of the human race. Milton’s poems, “Paradise Lost” and “Paradise Regained,” portray a

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<sup>13</sup>“Daniel,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953-1957), 4:752.

<sup>14</sup>This story can be found in Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13. White wrote about 1,200 pages illustrating the great controversy theme in the New Testament. She also wrote a series of articles in the 1870s discussing Satan’s confrontation with Jesus in the wilderness. These were later used for a new book on the topic: Ellen G. White, *Confrontation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971).

cosmic argument between the forces of heaven and the forces of Satan, with human beings caught in the middle.<sup>15</sup> These works contain generous amounts of poetic dialogue between the two celestial forces. “Paradise Lost” focuses on the fall of Adam and Eve, culminating with their expulsion from Eden.

“Paradise Regained” focuses on the biblical story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness, drawing out the contrast between Satan’s greedy depravity and Christ’s selfless and humble demeanor. Jesus, by controlling His passions, manages to reverse the consequences of the fall of humanity as documented in “Paradise Lost.” Ultimately Christ, by not yielding to Satan’s temptations, demonstrates how a virtuous life will be rewarded eternally, for the forces of heaven will inevitably triumph over evil.<sup>16</sup>

John Bunyan (1628-1688), best known for his allegory, *Pilgrim’s Progress*, wrote another excellent work, *The Holy War*, which examines the fall and redemption of humanity—a story symbolized by the struggles of a besieged city.<sup>17</sup> Satan is portrayed as doing everything possible to imprison souls under his domination, while the Christ figure works tirelessly to grant freedom for all. Unlike some Greek mythology, this cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan involves direct human action and choice.

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<sup>15</sup>See John Milton, *Paradise Lost and Paradise Found*, *The Works of John Milton*, vol. 2, part 2, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1940), 403-482.

<sup>16</sup>Milton and White share a similar overarching theme regarding a celestial controversy between good and evil. There are even some similarities in the storyline of Lucifer’s fall from heaven and the subsequent fall of man. Nevertheless, Milton does not interject the image-of-God motif or the great controversy theme to undergird philosophically his view of history as White does. Consequently, the overall flavor of Milton’s work is substantially different from White’s. Both perspectives, however, are well-known renditions of humanity’s fall and redemption.

<sup>17</sup>John Bunyan, *Christian Behavior, The Holy City, The Resurrection of the Dead*, *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan* 3, ed. J. Sears McGee (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 69-196.

Vigilance, proper decisions, and spiritual acuity are important virtues Bunyan advocates to enable escape from the bondage of Satan's evil habits. True freedom comes only through Christ who grants humans the power to choose a better way of life.

In American history, the idea of a controversy between God and Satan has existed since before the Revolutionary War. The literature of both Milton and Bunyan was well known to the early Puritan settlers of America. Many Puritan ideas can be traced back to the early days of the Protestant Reformation.<sup>18</sup> As noted in chapter 2 of this dissertation, John Calvin and the Reformed wing of the Protestant Reformation believed that in the conflict for souls between God and Satan, God predetermined whom he would save and Satan was allowed to claim the rest. An illustration of this perspective in its American form can be found in Jonathan Edward's (1703-1758) book, *The History of Redemption*. In its pages, he advocated a type of great controversy theme, complete with a "personal devil competing with a personal God for dominion over all creation."<sup>19</sup> He portrays an energetic Satan greedily grabbing the wavering souls of men. The souls that God chooses to reserve for Himself are the only ones removed from Satan's grasp.

Subsequent generations, influenced by Arminianism and American Methodism, began to view human choice as playing a role in this controversy as illustrated by the Revolutionary War ethos and the writings of Stephen Olin and Charles Finney. For

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<sup>18</sup>Ball, 8.

<sup>19</sup>Sparkman, 35. See also Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust), 2:535, 537, 595. Edwards's "History of Redemption," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust), 2:532-619, traces the process of the elect being restored to God, beginning with the prehistoric fall of Lucifer and on through history to the end of time. Several chapters deal with eschatological events much like the final chapters of Ellen White's *Great Controversy* though from very different theological perspectives.

example, during the American Revolutionary War many patriots compared the conflict between God and Satan for control of the universe with the revolutionary skirmishes between the “righteous” patriots and the “wicked” English soldiers. What is notable about this comparison is that it lends further evidence that a supernatural conflict between God and Satan was part of the religious rhetoric of the day.<sup>20</sup>

Stephen Olin, writing in the early nineteenth century, spoke in grave tones of a severe “conflict between good and evil” that waged in the hearts of men. He also claimed that earlier Christian sects spoke of an engagement between good and evil for the dominion of the universe and every person, but Olin did not offer a bibliography to back his claim.<sup>21</sup> Olin upheld a pious life as humanity’s best defense against the negative effects of temptation, even though the “infirmities of a fallen nature” remain unchangeable. Although this sounds very similar to White’s great controversy theme, there is a significant difference. Olin emphasizes the conflict between God’s holy *law* and the “sinful propensities of *man*,” rather than primarily between God and *Satan*.<sup>22</sup>

Many Americans in Olin’s day were familiar with the multitudinous revivals that swept the land during the first half of the nineteenth century. In Charles Grandison Finney’s revivals, “anxious seats” were set up where family, friends, and curious onlookers could view firsthand the spiritual controversy raging between Christ and Satan

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<sup>20</sup>Noll, *History*, 116, 118.

<sup>21</sup>Stephen Olin, *Early Piety: The Basis of Elevated Character—A Discourse to the Graduating Class of Wesleyan University, August, 1850* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1851), 41-43.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 41-43.



as individuals publicly struggled to gain the assurance of salvation.<sup>23</sup> Finney used his anxious seat to urge an immediate conversion that would instantaneously lead to a changed and sanctified life. During these antebellum revivals, many souls were won for Christ at Satan's expense—a great controversy indeed. With this background in mind, it is likely that when White spoke of the great controversy theme, the concept was already in the minds of many Americans.<sup>24</sup>

Illustrating this point is a book by Horatio Lorenzo Hastings that was written about the same time as White's first rendition of the great controversy motif in 1858. Although dealing with a topic much different from White's, Hastings's book was curiously titled, *The Great Controversy between God and Man: Its Origin, Progress and End*.<sup>25</sup> The book was probably brought to the Review and Herald publishing offices near where White lived, causing some to wonder if she had gotten the great controversy idea from this copy. Whether or not the title helped crystallize the idea of the great controversy in her mind is in the realm of speculation, but her ensuing rendition of the theme emphasized a controversy between God and *Satan*, rather than between God and *man* as Hastings asserted or between God's law and man, as Olin asserted.<sup>26</sup> The focus

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<sup>23</sup>Noll, *History*, 176-177. The anxious seat was a dedicated location (such as a bench or pew) near the front of the meeting hall where sinners could sit while grappling with their personal state of salvation preparatory to taking a public stand to follow God (as well as encourage acquaintances that also might profit from a turn on the anxious seat).

<sup>24</sup>Great controversy allusions in literature informed the scholars while revivalist theology informed the public.

<sup>25</sup>Horatio Lorenzo Hastings, *The Great Controversy between God and Man: Its Origin, Progress and End* (Rochester, NY: H. L. Hastings, 1858).

<sup>26</sup>Arthur White, *The Early Years*, 375; Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 264.

was therefore very different, yet it does appear that the belief in a cosmic controversy between God and Satan for the souls of men was part of the American religious vernacular of those times.<sup>27</sup> This could have given White's distinctive explanation of the subject even more appeal and relevance to the people of her day.

### Ellen White's Great Controversy Theme

Ellen White first began writing on the theme of the great controversy after a vision interrupted funeral remarks she was giving near Lovett's Grove, Ohio, in 1858.<sup>28</sup> In this vision she saw a vast cosmic battle taking place between the forces of God and the armies of Lucifer, also known as Satan.<sup>29</sup> This war began in the distant past in heaven and eventually spread to this earth when human beings became involved in the conflict. White articulates the anthropocentric nature of this struggle by portraying a jealous Lucifer who fomented a rebellion in heaven because he was not consulted when Jesus and God the Father were creating a unique human race to be made in the image of God.<sup>30</sup>

Although Lucifer was given the highest rank of any created being, White writes

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<sup>27</sup>An interesting topic for future research would be to examine and document the historical prevalence of the idea of a controversy between Christ and Satan in literature and religion.

<sup>28</sup>See Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915), 161-163; idem, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, 3:49-53; idem, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Review and Herald Office, 1858-1864; facsimile reprint, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 2:265-272.

<sup>29</sup>White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 2:270.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 3:36. This element of the story is less emphasized in the final Conflict of the Ages version in favor of focusing upon the role that the government and law of God play in determining the loyalties of the universe's inhabitants. See Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1958), 33-43; 52-53, for examples of how White addresses these themes in her mature writings.

that he nurtured a jealousy against God the Father and Jesus the Son because they ranked higher than he did. Lucifer questioned the rules of God's heavenly government and charged that God was not just. This led to Lucifer's dismissal from heaven—an event that led to his new name as the originator of sin, Satan.<sup>31</sup> Consequently, he possesses an intense hatred for all that God loves—especially human beings created in His image.<sup>32</sup> Satan therefore confronted the new human creatures in an attempt to seduce them to join in his rebellion and thus more effectively seek revenge against God for “unjustly” denying him equality with Jesus.

The love of God is a theme that is reiterated throughout the great controversy narrative—God's restorative love as exemplified in His laws versus Satan's ruinous deceptions. So important is this theme that her Conflict of the Ages series begins and ends with the phrase “God is Love.”<sup>33</sup> In the opening lines of her great controversy narrative White writes, “His nature, his law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. . . . The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God's unchanging love.”<sup>34</sup>

White portrays this conflict between Satan and Christ as occurring throughout world history. For example, after the fall, the biblical characters Cain and Abel became involved in the struggle when God asked them to offer a sacrifice as a test of loyalty to

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<sup>31</sup>White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 3:37-39; idem, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1:17-24.

<sup>32</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 299.

<sup>33</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 33; idem, *Great Controversy*, 678.

<sup>34</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 33.

Him. Cain ignored God’s specific instructions and failed the test while Abel strictly followed the Word of God and exemplified the lifestyle of those who choose God’s way over the natural inclinations of the heart.<sup>35</sup> Many centuries later, Daniel and his friends were also given a test, choosing to demonstrate loyalty to God by refusing to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s image rather than taking the easier path by publically compromising their loyalty to God.<sup>36</sup> Through many biblical biographies such as these, White emphasized the deceptive nature of Satan in the great controversy and the importance of remaining true to principle in following the Word of God.

The incarnation and death of Christ serves as the centerpiece of her great controversy theme. When Adam sinned, Satan claimed dominion over this world. “But the Son of God proposed to come to this earth to pay the penalty of sin, and thus not only redeem man, but recover the dominion forfeited.”<sup>37</sup> “It was love for sinners that led Christ to pay the price of redemption.”<sup>38</sup> Because Christ successfully lived a godly life on earth, Satan’s grasp over humanity was mortally weakened.<sup>39</sup> With Christ’s death on the cross, the wickedness of Satan was made clear to the universe and the destructive nature of his rebellion made obvious. “Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man’s uplifting, and

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 71-79.

<sup>36</sup>White, *Prophets and Kings*, 503-513.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 682.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 692, 696.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 701.

Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all.”<sup>40</sup>

Christ had triumphed in the great controversy by redeeming humanity through overcoming Satan and his forces.<sup>41</sup> Although the ultimate victory of God’s government was assured by Christ’s atonement, Satan was not yet to be destroyed after Christ’s victory on the cross. There remained elements of the great controversy still to unfold.

White explains:

The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan’s existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.<sup>42</sup>

It is at this point in the great controversy story that White leaves the biblical narrative and interprets history through her great controversy lens. Her book, *The Great Controversy*, illustrates this cosmic conflict by highlighting the critical role of individual choice. To illustrate, White cites Luther and Calvin, the story of the American pilgrims, the Great Awakening, and the rise of the Advent movement to illustrate this great conflict throughout history.<sup>43</sup>

Her emphasis on individual choice in the great controversy heightens just before Christ’s Second Coming. Then, the close of probation seals the ultimate destiny of people and is based on their acceptance of Christ in their lives and their willingness to

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<sup>40</sup>White, *Desire of Ages*, 759.

<sup>41</sup>See *ibid.*, 758-764.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 761.

<sup>43</sup>The table of contents in her book, *The Great Controversy*, xiii-xiv, provides a convenient outline of the many incidents in history that illustrate her great controversy theme. The above references are only a few examples.

follow in His steps. With wickedness and great violence raging on this earth, this remnant—those who have chosen to follow Christ—encounter severe persecution at the hands of those controlled by Satan.<sup>44</sup>

The assaults of Satan are fierce and determined, his delusions are terrible; but the Lord's eye is upon His people, and His ear listens to their cries. . . . God's love for His children during the period of their severest trial is as strong and tender as in the days of their sunniest prosperity; but it is needful for them to be placed in the furnace of fire; their earthliness must be consumed, that the image of Christ may be perfectly reflected.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, the redeemed are rescued by the Second Coming of Christ, even though it has seemed that Satan and the wicked were prevailing against the remnant people of God.<sup>46</sup> Instead, the unrepentant wicked are destroyed by God's glory as the dead in Christ are raised from their graves with "the freshness and vigor of eternal youth." White continues portraying the scene by stating, "In the beginning, man was created in the likeness of God, not only in character, but in form and feature. Sin defaced and almost obliterated the divine image; but Christ came to restore that which had been lost. He will change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto His glorious body. . . . All blemishes and deformities are left in the grave."<sup>47</sup> White continues, "Oh, the wonders of redeeming love! the rapture of that hour when the infinite Father, looking upon the ransomed, shall behold His image, sin's discord banished, its blight removed, and the human once more

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<sup>44</sup>See White, *Great Controversy*, 613-634.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 621.

<sup>46</sup>See *ibid.*, 635-652.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 644-645.

in harmony with the divine!”<sup>48</sup> Now, all the redeemed are together with Jesus and his angels as they travel to heaven.

Yet still the great controversy is not fully resolved. Although, on this earth the wicked are dead, White writes that Satan and his angels are left alive for a thousand years with nothing else to do but contemplate the origin and final ending of Satan’s rebellion.<sup>49</sup> Meanwhile, in heaven, the life records of the wicked are reviewed so that the redeemed can appreciate for themselves the absolute justice of God and the reasons for the condemnation of those who had followed Satan.<sup>50</sup>

At the end of the thousand years the wicked are raised to life and Christ presents a massive panorama that lays out, in vivid detail, the story of the great controversy and each person’s role in it. This representation exposes Satan’s evilness with such clarity that all the wicked and even Satan himself agree that God’s government is indeed just.

Concerning this event, White writes,

Every question of truth and error in the longstanding controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan’s rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan’s own works have condemned him. God’s wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created.<sup>51</sup>

But even after this incontrovertible evidence, Satan again seduces the wicked to join

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 646.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 659.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 660-661, 666-691. White calls this event the “judgment of the wicked.”

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 670-671.

forces with him in a desperate and final attempt to defeat Christ and His followers.

In this last, great epic controversy, Christ prevails and at last, Satan and his forces are forever destroyed. This earth is created anew in all the glory and perfection it possessed before Adam sinned.<sup>52</sup> White completes her epic great controversy story by highlighting yet again the love of God.

And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. . . . The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.<sup>53</sup>

White saw the entire history of the world through the prophetic lens she received at Lovett's Grove.<sup>54</sup> Her goal of interpreting history through the perspective of the great controversy was not so much to reveal little known history as it was to place "new significance" on past events.<sup>55</sup> George Knight writes that the primacy of Scripture and her restorationist view of history are integrally attached to the center of the entire great controversy theme.<sup>56</sup> Within every person the battle rages as either good (God, Christ) or evil (Satan and his angels) is chosen.<sup>57</sup> Knight concludes that White's anchoring of this

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 672-673.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 678.

<sup>54</sup>White, *Education*, 190; Fowler, 99-100.

<sup>55</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, xii.

<sup>56</sup>Knight, *Ellen White's World*, 55. White's "restorationist view of history" refers to her belief that restoring the image of God in humanity is a major component of the great controversy.

<sup>57</sup>White, *Education*, 28-30; 79-80.



story squarely on the nature of humanity “hit the pivot point of educational philosophy” by placing the human sin problem right “at the very center of the educational enterprise.”<sup>58</sup>

Ellen White scholar Leroy Moore concurs by emphasizing that throughout White’s soteriological and educational perspectives the nature of humanity is paramount.<sup>59</sup> Philosophical anthropology is a subset of metaphysics that deals with the study of human beings and explores the traditional question, “What is man?”<sup>60</sup> Are we fundamentally good, or evil? Have we merely evolved, or are we created by God?<sup>61</sup> Are we irreparably depraved, or do we still retain vestiges of the image of God? Or is human nature basically neutral—neither good nor bad—as illustrated in John Locke’s *tabula rasa*? The ramifications of these questions are significant and will provide a catalyst to understanding what White means when she says we are “made in the image of God.”

Knight writes that a critical element of White’s Christian worldview sees men and women, though encumbered by depravity, as still possessing a hint of the divine image. We are neither angel nor brute—“but a complexity of good and evil.”<sup>62</sup> It is this “anthropological complexity” that must be dealt with. White’s great controversy theme highlights the concept that within every person a great controversy between good and evil

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<sup>58</sup>Knight, “The Devil Takes a Look,” 185.

<sup>59</sup>Leroy Moore, “Righteousness by Faith,” 57. See also Ellen G. White, “Christian Work,” *Review and Herald*, October 10, 1882, 333.

<sup>60</sup>Knight, *Philosophy and Education*, 3rd ed., 16.

<sup>61</sup>Knight provides these questions as part of his discussion on anthropology in his book *Philosophy and Education*. *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>62</sup>Knight, “The Devil Takes a Look,” 189.

rages on a microcosmic level.<sup>63</sup> Man's nature is neither irremediably bad nor intrinsically good.<sup>64</sup> There is a great controversy that rages in the world between good and evil, with Christ and Satan competing for each individual. What humanity lost by gaining a knowledge of evil can be restored through the ministry and grace of Jesus Christ.<sup>65</sup>

The vision at Lovett's Grove gave White the assurance that sometime in the near future the great controversy would end with the goodness of God triumphing over the evil of Satan.<sup>66</sup> God could have destroyed Satan immediately when the latter was expelled from heaven; however, God withheld this judgment, seeking instead to demonstrate before the universe His justice in dealing with evil. The story behind the plan of redemption and the restoration of humanity to a pre-sinful state contains, as White stated, dramatic "heights and depths that eternity itself can never exhaust."<sup>67</sup>

In summarizing this great controversy story, White explains that humanity's powers were perverted by Satan's deceptions, which then led to the overt transgression of God's law—selfishness replaced love. Originally, the human race was created to reveal God's glory to the universe. As time went on, individuals were to continue learning and

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<sup>63</sup>Knight further explains this idea as it relates to schooling in "The Devil Takes a Look." Ibid., 190.

<sup>64</sup>Ellen White writes, "There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist" (*Education*, 29). Christ, however, provides the grace to make it possible to cooperate with Him to rectify this condition.

<sup>65</sup>Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 104-105; White, *Education*, 76, 79-80.

<sup>66</sup>Arthur White, *The Early Years*, 366. See also chapters 39-42 in Ellen White's *Great Controversy*. This eventual victory is celebrated in an alternative title to the *Great Controversy*, *The Triumph of God's Love* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1957).

<sup>67</sup>White, *Education*, 308.

sharing forever their knowledge of God.<sup>68</sup> Tragically, sin caused each person's nature to deteriorate so significantly that it was impossible to resist evil, and in this way Satan saw his goal being fulfilled "to thwart the divine plan of man's creation."<sup>69</sup>

Christ, however, created a remedy—to come to this earth and "educate" the human race for a better way of life. He sought to mold the character by ennobling and enlightening each person through true education. Christ came to reveal the beneficent character of God's law and to instill by example a desire for service. In this way Christ revealed His principles of true freedom that "struck at the root of selfishness," enabling individuals to improve holistically through His power. Christ came to oppose Satan's repressive depravity.<sup>70</sup>

The Development of the Great Controversy Theme  
with the Restoration of the Image-of-God Motif  
in the Writings of Ellen White

The role and importance of the fledgling Advent movement was carefully woven into the fabric of White's great controversy theme.<sup>71</sup> Hence, the Lovett's Grove revelation was perhaps one of the most significant visions of White's life.<sup>72</sup> No less than three distinct written editions of the great controversy theme emerged over the next fifty

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<sup>68</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 8:264; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 595. White's insights into the reason for humanity's creation are discussed earlier in this section.

<sup>69</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 33.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>71</sup>Battistone, vii.

<sup>72</sup>White claimed to have seen this "panorama" in an earlier unspecified vision that took place ten years before (White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 2:270; idem, *Life Sketches*, 162). This vision, however, was not written down and there is little evidence of the great controversy theme in her writings before Lovett's Grove.

years as the concept continued to mature in her thinking.<sup>73</sup> This vision is especially significant to her image-of-God motif because the nature of humanity provides the context for the battle between good and evil.<sup>74</sup>

In her writings subsequent to Lovett's Grove she overtly combined the idea that man was "made in the image of God" with the great controversy theme (1864).<sup>75</sup> Prior to this time a few isolated references spoke of her wish to "reflect the lovely image of Jesus" (1850) or illustrated her belief that the end-time saints will possess the "image of Jesus" (1851). Nevertheless, it was not until the 1858 Great Controversy Vision that the image of God theme took on a greater degree of significance in her writings.<sup>76</sup> For example, as early as 1860, and less than two years after the vision, White noted that there was a battle waging within each person between the love of the world and love for Jesus. Individuals should dedicate their lives to following Christ in order to more fully reflect the "image of Jesus."<sup>77</sup>

By the mid-1860s many of White's comments concerning the image-of-God motif tended to reflect the impact of her health reform vision of June 6, 1863.<sup>78</sup> This vision

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<sup>73</sup>Battistone traces this maturation process in his book, *Great Controversy*, iv-v.

<sup>74</sup>Leroy Moore, "Righteousness by Faith," 68-69.

<sup>75</sup>White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 3:33-39.

<sup>76</sup>White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:211; *ibid.*, 12:250; *idem*, "Testimony to Believers at Paris, Maine," MS 9, 1851, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

<sup>77</sup>White, *Manuscript Releases*, 15:327.

<sup>78</sup>Arthur L. White, *The Progressive Years: 1862-1876*, Ellen G. White 2 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986), 73; Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 19-22.

outlined the holistic connection between healthy living and spiritual acuity. For example, in the great controversy, Satan uses every possible tactic to weaken and obstruct the mind, which is the primary conduit for positive impressions from God. Within this context, White writes that highly seasoned foods, meats, rich gravies, eating too much or too often, and drinking tea and coffee create unnatural appetites which lead to the stronger and potentially mind-altering stimulants of alcohol and tobacco. When the body system is thus “deranged,” the image of God is diminished in each person, giving Satan the advantage in the great controversy.<sup>79</sup>

Over the years, White amplified and expanded her great controversy theme. For example, her first rendition of the fall of humanity was only a few pages in length.<sup>80</sup> However, by 1864 many of the major themes that would characterize her mature version of the fall occupied about twelve pages of writing with only a few references to the image-of-God motif.<sup>81</sup> Her 1870 *Spirit of Prophecy* version contained many more comments connecting the great controversy with the restoration of the image of God than could be found in the initial version recorded in *Spiritual Gifts*.<sup>82</sup> Occasionally through

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<sup>79</sup>Much emphasis was placed on “debasement” and “perverted” appetites, passions, and habits in White’s writings. See Ellen G. White, *A Solemn Appeal Relative to Solitary Vice and Abuses and Excesses of the Marriage Relation* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870), 103; idem, *Selected Messages*, 2:27, 420; idem, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4:14, 125. A whole segment of this chapter will explore White’s connection of health with restoring the image of God.

<sup>80</sup>White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 1:20-22. The entire great controversy story in this incipient volume covered about 200 pages.

<sup>81</sup>Leroy Moore, “Righteousness by Faith,” 86. This twelve-page version is found in White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 3:36-47. The version of the great controversy story in volumes 3 and 4 was about 277 pages in length. Eventually, this led to an expansive survey of history over 3,400 pages in length in her Conflict of the Ages series.

<sup>82</sup>*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, only remotely alludes to the image-of-God motif even though it

the 1870s White would write about various vices that could debase this image of God—thus continuing her temperance and health emphasis. These vices include the impact pornographic images have in clouding the image of God, the debilitating mental stimulation found in “exciting love stories” or the danger of not following God’s requirements closely and hence defiling His image.<sup>83</sup> She also emphasized rising above these “base animal passions” to experience a “true elevation of the mind” by properly cultivating the mental powers for “high and noble purposes.”<sup>84</sup> Finally, her mature post-1890 telling of the great controversy identifies restoring the image of God in humanity as the significant goal of humans redeemed by the plan of salvation. This integration is noted in the Conflict of the Ages series and will be examined through the remainder of this chapter.<sup>85</sup>

#### Education, the Great Controversy, and Restoring the Image of God

One of the last themes to emerge from White’s great controversy perspective emphasized the role education plays in restoring the marred image of God in humanity. This link was implied as early as 1870 when she stated: “Though formed in the image of

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opens with the great controversy story. In volume 3, the story occasionally mentions the theme (see pages 33, 34, 36). By the time Ellen White wrote the *Spirit of Prophecy* volumes (1870) there were stronger connections. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1:28, 279.

<sup>83</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:410; idem, *Counsels on Health* (1923; reprint, Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2002), 105; idem, “Temptation of Christ,” *Review and Herald*, March 4, 1875, 74.

<sup>84</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:438.

<sup>85</sup>The Conflict of the Ages series contains her most mature views on the great controversy. This combines the restoration theme and the role of education into the story. See Knight, *Meeting Ellen White*, 94.

his Maker, man can so *educate* his mind that the sin which he once loathed will become pleasant to him.”<sup>86</sup> Again, in 1871 White challenged denominational pastors to educate themselves toward developing habits that would lead them as close to “the pattern” (Christ) as possible.<sup>87</sup> At the same time she encouraged parents to be sure to educate their children about physiology and health.<sup>88</sup>

It took longer than a decade, however, before the first published article directly connected the restoration of the image-of-God motif and the great controversy within the role of formal denominational education. An article in the *Review and Herald* published July 11, 1882, discussed nearly all the major post-1890 themes that would characterize her mature writings on the subject.<sup>89</sup> In the article, “The Primal Object of Education,” White wrote that the main reason for Christian education was to “bring man back into harmony with God . . . [and] to elevate and ennoble his moral nature that he may again reflect the image of the Creator.” This goal of restoration constituted the primary reason Christ left the safety of heaven and came to earth to “teach man how to obtain a fitness

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<sup>86</sup>Emphasis added. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:478-479.

<sup>87</sup>Ellen G. White, “Address to Ministers,” *Review and Herald*, May 30, 1871, 187.

<sup>88</sup>Ellen G. White, “Words to Christian Mothers on the Subject of Life, Health and Happiness,” *Review and Herald*, October 31, 1871, 154-155; idem, “Words to Christian Mothers,” *Review and Herald*, September 12, 1871, 99.

<sup>89</sup>For example: Constant advancement of the student throughout life (White, *Counsels to Parents*, 51, 54-55); Education throughout eternity (ibid., 51, 55); Regeneration/transformation (restoring the image of God) in the physical, mental, and spiritual (ibid., 51); The role of the Bible in facilitating restoration (ibid., 52-54); Glorifying God as various faculties are strengthened via education (ibid., 52); Nature’s role in education (ibid., 54-55). These themes and their relationship to restoring the image of God will be addressed in more detail throughout this chapter and chapter 4.

for the higher life.”<sup>90</sup> In the course of the great controversy, Satan’s goal was to deface the image of God in humanity, while Christ’s purpose was to redeem humanity—restoring the image of God. This passage closes with the following optimistic outlook:

To dwell forever in this home of the blest, to bear in the soul, body, and spirit, not the dark traces of sin and the curse, but the perfect likeness of our Creator, and through ceaseless ages to advance in wisdom, in knowledge, and in holiness, ever exploring new fields of thought, ever finding new wonders and new glories, ever increasing in capacity to know and to enjoy and to love, and knowing that there is still beyond us joy and love and wisdom infinite—such is the object to which the Christian’s hope is pointing, for which Christian education is preparing. To secure this education, and to aid others to secure it, should be the object of the Christian’s life.<sup>91</sup>

On January 31, 1884, she published an article in the *Signs of the Times* that explicitly stated, “The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul.”<sup>92</sup>

There are, however, a number of earlier references that help provide a background to White’s article on “The Primal Object of Education.” In 1872, in White’s first article dedicated solely to education, she implied that proper education could play a role in reversing the physical, mental, and moral decay of the image of God brought on by generations of poor lifestyle choices.<sup>93</sup> In 1877 she gave a commencement speech that encouraged graduates, as individuals formed in God’s image, to strengthen their connection with God in order to rise above all that is debasing and depraved.<sup>94</sup> On a

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<sup>90</sup>Ellen G. White, “The Primal Object of Education,” *Review and Herald*, July 11, 1882, 433-444, reprinted in idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 49-55.

<sup>91</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 55.

<sup>92</sup>Ellen G. White, “Parental Responsibility,” *Signs of the Times*, January 31, 1884, 65-66. This mandate was later repeated in 1885 in White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:322.

<sup>93</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 23.

<sup>94</sup>Ellen G. White, “Battle Creek College,” *Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1878, 49 (given June 26, 1877).



number of occasions she wrote to the students at Battle Creek College, impressing upon them that they were created in the image of their Maker and hence should be trained to accommodate God's plan for development and growth.<sup>95</sup> Another letter to the students at Battle Creek College in 1881 further emphasizes her link between education and restoring the image of God. She continued to advocate that students should strive to rise above ignorance and degradation to reflect more fully what God expects from those formed in his image.<sup>96</sup>

In 1882 she contrasted defacing the image of God with educating children to love and obey Him.<sup>97</sup> By 1885 she had noted that true education is much more than merely knowledge of books—"the true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul."<sup>98</sup> In 1888 White described how the loss of the image of God after the fall of man could be reversed through conversion and sanctification. Through Christ's merits and grace, humans can be progressively empowered to restore the image of God via the new-birth experience and so reach great heights of attainment.<sup>99</sup> She also specified how effective teachers, while educating others, become more educated themselves. The result

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<sup>95</sup>For example, Ellen G. White, "Instruction Concerning Education," Pamphlet 040, 1881, *Ellen G. White Writings Complete Published Edition 4*, CD-ROM (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2005).

<sup>96</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:24, 31.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 5:78. Interestingly, White's article in the *Signs of the Times* announcing the opening of Healdsburg Academy made no mention of the restoration motif as a justification for the school's founding. White, "Our School at Healdsburg," 212-213.

<sup>98</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:322.

<sup>99</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 467, 470, 477.

leads to a better school that plays a significant role in restoring the image of God in students.<sup>100</sup>

Not until the 1890s did the great controversy-education-restoration combination emerge in its mature form. There were some scattered references to the motif prior to the 1890s, as we have seen, with the 1882 article on the “Primal Object of Education” being the most significant. However, a comprehensive view of education and the philosophy behind it became more pronounced in her writings after 1890. By this time White had constructed a working philosophy that linked education with the restoration of the image-of-God motif in a definitive form. Occasionally found in the articles selected for her 1893 compilation *Christian Education*, it came to full maturity in her definitive manuscript on schooling, *Education* (1903).<sup>101</sup> The following passage from *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890) is one of White’s earliest statements highlighting this mature connection between the great controversy theme and the image-of-God motif:

The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul. In the beginning, God created man in his own likeness. He endowed him with noble qualities. His mind was well-balanced, and all the powers of his being were harmonious. But the fall and its effects have perverted these gifts. Sin has marred and well-nigh obliterated the image of God in man. It was to restore this that the plan of salvation was devised, and a life of probation was granted to man. To bring him back to the perfection in which he was first created, is the great object of life—the object that underlies every other. It is the work of parents and teachers, in the education of the youth, to co-operate with the divine purpose; and in so doing they are “laborers together with God.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Ellen G. White, “To Superintendents and Teachers,” *Sabbath-School Worker*, October 1, 1885.

<sup>101</sup>For example, White, *Education*, 13-19; idem, *Christian Education*, 146-147, 149, 156.

<sup>102</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 590. This book was the second volume to be completed of White’s Conflict of the Ages series—her mature exposition on the great controversy theme. She began working on *Patriarchs and Prophets* as early as 1885, according to Arthur

After 1890, White increasingly portrayed education as playing a significant role in restoring in students the lost image of God.<sup>103</sup> Redemption—“the plan of salvation”—revolves, according to White, around the process of bringing individuals “back to the perfection” of their original creation. Therefore, parents, teachers, and the students themselves cooperate in this process of uplifting humanity to recover what was lost.<sup>104</sup> Every person plays a part in the great controversy—the struggle of God to uplift versus the attempts of Satan to mar the image of God in man.<sup>105</sup> Herbert Douglass notes that this version of the great controversy theme plays out most clearly in her educational writings because “restoration lies at the heart of her educational philosophy.”<sup>106</sup>

#### Ellen White’s Book *Education*, Restoring the Image of God, and the Great Controversy

The table of contents in White’s preeminent book on education effectively illustrates the relationship she developed in her thinking between education and the great controversy/restoration motif. The major themes she uses in the great controversy story throughout her Conflict of the Ages series also appear in this book and adequately summarize her mature thoughts on the topic. *Education* opens with a discussion of the

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White, Ellen White’s biographer (Arthur White, *The Lonely Years*, 338). However, “serious work” on the project did not really occur until late 1886 and into 1887 (ibid., 3:435).

<sup>103</sup>For example, White, *Fundamentals*, 262, 265, 271; idem, *Christian Education*, 146-147, 149, 156.

<sup>104</sup>For an 1893 example of how White understood this process in the intellectual realm, see White, *Christian Education*, 90-91, 137-139.

<sup>105</sup>For example, in 1891 White noted that teachers are either uplifting the characters of students or are bringing them down towards evil. Ibid., 70-71, 96-97.

<sup>106</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 344.

restoration theme, God’s plan to restore the image of God in every person. Then it investigates the Eden school—how humanity was educated before Adam’s fall, based largely on White’s insights into this period of earth’s history.<sup>107</sup> A discussion of sin and how it entered this Edenic paradise sets the stage for the redemptive theme that buttresses her educational philosophy.<sup>108</sup>

The next section of *Education* examines the historical record by tracing the active hand of Providence in the education of the Israelites, the ancient schools of the prophets, and the lives of great men in the Bible.<sup>109</sup> Throughout these pages White cites examples of the cooperative effort between Christ and humanity in restoring the image of God.<sup>110</sup> The story of Jesus Christ, His teaching methods, and their redemptive results continue her discussion.<sup>111</sup> Next, White examines how nature study reveals evidences of the great controversy in the natural world and how the perceptive student can deduce object lessons about life, God, and the laws that control the universe.<sup>112</sup>

The role of the Bible in providing knowledge and balance in the student’s life is frequently mentioned throughout White’s educational writings.<sup>113</sup> She sees the Bible as

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<sup>107</sup>White, *Education*, 20.

<sup>108</sup>Refer to the Table of Contents in White, *Education*, 9. The entrance of sin into the world is outlined in *ibid.*, 23-27.

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, 33-51.

<sup>110</sup>For example, see *ibid.*, 29. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 73-84.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, 99-113.

<sup>113</sup>A large section of *Education* is dedicated to the concept of “the Bible as an educator.” See White, *Education*, 123-192; *idem*, *Counsels to Parents*, 421-463; *idem*, *Fundamentals*, 123-137, 444-452; *idem*, *Counsels on Education*, 249-258. White’s perspective on the role of the

much more than a recital of history or theology. It presents a “grand central theme” that embodies the entire scope of the great controversy.<sup>114</sup> White states it this way:

The student should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.<sup>115</sup>

For White, the culminating work of redemption is the triumph of God over Satan, a triumph that can be played out in every phase of human experience as people choose the appropriate side to support.<sup>116</sup> The mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of humanity are emphasized in *Education* as well—all within the context of restoring the image of God in humankind.<sup>117</sup>

Although the book *Education* couches these themes within the perspective of education, it is also helpful to note that this perspective is amplified even further in her 3,500-page *Conflict of the Ages* exposé of the great controversy. She concludes *Education* by emphasizing character building and specific standards that uplift individuals while simultaneously explaining how the education that we receive today can

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Bible in education will be covered in-depth later in this chapter.

<sup>114</sup>White, *Education*, 190.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 123-127; 195-222.

complement the education we will receive throughout eternity in the heavenly hereafter.<sup>118</sup> This “Eden to Eden” perspective places her entire educational viewpoint within the scope of the great controversy, emphasizing the role education plays in shaping the outcome of the great conflict.<sup>119</sup>

### The Connection between the Great Controversy Theme and the Restoration of the Image-of-God Motif

Having briefly traced the idea and history of the great controversy and how it integrates with the image-of-God motif, it is now important to examine this relationship more in detail. To explore this integration adequately, White, in the opening pages of *Education*, introduces four fundamental areas of inquiry:<sup>120</sup>

1. The nature and value of man
2. The purpose of God in creating him
3. The change in man’s condition that occurred at the fall
4. God’s plan for fulfilling His glorious purpose through education.

In answering each of the above inquiries it is helpful to note how White combined the great controversy theme with the image-of-God motif. For example, the nature and value of man is closely aligned with God’s purpose in creating him and is fundamentally

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<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 225-309.

<sup>119</sup>The term “Eden to Eden” reflects White’s perspective of an education that spans from before the fall of man in the Garden of Eden to a time in the future when the biblical Garden of Eden will be restored on a newly created earth. White, *Education*, 301.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 14-15. Earlier in this passage White states that “knowledge of God”—the revelation of God’s love throughout nature and revelation—is of paramount importance. These four fundamental points of inquiry fall within this overarching context. Each of these inquiries and this overarching context will be addressed further throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

an anthropological question. In *Education*, using only three pages, White carefully sketches the problem and then offers a solution.<sup>121</sup>

In consideration of the first inquiry, White emphasizes that people were originally created perfect and in the image of God—physically, mentally, and spiritually.<sup>122</sup> She writes, “Every human being, created in the image of God is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do.”<sup>123</sup> The second inquiry ties in closely with the first. The purpose God had in mind when creating human beings was one of continual growth. “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for his children. Godliness—God likeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is a path of continual progress.”<sup>124</sup> The longer humans lived, the more fully they would “bear His image—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator.”<sup>125</sup> Humans were created to develop, grow, and mature infinitely. Eternity was to be spent learning and gaining “new treasures of knowledge” and “fresh springs of happiness” while continually learning more about God and His universe.<sup>126</sup>

But a change occurred in humanity’s condition that altered this course of happiness and seriously hampered humanity’s ability to grow—White’s third fundamental area of inquiry. Satan successfully tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 14-16.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 15. See also White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 44-45.

<sup>123</sup>White, *Education*, 17.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

Eden and introduced sin, resulting in the divine image becoming “well nigh obliterated.”<sup>127</sup> The result of their choice to sin, greatly marred the divine image in humanity.

Even though humanity’s mental, physical, and spiritual powers were tragically weakened by the blight of sin, White’s fourth area of inquiry examines God’s plan to rescue every individual from this hopeless quandary. Building on her 1890 *Patriarchs and Prophets* statement that was examined earlier in this chapter, White provides a key commentary that underscores this redemption strategy and provides the foundation for this dissertation. “To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection with which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind, and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized—this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.”<sup>128</sup>

For White, education is primarily concerned with correcting the miserable and destructive effects of the fall. There is a great controversy between Christ and Satan in each person with one force seeking to restore God’s image in humanity and the other seeking to mar this image. Education involves restoring in humanity—physically, mentally, and spiritually—the lost image of God that was forfeited when Adam sinned. Sin dulls humanity’s faculties. Therefore, Christ came to this earth to restore humanity and undo this work of evil.<sup>129</sup> For White, the highest aim of education is to cooperate with Christ, who provides the power to engage in the process of restoration—the uplifting

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 15-16. Compare with White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 590.

<sup>129</sup>White, *Education*, 29; idem, *Fundamentals*, 499.



of humankind. Philosophically, this is a very optimistic view of what can be accomplished through proper education. The ramifications of this perspective will be examined in the rest of this chapter and chapter 4.

### **Investigating the Image-of-God Motif in Ellen White's Writings**

Up to this point, this dissertation has focused primarily on the image-of-God motif from the perspective of the great controversy theme, which ultimately provides the context for White's educational philosophy. This section will investigate further the specific characteristics of her restoration motif. Most of the ensuing references to White will draw on her mature post-1890 conclusions.

Grady Temp Sparkman wrote in his dissertation that there are several factors denoting the importance of the image of God in humanity, especially as it relates to education. First, it is critical to one's theory of education. How a person views the anthropological nature of humanity will in large part determine what is educationally important to know. Second, it is a "watershed doctrine" for developing a "theology for the education of children."<sup>130</sup>

For example, most schooling emphasizes the future through work preparation or career development. However, the image-of-God motif makes education more existential than futuristic. In consequence, individuals become more concerned with meaning today (process oriented) rather than focusing predominantly on attaining some future status (product oriented).

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<sup>130</sup>Sparkman, 2.

Sparkman continues by advocating a “balanced” view of the image of God that would lead to a more harmonized religious educational perspective. If the process of education focuses too much on the concept of original sin in relation to man’s nature, then a pessimistic view of man’s potential could limit the regenerative role of education. If, on the other hand, the educational system focuses exclusively on the restoration of the image of God, this might lead to what he called an inflated view of man’s potential. It would be too “optimistic.” Sparkman’s self-proclaimed “balanced” approach would probably find White’s perspective leaning toward his “optimistic” side.

#### The Restoration of the Image-of-God Motif and Ellen White’s Optimistic Anthropology

As was emphasized in chapter 2 of this dissertation, many nineteenth-century Americans cherished an optimistic view of what humanity could accomplish. White shared in this hopeful anthropology, as embodied in her essays on the restoration of the image-of-God motif.<sup>131</sup> Her writings are full of challenges for every person to rise to a higher level, physically, mentally, and especially spiritually. The following pages will investigate a number of specific examples that exemplify this optimism in White’s writings.

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<sup>131</sup> Although White shared in many ways the optimistic spirit of antebellum America, she was primarily concerned with individual regeneration rather than working toward government-enforced societal morality. She was also suspicious of postmillennial views that saw Christ setting up His kingdom temporally on this earth before the Second Coming. Her convictions on the seventh-day Sabbath made it nearly impossible for her to join hands with other Sunday-keeping Christians in enforcing the Ten Commandments in civic rule. Finally, while White spoke highly of reform and regeneration, she did not subscribe to a holiness-entire sanctification perspective that advocated instant perfection amidst an emotionally charged environment. Instead her mature perspective favored a more rational and intellectual approach to revival (White, *Great Controversy*, 461-478). See the first half of chapter 2 of this dissertation for more on nineteenth-century optimistic reforms and an examination of areas where White differed from other writers

## Freedom to Grow

Fundamentally associated with White's uplifting theme was her belief in the traditional American virtues of freedom, choice, and decision. Perhaps in line with aspects of the Whig, early Republican, or Nativist sentiment that permeated certain sectors of American culture in the nineteenth century, White occasionally contrasted the perceived authoritarian dogmas of Catholicism with reformation ideals.<sup>132</sup> In *The Great Controversy*, she advocates the rights of individuals to seek truth, unhindered by ecclesiastical or political authorities.<sup>133</sup> For example, old-world dogmatism as practiced by the Papacy was seen as a threat to American-style freedoms, especially the right to decide truth for oneself.<sup>134</sup> Yet White took her suspicions even further by cautioning that Protestants themselves faced the same dangers if they, in a quest for power, stooped to infringe on an individual's freedom of conscience.<sup>135</sup>

Freedom to think, to reform, to grow, and to look to Christ alone for salvation was very important to White.<sup>136</sup> She frequently wrote that every individual was created a free moral agent imbued by God with the power and freedom to choose and decide his or her

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and thinkers of her time.

<sup>132</sup>Douglas Morgan, 51. Historian John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860—1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 5-6, outlines how Americanism, Protestantism, and anti-Catholicism were part of the rhetoric of antebellum America.

<sup>133</sup>For example, see White, *Great Controversy*, 93.

<sup>134</sup>See *ibid.*, 61-62; 563-581. Note that White focused her opposition on the Catholic and apostate Protestant *system* of doctrine and government—rather than the Catholic or Protestant *people*. *Ibid.*, 383-390.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.*, 383-390.

<sup>136</sup>For example, see *ibid.*, 131.

beliefs.<sup>137</sup> She often contrasted what she saw as man-made traditions and superstitions with that of the Scripture-based “word of truth.”<sup>138</sup> Any system of coercion—religious, civic, or personal—that would restrict this biblical relationship between God and man was perceived by White as a dire threat.<sup>139</sup> Freedom of conscience and freedom of choice were foundational in White’s perspective of the great controversy.<sup>140</sup> Satan’s form of government sought to force the will, while Christ’s was one of freedom and truth.<sup>141</sup> She notes that by one’s own choice, one’s destiny is determined.

George Knight observes that White linked freedom to choose God with freedom to become renewed and transformed—all part of restoring the image of God in humanity. Nevertheless, one’s liberty to choose does not come without its limits. In light of humanity’s fallen nature, without God’s intervention such choice could never be possible.<sup>142</sup> White did not overtly advocate John Wesley’s prevenient grace term, which established a theological basis for freedom of choice in light of humanity’s depraved nature.<sup>143</sup> However, like many American Methodists of the time, she emphasized the

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<sup>137</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1905), 176; idem, *The Sanctified Life* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1990), 76; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 49. See also idem, *Great Controversy*, 564-565.

<sup>138</sup>White, *Great Controversy*, 69.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid. See Douglas Morgan, 51-56.

<sup>140</sup>Ellen G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, 2 vols. (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1977), 2:707.

<sup>141</sup>White portrays Satan as continually trying to bind the individual who is struggling to be free. White, *Fundamentals*, 299. See also, idem, *Education*, 178-179.

<sup>142</sup>Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 109.

<sup>143</sup>See page 101 of chapter 2 for more on Wesley’s concept of prevenient grace.

importance of free-will choice without the theologically complex explanation. White's optimistic view of the uplifting of humanity is then closely tied to her belief that every person must have the unrestricted ability to choose freely to engage in this process of growth. Although God enables this ability, it must be an individual's choice and priority to broaden one's own experience.<sup>144</sup> According to White, restoration of the image of God in each human being can occur only if that individual has freedom to choose the grace that is offered and in collaboration with God's Spirit, freedom to embrace and implement growth in Christ-like character.

### **Steps to Individual Restoration of the Image of God: The Role of the Will and Cooperating with the Divine**

Education is a significant catalyst for reaching the uplifting objective of restoring the image of God through divine assistance. White writes that "the glorious destiny of every Christian is to unite the human with the divine."<sup>145</sup> Christ, the Master Teacher, cooperates in a relationship that uplifts humanity, "discerning infinite possibilities," "awakening new impulses," and "transfiguring" each individual.<sup>146</sup>

There are several steps that White advises for linking humanity's efforts with

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<sup>144</sup>White, *Desire of Ages*, 550; idem, *Education*, 183. Although White did not use the term "prevenient grace," she still advocated the concept of God's grace through Christ's sacrifice on the cross enabling human beings to choose as their conscience dictates. See White's comments on Gen 3:15. "Genesis," *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953-1957), 7-A:1084-1085.

<sup>145</sup>"Romans," *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953-1957), 6:576. See also Ellen G. White, "The Divine Teacher," *The Youth's Instructor*, March 19, 1903, 2.

<sup>146</sup>White, *Education*, 79-82.

those of the divine to begin this restoration process. She notes in the book *Education* that faith plays a significant role in humanity's uplifting. A person can exemplify faith by "trusting God" and believing His promises that "you are forgiven and cleansed" by a loving God.<sup>147</sup> She promotes a relationship with Christ that is informed by Bible study and a conscientious, applied faith. In this way, an individual can develop a mental outlook that can facilitate this restorative process. First, White advocates consciously choosing Christ's biblically revealed way rather than something based on one's own opinion. This is a deliberate faith-based decision founded in a mind-set that gives an encounter with Christ priority in one's life. Next, the individual must exchange human ignorance for Christ's wisdom and strength derived through prayer, nature, and study of the Bible.<sup>148</sup> White then emphasizes changing one's habits and actions through acceptance of Christ's righteousness in place of one's own—faith-in-action. "Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessing."<sup>149</sup> By focusing on truth, uprightness, and purity, White believes everyone can possess the preceding benefits through a growing faith. "If we are willing to do His will, all His strength is ours."<sup>150</sup>

In this way, White introduces a cooperative element in the human-divine relationship. This is what she calls a "copartnership" with Christ. She further

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<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 253; White, *Steps to Christ*, 50-51.

<sup>148</sup>See White, *Education*, 120, 185.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 253.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid., 253.

emphasizes that this copartnership is the “greatest lesson” to be taught in school.<sup>151</sup>

White views Christ as a spiritual conduit bringing growth-inducing power from heaven to each individual.<sup>152</sup> Through such a relationship humanity gains “great possibilities.”<sup>153</sup>

The only way to actualize the process of restoring the image of God in every individual is through this divine power, accomplished by conforming the will to the image of Christ as exemplified throughout Scripture. Only divine power can “imbue the soul with the love of Christ, which will ever manifest itself in love to those for whom He died.”<sup>154</sup> Through a cooperative effort, divine power enables humans to accomplish great things.<sup>155</sup> White states that one of the best ways to fortify such a relational partnership is to emulate the life and character of Christ, leading to a personal “experimental knowledge” of Him gleaned through a careful study of the Scriptures.<sup>156</sup> She refers to this process as the linking of the human with the divine, a significant step in the process of restoring the image of God in man.

White’s description of the “will” is an important concept that needs to be understood in comprehending this cooperative relationship between the human and the divine. After decrying the legalistic efforts of some Christians who sought to secure salvation by “their own efforts,” she contrasts these attempts with what she calls “the

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<sup>151</sup>Ibid., 14, 29; White, *Counsels to Parents*, 434.

<sup>152</sup>White, *Steps to Christ*, 20.

<sup>153</sup>White, *Desire of Ages*, 568.

<sup>154</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 241.

<sup>155</sup>White, *Education*, 14. See idem, *Desire of Ages*, 535, for more details on this concept.

<sup>156</sup>White, *Counsels on Education*, 388, 434.

right action of the will.”<sup>157</sup> She explains that the “right action of the will” is “the power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise.” She goes on to state,

You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. In this way your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.<sup>158</sup>

White goes on to emphasize that by submitting the will to Christ one becomes an ally with the divine and receives a new heart. The sanctifying process that occurs because of this “new-birth” launches the progression of restoring the image of God in the individual. This new life of restoration is the result of the human-divine connection.<sup>159</sup>

### **Character Building, Transformation, Regeneration, and Restoring the Image of God**

John M. Fowler, while researching character development in the writings of Ellen White, concluded, “Godlikeness is the ultimate objective of character development. Hence the norm for evaluating human character is the character of God.”<sup>160</sup> As noted earlier, for White, character development stemmed from freedom of choice informed by the guiding law of God.<sup>161</sup> Fowler states that the possibilities of character development come through God’s grace—the path of redemption. In contrast, retrogression is a threat

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<sup>157</sup>See White, *Steps to Christ*, 44, 47.

<sup>158</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>159</sup>See Whidden, 41-46, for a detailed look at White’s conception of sin, the human condition, and salvation. See also White, *Steps to Christ*, 18.

<sup>160</sup>Fowler, Abstract notes.

<sup>161</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 45-49.



to be constantly guarded against. Fowler observes that the image of God in the biblical narrative is “vital” to White’s understanding of character development and the nature of man.<sup>162</sup>

In White’s writings the process of restoring the image of God leads to a transformed character. Fowler seems to use “character development” almost synonymously with the restoration motif as being a deciding factor for both the “destiny of man and the ultimate vindication of God’s purposes.”<sup>163</sup> W. Richard Leshar wrote that White’s concept of sanctification is tied to character development and the process of growth.<sup>164</sup> Masao Yamagata dedicated a significant portion of his dissertation to dealing with White’s concept of sanctification. He points out that everything from health to talents is important to White, merging into a “transformation by theme” emphasis.<sup>165</sup> Both sanctification and character development are natural consequences of her restoration motif in action.

White wrote that “Christ’s work was to restore man to his original state” while “man’s part” was to grasp Christ’s merits by “cooperating with divine agencies” to develop a lofty character so that “God may save the sinner, and yet be just and His righteous law vindicated.”<sup>166</sup> This statement combines the idea of character development

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<sup>162</sup>Fowler, 76.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 16. See also W. Richard Leshar, “Ellen G. White’s Concept of Sanctification” (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1970).

<sup>165</sup>Yamagata, 260-267. The “themes” Yamagata mentions include: health and lifestyle issues, the proper use and development of talents, and character development. The process of sanctification leads to a transformed life in each of these areas.

<sup>166</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 430.

with the restoration theme through the lens of the great controversy motif; all aspects of one cohesive system in White's thinking. In this context, character development and sanctification are all part of the same optimistic process—restoring the image of God—“the work of a lifetime” to transform both mind and heart.<sup>167</sup>

Regeneration is another term used to describe transformation of character. As noted in the previous section, White states that Christ died on the cross so that He could make it possible for humans to cooperate with Him in restoring the image of God in their lives. She overtly calls this transformation “recreating the image of God” in humanity.<sup>168</sup> Painting bold strokes, White asserts that in the “true religion of Christ there is a regenerating influence that transforms the entire being, lifting man above every debasing, groveling vice, and raising the thoughts and desires toward God and heaven.”<sup>169</sup> When Christ is accepted into the life, the individual begins the process of becoming transformed into a new person through the work of the Holy Spirit. In this way, Christ's sanctifying work was seen as an open challenge to Satan's efforts to subjugate man into his own debased image.<sup>170</sup> White sees the whole idea of transformation as being part of a process that turns an individual more toward the likeness of Christ. Transformation enriches and regenerates life, both for the individual and for those with whom they associate.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 52; White, *Counsels on Education*, 61; idem, *Fundamentals*, 24.

<sup>168</sup>See White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 409; idem, *Education*, 126; idem, *Steps to Christ*, 62. See also idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:399.

<sup>169</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 51.

<sup>170</sup>For example, see Ellen G. White, “Character Tested by Small Occurrences,” *Review and Herald*, October 15, 1895, 657.

<sup>171</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 66.

## **Restoring the Image of God and Perfection: How Optimistic Is Ellen White's Anthropology?**

It is now important to inquire, how far does this transformation in White's restoration motif actually reach? Questions some have asked about this issue include: How optimistic is her anthropology? Can character transformation, linking up with the divine and the process of becoming changed into the image of God make us perfect? What does it mean when she refers to the goal of education as "godlikeness"? Is this supernatural perfection? Is the ideal of Christian education to produce "mini-gods"?

To answer these questions, one needs to look at White's rather pragmatic reasons for many of her taboos. First, as has been seen, Satan, a "sharp and persevering workman," is dedicated to doing all he can to mar the character by weakening the body, darkening the intellect, and debasing the soul.<sup>172</sup> In contrast, Christ offers an antidote to Satan's work. In Christ, true freedom is escaping the depravity of sin.<sup>173</sup> Anything that is perceived as aiding Satan's work is positively condemned and relegated to her list of taboos. For example, White decries reading superficial novels because this takes time away from mastering subjects that lead to higher growth and development. She deplores evolution and certain types of "higher criticism" primarily because they rob "God's word of power to control, uplift and inspire human lives."<sup>174</sup> Such an education offers few weapons for the youth to resist the debasing allurements of sin. She lamented that poor

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<sup>172</sup>Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 81; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 341.

<sup>173</sup>White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 130.

<sup>174</sup>White, *Education*, 227.

people too often spend their trifles on amusements and intoxicants that contribute nothing to bettering themselves; indeed, these diversions risk enfeebling minds that are “created in the image of God.”<sup>175</sup>

White emphasizes that with every physical and mental endowment God bestows capabilities for wise improvement of these gifts. In return, “He claims a due cultivation and exercise of the intellectual and moral faculties.”<sup>176</sup> For example, White criticizes youth who do not maximize every opportunity to “improve their standing in society, elevate the character, ennoble the mind and [in this way] increase their happiness.”<sup>177</sup> She sees Christ’s ministry on this earth as empowering humankind through cooperation with Him in overcoming the negative results of sin. White felt that any departure from this ideal grieves God.

Ultimately, White presents a very high standard of Christian behavior.<sup>178</sup> All powers of the individual must be maximized because anything less will be unacceptable in the pure and holy environment of heaven.<sup>179</sup> In the thinking of White, any habit that detracts from her optimistic perspective of continual growth is considered a hindrance to character transformation.

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<sup>175</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 326.

<sup>176</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 99.

<sup>177</sup>*Ibid.*, 99-100.

<sup>178</sup>For example, see White, *Counsels to Parents*, 365; *idem*, *Testimonies for the Church*, 8:63; *idem*, “The Preparation for Heaven,” *Signs of the Times*, December 22, 1887, 769; *idem*, *Fundamentals*, 265.

<sup>179</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 133.

## **A Very Optimistic Anthropology: Ellen White and Perfection**

Perhaps no other passage summarizes Ellen White's view on the potential heights attainable through restoring the image of God in humanity as the following quotation from her book, *Education*:

Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is open a path of continual progress. . . . He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. . . . He who cooperates with the divine purpose in imparting to the youth a knowledge of God . . . presents an education that is as high as heaven and as broad as the universe; an education that cannot be completed in this life, but that will be continued in the life to come; an education that secures to the successful student his passport from the preparatory school of earth to the higher grade, the school above.<sup>180</sup>

Throughout her educational writings, one can detect a continual theme that emphasizes constant progress and growth. Nothing is achieved without significant effort.<sup>181</sup> There is no place for idleness in her soteriology. In examining the myriads of quotations that delineate her optimistic perspective, she frequently speaks of a “path of continual progress.” In the above quotation, the goal of “godlikeness” is in the context of not actually becoming a God or reaching a godlike state, but rather an attitude is encouraged that fosters a continual progression toward God-likeness in character throughout eternity. White notes that “eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored in God's image, may attain.”<sup>182</sup>

The attainment of perfection is not so much an end to be reached as it is a journey

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<sup>180</sup>White, *Education*, 18-19.

<sup>181</sup>*Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>182</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 602; *idem*, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 61; *idem*, *Education*, 18-19.

to be traveled. White frequently affirms that God alone is the embodiment of perfection.<sup>183</sup> Additionally, she notes that the earliest problem of Satan was that he sought to be as God.<sup>184</sup> Therefore, she writes that no created being can safely aspire to ascend to the level of God.<sup>185</sup> Because God embodies the highest possible point of perfection by the very definition of His name, He offers a continual benchmark as one progresses into higher levels of truth, knowledge, and perfection throughout eternity. Humans will forever be learning more about God's character.<sup>186</sup> In this paradigm, it cannot be maintained that White's anthropology demands that we become perfect mini-gods. Such a concept seems antagonistic to her belief in continual advancement throughout eternity.

Restoring the image of God in humanity is a process of returning us to the state that was possessed by Adam before the fall, yet even in Adam's own pre-fall condition, continual growth was to characterize his life.<sup>187</sup> The entrance of sin did not change God's ultimate goal of humanity growing into His glory, but sin did lower the location of the starting line by marring the divine likeness significantly.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 574; idem, *Education*, 16-17, 169, 172.

<sup>184</sup>White, *Desire of Ages*, 435-436.

<sup>185</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 35-36. White outlines her understanding of Lucifer's fall in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 33-43.

<sup>186</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 8:64; idem, *Spalding and Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White* (Spalding and Magan, 1915-1916; reprint, Payson, AZ: Leaves of Autumn, 1975), 241.

<sup>187</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 51; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:340.

<sup>188</sup>White, *Education*, 15.

Masao Yamagata's research concurs with the conclusion that White does not evidence belief in instantaneous sanctification or perfection.<sup>189</sup> He noted passages where White referred to sanctification as "the work of a lifetime" and a transforming process that is as important as justification.<sup>190</sup> Early in her ministry, White wrote that there is no point where we will attain total perfection.<sup>191</sup> Later she noted that Christians who think they have reached perfection are being led astray.<sup>192</sup> Using the apostle John as an example of an "earnest effort to conform to the will of God," she emphasized that he never claimed to be sinless.<sup>193</sup> Instead, she advocated constant day-by-day advancement leading individuals to ever-higher rungs of the spiritual ladder.<sup>194</sup> Of course, passages such as these have to be counterbalanced and contextualized with passages that seem at first to demand a static arrival at perfection. Her image-of-God motif is especially important to understand when attempting to comprehend her thoughts on perfection.

For example, White once noted that "every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, and every fault corrected, every excellence

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<sup>189</sup>Yamagata, 260-261.

<sup>190</sup>White, *The Sanctified Life*, 10; idem, "The Righteousness of Christ," *Review and Herald*, August 19, 1890, 497.

<sup>191</sup>For example see Ellen G. White, "The Cause in Northern Wisconsin," *Review and Herald*, May 6, 1862, 179.

<sup>192</sup>Ellen G. White, "Sanctification," *Review and Herald*, January 18, 1881, 33. See also idem, *Great Controversy*, 470.

<sup>193</sup>Ellen G. White, "Sanctification," *Review and Herald*, March 1, 1881, 130.

<sup>194</sup>Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962), 506; idem, *The Ministry of Healing*, 503; idem, *My Life Today* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 96.

developed.”<sup>195</sup> Yet even a statement this direct is tempered in the context of “faith in Christ.” White further clarifies that this ideal is accomplished “in Him” through believing that we have received pardon from sin.<sup>196</sup> “In Him” we have limitless potential for growth—a genuine upward change and development process—to be experienced forever. Stimulated by “the great themes” of salvation such as restoring the image of God in humanity, the individual will rise higher and higher in his or her actualization of this ideal.<sup>197</sup>

While discussing her belief that “the religion of Christ never degrades the receiver,” White also contrasts God’s perfection “in His high sphere of action” with man becoming perfect “in his human sphere.” Again, she seems to distinguish between the two “spheres” while acknowledging that “God’s ideal is higher than the highest human thought can reach. The ideal of Christian character is Christ-likeness.”<sup>198</sup> Yet in all these assertions, White does not seem to be referring to perfection as a static point at which one arrives, but rather as a process of restoring the image of God in the soul. This is why her next sentence reminds the reader that there is a “path” before every Christian that leads to “continual advancement.” Such passages provide strong support for defining White’s “perfection” as a process of continual advancement.

In 1888 White wrote that the restoration of humanity from the “defilement of sin must be thorough and complete.” This occurs when “man does according to the best of

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<sup>195</sup>White, *Education*, 257.

<sup>196</sup>*Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>197</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 444-445.

<sup>198</sup>*Ibid.*, 365.



his ability, and seeks to keep the way of the Lord by obedience to the Ten Commandments, [then] the perfection of Christ is imputed to cover the transgression of the repentant and obedient soul.”<sup>199</sup> In a similar vein she wrote in *Steps to Christ* that “the condition of eternal life is now just what it has always been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness.”<sup>200</sup>

There is no doubt that White expects to see significant advancement and observable progress in the life of every Christian. She writes that there “is no evidence of genuine repentance unless it works reformation.”<sup>201</sup> Yet in the same passage she explains that this occurs only as one becomes a partaker of Christ’s “pardoning grace.” To attempt holiness by one’s own works is “attempting an impossibility.” “It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.”<sup>202</sup> Through maintaining a connection with Christ by faith, the heart becomes changed. Christ changes the heart and then the life becomes “renewed in the image of God.” She summarizes this process by stating: “The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character and the more fully we shall reflect His image.”<sup>203</sup> Growing in the image of God is a response in love to God’s grace rather than some

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<sup>199</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 135.

<sup>200</sup>White, *Steps to Christ*, 62.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>202</sup>*Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>203</sup>*Ibid.*, 63, 65.

internal goodness we possess.<sup>204</sup> One must always keep in mind that one's growth, success, and aspirations to the highest standards come through a relationship with Jesus rather than from personal merit.

White once wrote to the students at Battle Creek College that God wanted the school to reach a standard higher in intellectual and moral culture than any other institution in the land. Not only were students to be superior in the sciences, but they were also to be trained in spiritual things so they could, through Christ's grace, develop characters suitable for eternity.<sup>205</sup> Throughout her life, White wrote letters to denominational schools challenging them to rise to a higher level. In every subject the intellect was to be highly developed.<sup>206</sup> All powers were to be in the "best condition" to fulfill a "high destiny" as children of God.<sup>207</sup>

She would remind students that "the world is watching" to see if there actually are advantages to living the Christian life. The evidence of living on a "higher plane of existence" needs to be made obvious to the world.<sup>208</sup> Above all else, White encouraged the founding of denominational schools so that students could be taught by teachers who know the importance of preparing for "the life which measures with the life of God."<sup>209</sup> These are indeed very high aspirations.

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<sup>204</sup>Note that White, *Steps to Christ*, 57-65, is a good passage for understanding White's perspective in dealing with this sensitive issue.

<sup>205</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:425.

<sup>206</sup>White, *Education*, 138.

<sup>207</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 428.

<sup>208</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 324, 452.

<sup>209</sup>*Ibid.*, 401.

Walter Howe, over half a century ago, noted that White's perspective on perfection advocated a well-balanced, "judiciously functioning mind," "motivated by holy aims, capable of vast intellectual development [and] in perfect physical condition."<sup>210</sup> White further stated that "God has given man intellectual faculties capable of the highest cultivation." She then suggested that God cannot blithely accept those as His messengers who do not see a need to improve themselves through study, observation, reflection, constant effort, and discipline. In White's eyes, through Jesus, everyone can and should improve.<sup>211</sup> Restoring the image of God calls for nothing less than the highest attainments—a constant process of advancement and self-betterment through the grace of God.<sup>212</sup> These statements and others by White truly project an optimistic anthropology.

#### The Restoration of the Image-of-God Motif, Love, and the Gospel

In her writings White often connects the love of Christ with the uplifting of humanity.<sup>213</sup> Christ's own teachings centered on "grand, ennobling, saving truth, to which man's highest ambitions and proudest inventions can bear no comparison. . . . This scheme of restoring the moral image of God in debased humanity entered into every purpose of the life and character of Christ."<sup>214</sup> The love of God provided the sacrifice of

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<sup>210</sup>Howe, 14; White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 45.

<sup>211</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:340-341.

<sup>212</sup>Fowler, in discussing the issue of perfection in White's writings, concludes that White commends the pursuit of perfection while realizing that we can never really claim it in our sinful fallen state. Perfection is a continual, progressive, and necessary process in order to experience the highest capacity possible. Fowler, 146-147, 151.

<sup>213</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 292.

<sup>214</sup>*Ibid.*, 408.

Jesus, which in turn enabled the plan of salvation to be implemented—including the process of restoration in the image of God.

White understood the plan of salvation and its restoration motif as an essential therapeutic aspect of the Gospel. With Jesus Christ at the center, both education and redemption are one—both are integral elements in healing the sin problem.<sup>215</sup> White writes that “God’s healing power runs all through nature.”<sup>216</sup> She goes on to observe that when there is an injury in nature, natural processes work to heal the injury. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, “before sin created the need, God had provided the remedy.”<sup>217</sup> “Wherever there is sin, there is a Savior” with whom humans may cooperate to heal the sin problem.<sup>218</sup> This cooperative process provides power in the individual life for transformation and healing—a testament to the love of God.<sup>219</sup> As a result, the Gospel of Jesus is equated with a message of spiritual, mental, and physical restoration.<sup>220</sup>

Restoring the image of God brings humanity into the “sunshine of God’s love.” This is the crux of the gospel for White.<sup>221</sup> When individuals accept Christ’s pardoning

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<sup>215</sup>White, *Education*, 30. See also Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 50-51. A discussion of the therapeutic nature of God’s grace as it relates to John Wesley’s teachings can be found in chapter 2 of this dissertation, pages 103-104. White shared a similar view to Wesley as outlined in her book *The Ministry of Healing*. This text is full of references linking the gospel not only to physical healing, but also to the healing of sin and its destructive effects on the soul. For example, see White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 17-26, 62, 104, 112-113, 115, 141.

<sup>216</sup>White, *Education*, 113.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 114.

<sup>220</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 466-467; idem, *Education*, 157.

<sup>221</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 199.

grace, “love springs up in the heart.”<sup>222</sup> The more people reflect Christ’s character, the greater their love will be.<sup>223</sup> God’s love is exemplified to the world through the love of those who claim His name. In *Steps to Christ*, White convincingly ties together these concepts of restoring the image of God, love, and the concept of Christian growth in light of the gospel.

The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul [by grace], will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, ‘I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them’ Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life?<sup>224</sup>

Love expresses itself in personal growth and care for humanity.<sup>225</sup> It is a progressive phenomenon. White argues that it is the power of Christ’s grace that brings people together through obedience to the truth. In turn, these united people will experience an accelerated growth process in their own lives as they share what they have learned with others.<sup>226</sup>

Redemption, restoration, God’s love, the healing of sin, and the gospel are closely connected to education in White’s thinking. She charges all educators to be “gospel

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<sup>222</sup>White, *Steps to Christ*, 59.

<sup>223</sup>White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 188.

<sup>224</sup>White, *Steps to Christ*, 60.

<sup>225</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:167-169.

<sup>226</sup>For example, see White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:537; idem, *Education*, 28-29, idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 249.

teachers” who labor together with God in the training of minds for His service.<sup>227</sup>

Education falls short unless students have been trained to understand the Bible for themselves and to live their lives in harmony with the gospel of Christ.<sup>228</sup> White believed that “true education is religion” not something that stands next to it.<sup>229</sup> “The theme of redemption is one that angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now?”<sup>230</sup> This is the essence of the gospel as seen through White’s image-of-God motif.

#### The Role of the Bible in Restoring the Image of God

Ellen White often emphasizes the role the Bible plays in exposing people to the important truths that lead the soul to limitless development. It is the “vivifying power” of the Bible that can dramatically change lives for the better while restoring the image of God in the individual.<sup>231</sup> The Bible is the medium where God’s character is revealed through continual learning, development, and advancement. “Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, His power.”<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>227</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 527.

<sup>228</sup>*Ibid.*, 536.

<sup>229</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 108.

<sup>230</sup>Ellen G. White, “Our Great Treasure-House,” *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1906, 6.

<sup>231</sup>White, *Education*, 172.

<sup>232</sup>*Ibid.*

Aside from reiterating her belief that absolute knowledge is never fully attained by humans either here or in heaven, White notes that this process of constant transformation is in itself a “miracle of miracles.”<sup>233</sup> The fact that a debased human, marred under the burden of sin, can be transformed into the image of God is one of the “greatest proofs” of the divine authenticity of the Bible.<sup>234</sup>

For White, Scripture becomes a link that connects sinful humans with the eternal life-changing concepts of the divine. Christian philosopher James W. Sire writes that oftentimes naturalistic and humanist philosophies lead to a nihilistic depression as individuals “think” themselves into irreconcilable dead-end philosophical corners.<sup>235</sup> It could be argued that White sees the Bible and nature as spiritual windows that reveal a world beyond one’s own mortal existence. If left to one’s own human reasoning and devices, one eventually encounters the stark limitations of one’s rationality. Human beings become, as it were, trapped within the impenetrable walls of their own finiteness. Individuals simply cannot raise above their earthiness, greed, passion, and pride, which often lead to destructive and exploitive behavior—behavior out of harmony with the principles of God’s universal government.

The Bible, however, provides a window in the wall of one’s human limitations, by exposing the eternal concepts, ideas, and truths that can instruct the individual in principles of growth both now and throughout eternity.<sup>236</sup> Through a study of Scripture,

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<sup>233</sup>Ibid.

<sup>234</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>235</sup>Sire, 85 passim.

<sup>236</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:24.

people are led to understand that they are not enslaved by a purely material universe, but that God, the Creator, has set them free to be independent actors, free to “think and to do.”<sup>237</sup> White noted that there is a “creative energy” in God’s Word that “transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God.”<sup>238</sup> Hence, we can rise from the ignorance and degradation of our present reality to become “the sons of God, [and] the associates of sinless angels.”<sup>239</sup>

White writes that the Holy Spirit serves as an essential medium in assisting mortal humanity to experience the uplifting truths found in the Bible. If the mind is receptive, then this familiarity with divine truth and eternal concepts can serve as a barricade against the temptations and degradations of Satan. The light of truth streams through this spiritual window, bathing individuals in the glory of heaven, totally transforming and changing their lives.<sup>240</sup>

For this very reason, White constantly advocates the value and centrality of the Bible. Within its pages can be found the plan of salvation—which is to restore the image of God in every human being—the process of individuals becoming reconciled to God. These everlasting principles of truth and duty are what give humanity that “vista of eternity”; the ability to see beyond the mortal self.<sup>241</sup> It also places people’s routine lives

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<sup>237</sup>White, *Education*, 17.

<sup>238</sup>*Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>239</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:24; *idem*, *Fundamentals*, 85.

<sup>240</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 171-172. White explains this concept in detail in *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 124-138. See also 1 Cor 2, especially vv. 10-16.

<sup>241</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 542-543.



within a new and eternal perspective, realizing that despite the mundane challenges confronting every person, they still have access to truths that can help overcome any difficulty.

The Bible, combined with Christ's justifying grace, can make human beings "perfect in this world" with a character that is fit for heaven. White notes that all are complete in Him, partakers of the incredible possibilities that have been set before them.<sup>242</sup> Scripture exerts a continual elevating influence, an influence that becomes more powerful as it is woven into practical life.<sup>243</sup> She also states that the Bible enlarges the mind, giving every faculty more vigor, strength, and efficiency.<sup>244</sup> It leads to a living connection with God because it reveals Christ who is the "fountain of all knowledge."<sup>245</sup>

Within this context, White advocates the study of the Scriptures as a critical component of education. The intricacies and significance of the theme of holistic restoration cannot be fully understood apart from the interaction between scriptural faith and the traditional subjects found in schooling.<sup>246</sup> She believed that the student would receive a superior education when faith and learning are combined.<sup>247</sup> Education, spirituality, and the study of the Bible, all combine to train the minds of students to think

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<sup>242</sup>Ibid., 445-446.

<sup>243</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>244</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 396.

<sup>245</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 450.

<sup>246</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid., 136.

on a higher level and thus transcend the pettiness of humanity by fitting their characters for eternity.<sup>248</sup>

The Restoration of the Image-of-God Motif and “Glorifying God”:  
A Major Impetus for Reform

**Glorifying God and Social Reform**

As was noted in chapter 2 of this dissertation, an antebellum reform impulse thrived in nineteenth-century America.<sup>249</sup> White’s optimistic anthropology fit in predictably well with this “spirit of the age.” Yamagata suggests that most of White’s concerns were more “otherworldly” in nature; hence, she was more interested in issues of the hereafter than in alleviating social and physical problems on earth.<sup>250</sup> Others, however, have pointed out that she was very much involved with many of the social-betterment movements that were a part of the fabric of nineteenth-century America.<sup>251</sup> On a number of occasions she connected herself and the Adventist movement with various reform interests of her day. Regarding work-study, health, and educational initiatives, she stated explicitly, “We are reformers.”<sup>252</sup> Interestingly, both the above contrasting views are surprisingly accurate, as White’s optimistic anthropology was not

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<sup>248</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 54.

<sup>249</sup>Note that in chapter 2 the word “reform,” unless otherwise stated, is used to denote the efforts of activists to reform society, rather than as a reference to the Reformed tradition of Calvin and his followers.

<sup>250</sup>Yamagata, 254.

<sup>251</sup>For example, Douglass Morgan, in his book *Adventism and the American Republic*, examines the activist nature of White’s Adventism, pp. 30-80.

<sup>252</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 292; idem, *Medical Ministry*, 170; idem, “Health, Philanthropic, and Medical Missionary Work,” PH 066, 1896, 9, *Ellen G. White Writings Complete Published Edition*, CD-ROM (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2005).

only couched within the context of preparing for “association with sinless angels” through restoring the image of God, but also dealt with real and discernable reforms that had significant earthly applications.

Glorifying God, for White, is an enterprise in which every human should participate. Glorifying God means that His image is being restored in His people for all to see. This is an outward manifestation of an inward transformation, and thus is very much tied to observable lifestyle issues.<sup>253</sup> At the same time, glorifying God takes on even grander significance in White’s thinking because the entire universe is watching.<sup>254</sup> As the image of God is restored in people’s lives, they vindicate the character and law of God before the onlooking beings from other planets.<sup>255</sup>

White writes that “the purpose of education is to glorify God” by upholding a strong ethic of excellence in the lives of students.<sup>256</sup> Glorifying God is defined by consecrated individuals who become a blessing and benefit to society. Their love for God and humanity leads them to social and reform activism as restored individuals who benefit society and glorify God.<sup>257</sup> Therefore, teachers and administrators leading

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<sup>253</sup>See White, *Prophets and Kings*, 479-490. White uses the biblical story of Daniel, his friends, and the food from the king’s table to illustrate the importance of lifestyle choices.

<sup>254</sup>For example, see White, *Prophets and Kings*, 148.

<sup>255</sup>White-influenced-Adventism has always had a fascination with the idea of other beings in the universe created by God. See White, *Desire of Ages*, 37, 467, 758, 834; idem, *Education*, 126.

<sup>256</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 229.

<sup>257</sup>*Ibid.*, 336; White, *Fundamentals*, 26. Note that White sees the cooperative effort of individuals restoring the image of God in their own lives as a benefit to society as well. However, she was often suspicious of groups attempting to force individuals to conform to a reform or teaching—for freedom of choice might be negatively affected.

Adventist schools are challenged to encourage students to rise as high as possible by actively performing the “greatest good in this world.”<sup>258</sup> She wrote often that every talent needed to be cultivated for the uplifting and stability of society.<sup>259</sup> The more knowledge a student accumulates, the greater good can be accomplished in that student’s life—as long as this knowledge is filtered through a worldview that acknowledges God as the source of inspiration for service.<sup>260</sup> A significant objective, then, of denominational institutions is to glorify God by making the world a better place through individual, social, and spiritual uplifting.<sup>261</sup>

### **Glorifying God through Health and Lifestyle Reform**

There is a strong correlation between health and education in many of White’s writings. Knight notes that a major theme of early Adventism was one of holistic restoration. White believed that humanity’s physical, mental, and moral faculties had been significantly damaged or lost by the fall, yet it is God’s will to restore each of these dimensions.<sup>262</sup> White believed that restoration of the body contributes also to healing of

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<sup>258</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 523.

<sup>259</sup>White, *Education*, 29-30; idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 200.

<sup>260</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 49.

<sup>261</sup>Ibid., 191-192. The practical ramifications of this concept will be discussed thoroughly in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>262</sup>Knight, *Ellen White’s World*, 55.

the soul.<sup>263</sup> This is a key reason why she resonated with the reform movements of her day—particularly those in the health arenas.<sup>264</sup>

A number of thoughtful researchers have grappled with the strong emphasis that White placed on lifestyle issues. Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart suggest that White's interest in health reform was a critical eschatological component of her theology, emphasizing the perfection that is needed for translation to heaven. They hypothesize that with the increased emphasis on justification in Adventism after the 1957 publishing of the book *Questions on Doctrine*, many in the church felt liberated from the traditional White-inspired link between salvation and health. Salvation was now seen as occurring independently of the physical body by remaining exclusively in the realm of the spiritual. The authors argue that Adventism was now forced to find a “new rationale for the principles [they] previously understood to be fitting them for translation.”<sup>265</sup> Adventists after the 1970s-80s began emphasizing what Bull and Lockhart call “holism,” stressing that the traditional Adventist view on health reform would pay off regardless of whether or not it had anything to do with salvation because it would lead to a higher quality of life.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>263</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 199.

<sup>264</sup>An informative book dedicated to exploring White and her interest in health reform has been written by Ronald Numbers in *Prophetess of Health*. While he addressed some of the ambiguities of Ellen White's health reform perspectives, he did not examine the foundational role the image-of-God motif played in her mature perspectives on health. As has been noted earlier in this dissertation, White's image-of-God motif was still in its incipient stages when she first began writing on health topics in the 1860s. It would be several decades before the restoration theme evolved to its mature perspective as exemplified in *The Ministry of Healing* (1905).

<sup>265</sup>Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 79-80.

<sup>266</sup>*Ibid.*, 81.

Knight concurs that the Adventist church has undergone a number of theological phases, and that these changes have continued after the 1950s.<sup>267</sup> Knight also reminds his readers, however, that after the 1919 Bible conference Adventism entered a more rigid “fundamentalist” phase, which was notably different from the position that White herself had taken in regard to theology.<sup>268</sup> It could be argued that many of the tenets of this fundamentalist phase were what *Questions on Doctrines* reacted against—not necessarily the writings of White.<sup>269</sup>

Bull and Lockhart also wrote that “finding Biblical support for Adventist health practices [was] not always possible.”<sup>270</sup> This is one reason why the church has never taken a formal stance to enforce vegetarianism, for example. Yet health reform is entirely consistent with White’s philosophy that stresses restoring the image of God within the great controversy context. She believed that various reforms were biblical because this restoration motif has been played out on a cosmic scale throughout biblical history.<sup>271</sup> The restoration motif challenges adherents to be the best they can be in whatever situation they find themselves—more of a philosophical attitude than a prescriptive formula. Health reform was not so much a blueprint as it was an optimistic challenge to live as healthfully as possible in order to boost spiritual acuity. For White,

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<sup>267</sup>See George R. Knight, “Adventism in Theological Tension (1950-),” in *A Search for Identity*, ed. Knight, 160-197.

<sup>268</sup>*Ibid.*, 134-135; 157-158.

<sup>269</sup>See chapter 1 pages 66-70 for more on Ellen White, Adventism and Fundamentalism.

<sup>270</sup>Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 2nd ed., 178.

<sup>271</sup>Jon Paulien wrote a compelling article noting how the image-of-God motif can be found throughout Scripture. “The Image of God and Educational Philosophy: A Biblical Construct?” 227-257.

health reform dynamically encouraged every person to grow mentally, physically, and spiritually—while glorifying God in the process.

White, living in the nineteenth century, utilized the language of her times to explain natural law and physiology—anything but the vernacular would have compromised her relevancy to the audience of her day. Despite this limitation, her undergirding interest in health reform was, by the late nineteenth century, couched within the restoration of the image-of-God motif in the context of the great controversy theme. Awareness of this “lens” that White employed makes it easier to contextualize her counsels on health and lifestyle issues.

In 1872 White wrote a pamphlet entitled “Proper Education” spelling out her early concepts that linked glorifying God with the great controversy/restoration motif. In this pamphlet she writes that after Adam sinned, humans, created in the image of God, found themselves in a “deplorable condition.” It was the will of God, however, to reverse this degeneration. Sickness, evil, and premature death were largely caused by violating God’s natural laws rather than by “an act of Providence” as was popularly believed. Humans were not passive players on a stage where the outcomes were all divinely preordained. Instead, God desired that people would choose to live in conformity to divine principles despite the fact that the appetites, passions, and gross violations of God’s natural laws had “weakened the race.” Within this context, White cautioned against the conclusion that illnesses were only the arbitrary dispensations of Providence; this myth, she intoned, was insulting to heaven.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>272</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 25.

At first glance, such sentiments might seem inappropriately strong. Yet in White's eyes, based on her philosophy, to sit idly by and do nothing to better one's physical and mental condition was practically a sin. Christ died so that every person could be empowered to regain control of his or her life through the free exercise of the will. To reject this offer to grow and develop seemed, from her perspective, to be rejecting the restoration component of the plan of salvation. Refusing to reason from cause to effect concerning health practices caused people to miss "health, peace and happiness."<sup>273</sup> This perspective is a major motivation for her strong admonitions about living a healthy lifestyle—anything less seemed to be "inexcusable ignorance."<sup>274</sup> White envisioned every believer living in health and vigor (physical), developing pure and noble characters (spiritual), and glorifying God through making this world a better place (mental, social). These sentiments express her view of what humanity's existence is meant to be.<sup>275</sup>

From this framework, then, healthy, vibrant people can best reflect a positive image of Christianity. Far better it be for Christians to be known for their positive attitudes, healthy bodies, and productive thinking habits than to be known as morose, sickly ascetics.<sup>276</sup> The gospel of Jesus is equated with a message of spiritual and physical restoration and Christians are to work together with God for the restoration of both.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>273</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 189-190.

<sup>274</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 60.

<sup>275</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup>White, *Education*, 197.

<sup>277</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 466-467.



White believed that every person's potential to better his or her health comes from God—to ignore these opportunities was synonymous with slighting God's blessings. The healthier people are, the more able they are to work successfully for God.<sup>278</sup> Therefore, she could proclaim that "health is an inestimable blessing, and more related to conscience and religion than many realize."<sup>279</sup> "Without health no one can as distinctly understand or as completely fulfill his obligations to himself, to his fellow beings, or to his Creator. Good health should be as faithfully guarded as the character."<sup>280</sup> If Satan sought to deprave, then it was Christ's goal to ensure that we could participate in the process of restoring the image of God and thus bring glory to Him. An indifferent attitude toward healthful living seemed negligent and careless in her eyes.

### Summary

Ellen White wrote that the life and death of Jesus, combined with His vindication of God's law, should always be kept before the minds of students. The great object of His sacrifice was to "uplift fallen man degraded by sin."<sup>281</sup> Such an uplifting of individuals becomes a demonstration before the watching universe of humanity being

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<sup>278</sup>Ibid., 294.

<sup>279</sup>Ibid.

<sup>280</sup>White, *Education*, 195. In stronger language White wrote that "anything that lessens the physical powers enfeebles the mind, and makes it less clear to discriminate between good and evil, between right and wrong." Idem, *Fundamentals*, 427. Note that White did not necessarily condemn those who were sick by prejudging the cause as negligence. She realized that since the fall of Adam, disease, sickness, and death are a part of humanity's lot. Therefore, her primary concern was for everyone to choose to live as healthfully as possible and then enjoy a better life because of it. See idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 78, 324.

<sup>281</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 370.

reconciled to God. Restoring the image of God is a cooperative effort actualized by grace from God to humanity—an effort that draws students and faculty closer to heavenly values.<sup>282</sup> Consequently, redemptive education acknowledges the great controversy theme in the life of every student. Teachers are to assist in the development of excellence in each student—a process of restorative transformation. Educators need to visualize consistently the heights that students can attain “through God’s help.” Every human being, no matter how fallen, can be fitted by God’s grace to experience “infinite possibilities.”<sup>283</sup> This, in her brief phrase, is what Ellen White seeks to communicate when she speaks of “restoring the image of God in man.”

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<sup>282</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 57.

<sup>283</sup>White, *Education*, 79-80.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE  
IMAGE-OF-GOD MOTIF

How one perceives the nature of humanity will play a significant role in determining what one sees as educationally significant. In the previous chapters of this dissertation the educational implications of Ellen White's image-of-God motif have been indirectly examined. White envisaged the universe as being caught up in a cosmic battle, a great controversy between good and evil affecting human endeavor from the dawn of ancient history to the issues of contemporary politics and the stories on the front pages of daily newspapers. Consequently, her educational ideas consistently reflect a conscious effort to reverse the destructive effects of Adam's fall through the active process of restoring the image of God in humanity. "True education" for White includes a cooperative network of institutions that complement traditional schooling in reversing the negative and damaging results of sin. Institutions such as the home, the school and the church coupled with individual spirituality were to work together, enabling students to discover and apply eternal truths.<sup>1</sup> With this context in mind, the potential educational implications of White's restoration theme will now be examined.

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<sup>1</sup>For example, see White, *Fundamentals*, 288-292.

## **Prologue: Ellen White and the Need for Quality Adventist Schooling**

Ellen White demanded a high level of proficiency for all Adventist schools.

Throughout this dissertation it has been pointed out how she frequently challenged both instructors and students to ascend to the highest level possible in all aspects of life—physical, mental, and spiritual. It was her hope that when proper education was actualized, the entire world would observe the tangible benefits of following God’s way. She praised the biblical models of Daniel and Joseph for becoming great leaders to both believers and unbelievers while remaining faithful to the eternal truths of God. In consequence, she encouraged students to follow closely the laws of God and thus rise to similar distinction. She would often proclaim that the “world is watching” to see if Christian education was indeed capable of developing a more refined human being.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout her life she recommended building colleges so that “the young could be educated to go out and labor for God.”<sup>3</sup> She wanted schools to specialize in educating ministers, medical missionaries, colporteurs, Bible instructors, and teachers who in turn would found additional schools and compound the benefit.<sup>4</sup> No matter what field was studied, all students were to be prepared to facilitate the work of restoring the image of God. The word “restore” is one that was frequently used by White to describe what she hoped Adventism would accomplish, both in education and in other denominational endeavors. Students would be educated to accomplish the “greatest good in this world”

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<sup>2</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 324. See also idem, *Fundamentals*, 428.

<sup>3</sup>George I. Butler, “The SDA Educational Society,” *Review and Herald*, December 4, 1880, 764.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur White, *The Australian Years*, 237.

through this restoration process—again illustrating White’s unbounded optimism for what regenerate humanity could achieve.<sup>5</sup>

In the summer of 1912, late in White’s life, she offered a number of reasons for Adventist children to attend denominational schools and colleges. First, she believed that secular schools taught concepts that hindered holistic student growth.<sup>6</sup> White preferred a holistic approach to education that divided the time between physical activity and the more traditional mental exercises—all within a spiritual perspective.<sup>7</sup> Second, she advocated the Bible as forming the “basis” of one’s worldview—foundational to every class.<sup>8</sup> Third, she believed that students would do best if they studied in an environment consciously designed to facilitate the preceding two goals. In this way, she justified an environment that protected students from the negative influences of the world. Fourth, she was concerned that ungodly teachers would advocate a skeptical view of the Bible or of Christianity in general. This in turn might nourish doubt, limiting the moral development of the student.<sup>9</sup>

In this chapter, White’s specific ideas for developing a quality school will be examined in the context of her holistic restoration perspective incorporating the points listed above. The physical, mental, and spiritual realms form the framework of her

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<sup>5</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 521-523.

<sup>6</sup>Ellen White specifically refers to scientific theories that cast doubt upon the clear teachings of the Bible. The moral corruption, infidelity and skepticism such views nourish are also condemned. “Worldly schools” have no safeguards to protect the youth from these spiritually destructive influences. White, *Fundamentals*, 541, 542.

<sup>7</sup>Arthur White, *The Australian Years*, 236.

<sup>8</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 541.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

specific ideas for developing this type of education. The following pages are organized around the educational ramifications of actualizing these concepts in a student's life.

## **The Spiritual Dimension, Education, and Restoring the Image of God**

### A Spiritual Worldview

Ellen White emphasized the relationship between one's worldview and everyday life.<sup>10</sup> Restoring the image of God becomes more difficult when there is a lack of alignment between the courses of study and a religious perspective. Christian education is much more cohesive when faith and learning are integrated.<sup>11</sup> White favored using a spiritual dimension as the lens through which every component of life is examined and every class taught. The attractiveness of this perspective is that now a spiritual worldview informs the learning that takes place in the classroom as well as in a student's individual life. Although White advocates spending private time in personal devotions, within her integrated framework *every class* embodies devotional elements because each class is taught through a spiritual perspective.

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<sup>10</sup>*Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines worldview as *Weltanschauung*. This word, first used in the nineteenth-century German language, means, "a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "Worldview," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/weltanschauung> (accessed 8 June 2008). Note that White never used the term "worldview" as it is used today. However, as has been emphasized throughout this dissertation, her great controversy and restoration themes were spiritual and philosophical concepts that clearly anchored her "conception or apprehension of the world." These spiritual standpoints clearly reveal her worldview.

<sup>11</sup>For example see White, *Fundamentals*, 136; idem, *Education*, 13-19, 125, 134. As illustrated in chapter 1 of this dissertation, White pressed for a strong spiritual curriculum in Adventism's first school, Battle Creek College. Her initial efforts in advocating a strong spiritual component in the school's formal curriculum were largely unsuccessful. See chapter 1 of this dissertation for additional details relating to these challenges.

Such a spiritual outlook promotes daily living by the abiding principles of God, be it in business, education, work, or wherever. “Let the youth be taught to take eternity into their reasoning,” White asserted.<sup>12</sup> Seeking the principles of heaven inevitably leads to an enriched life on this earth. White saw the religious training offered in denominational schools producing a direct and positive impact on a student’s long-term well-being, happiness, and religious perspective. The mind is then renewed, transformed, and molded as part of God’s plan of education—an education that extends throughout eternity.<sup>13</sup>

### Education and Absolute Truth

One of the major reasons for the development of Adventist schools is that such an education can be approached with a belief in absolutes. White believed these eternally existing laws of God are integrated into the very fabric of the universe. When carefully followed, they can lead to a better, more fulfilled life by creating a balanced, holistically developed individual. Even in White’s day, traditional public schools usually did not emphasize this search for universal truth. Yet in denominational schools, discovering the eternal laws of God is to be a major force in the redemptive-educative process. The ability to distinguish between truth and error is much more than a rhetorical cliché for White; it is one of her major concerns. Proper education is to supply students with the necessary tools to discover and discern truth. One of these tools is a distinctly Christian and biblical worldview—a significant advantage of Christian schools. This worldview

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<sup>12</sup>White, *Education*, 145.

<sup>13</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 413, 497.

then provides the framework whereby students can discover genuine truth.<sup>14</sup>

In view of the above assertions, some might assume that White promoted the idea that absolute truth could be absolutely knowable. However, as was noted in chapter 3, the very nature of restoring the image of God emphasizes the process of lifelong and eternal growth. Writing in the book *Education*, White argues that truth is perceived differently from person to person, largely dependent on the individual's spiritual capacity to absorb its vast dimensions. In line with her concept of eternal learning, she states, "the full radiance [of truth] is beyond our vision."<sup>15</sup> Truth can be experienced but never fully explained. Human beings will be growing, learning, and expanding their conceptions of truth forever.<sup>16</sup>

Yet this hardly advocates that the search for God's eternal truths should not be a major thrust of Christian schooling. Differing perspectives help individuals see more clearly the "big picture"—the more students study the vast dimensions of truth, the more fully it is understood and applied. White's conception of Christ-as-truth helps to explain the tension between the absolute and humanity's inability to know it absolutely. Because Christ is truth, developing a growing relationship with Him will lead individuals progressively closer to The Truth. Every human being can be transformed, uplifted, and

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<sup>14</sup>The following pages will examine White's various frameworks and tools (e.g., nature, Bible study, practical work, healthful living) that White saw as assisting students in their quest for truth.

<sup>15</sup>White, *Education*, 171.

<sup>16</sup>White, *Christ Object Lessons*, 129, 134.



restored.<sup>17</sup> Yet, as noted in chapter 3 of this dissertation, the dynamic nature of this relationship precludes ever acquiring the absolute knowledge of God.

Although White, on the one hand spoke favorably of the benefits of an open mind when searching for truth, on the other hand, she cautioned against speculation on the clear absolutes revealed in the Bible. For example, in chapter 1 of this dissertation, the Kellogg/pantheism controversy was discussed as a significant point in Adventist history.<sup>18</sup> John Harvey Kellogg was an active leader of the denomination's free-thinking progressive reformers who advocated aspects of the holistic approach to education that White favored as part of her restoration motif. However, White criticized Kellogg when she perceived that he was using his "freedom" to advocate speculative views that were contradictory to the clear revelations of Scripture. White, who acknowledged that we each perceive truth through our personal experiences, opposed Kellogg because he ventured beyond the bounds of personal application of God's absolutes into the murky realm of mystic speculation. From White's perspective, Kellogg's pantheistic leanings denied the biblical revelation of who God is. Nevertheless, an important aspect of education from White's perspective is teaching students to think independently rather than passively accepting another's preconceived version of truth. Restoring the image of God is a process of constantly refining and expanding this capacity to reason and to think.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>See White, *Education*, 76-81, for an example of White's perspective on Christ's role as "truth."

<sup>18</sup>See chapter 1, 68-69.

<sup>19</sup>White, *Education*, 188.

## The Bible as a Major Source of Truth

The major repositories of truth for White are found in a number of “heaven-appointed” sources—sources ranging from object lessons observed while walking out in nature to inspiring quotations from Scripture.<sup>20</sup> It is the Bible she upholds as the most direct link to truth—far superior to anything that human philosophy could contrive.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the philosophical framework of the academic curriculum should reflect the truths of the Bible—the expositor of the “science of redemption.”<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, as noted earlier in this dissertation, there is little evidence to suggest that she believed in using only the Bible as a source of intellectual training. As will be discussed later in this chapter, White expected human development to reflect the highest capabilities in all areas of learning.<sup>23</sup>

White’s perspective of redemption was heavily influenced by her great controversy theme, which defined restoring the image of God as redemption in action.<sup>24</sup> Learning about this redemption theme through studying the Bible was the primary reason for the preparatory school on earth.<sup>25</sup> “The work of every teacher should be to fasten the minds of the youth upon the grand truths of the word of inspiration.”<sup>26</sup> Students are to

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<sup>20</sup>For example, see *ibid.*, 77.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>22</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 448; *idem*, *Education*, 126.

<sup>23</sup>See chapter 1, pages 52-53, for an illustration of the debate with those who felt that *only* the Bible should be used as the primary textbook in Adventist schools.

<sup>24</sup>See White, *Education*, 125.

<sup>25</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 19.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 441.

“regard the knowledge of God as above everything else.”<sup>27</sup> Because the Bible contains eternal truths from “the mind of the Infinite,” the intelligence of people studying these revelations would, according to White, broaden in all subjects.

In chapter 3 it was noted that the process of restoring the image of God in every student involves a cooperative relationship between Christ and the student.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the highest goals of education are basically identical with the restoration theme. In order to accomplish this purpose in schools, White advocates that students and teachers study the Bible to discover areas in their lives needing improvement. They are to believe the promises of the Bible, accept God’s grace to improve, and then enjoy the better life that ensues.<sup>29</sup> Restoring the image of God in humanity was also the goal of Jesus when He taught the throngs of people on this earth—teachings clearly outlined in the Bible. Hence, every teacher should work toward this purpose in harmony with Christ.<sup>30</sup> Making the truths of the Bible practical to the everyday life of students is a major part of White’s restoration motif.

#### Character Transformation, Education, and the Restoration Motif

In chapter 3 it was emphasized that character transformation is another spiritual dimension that relates directly to White’s restoration theme. In her writings, salvation,

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 447; White, *Education*, 124.

<sup>28</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 513, 418.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 532; White, *Counsels to Parents*, 15.

<sup>30</sup>See White, *Fundamentals*, 436-437.

redemption, character building, and restoration are all closely connected.<sup>31</sup> While scientific knowledge and literary acquirments are important in White's educational scheme, in the book *Education* she proposes that transforming "power" is ranked higher. Yet even above this power is "goodness" and above "goodness" is character—the highest rung of intellectual training.<sup>32</sup> She defines character as "steadfast principle and wisdom gained through 'true education.'" Wisdom thus develops character, which then allows true education to "cover the whole circle of obligation—to us, to the world and to God."<sup>33</sup>

A good example of how White linked together the practical aspects of life with academic learning, spiritual development, character growth, and restoring the image of God is in the use of language. More recently, some philosophers suggest that the language we use largely informs our perceptions of the world around us. Imprecise language leads to imprecise interpretations and understanding.<sup>34</sup> White linked speech with strengthening and building up the character. She saw an interrelationship between speech and thought.<sup>35</sup> Courtesy in language and in deportment are part of her educational

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<sup>31</sup>For example, see White, *Counsels to Parents*, 61.

<sup>32</sup>White, *Education*, 126-127, 225.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid, 225.

<sup>34</sup>For example, see the chapter on analytical philosophy in Howard A. Ozmon and Samuel M. Craver, *Philosophical Foundations of Education* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 294, 303.

<sup>35</sup>White, *Education*, 234, 237-238.

scheme because these character traits can be taught, practiced, and effectively developed in a school setting.<sup>36</sup> Educators are to teach students to think before they speak so that

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 242.

when they say something, it is a courteous and informed perspective. The process of restoring the image of God in the life is greatly benefited by speaking and thinking about ideas that are pure, noble, and true.<sup>37</sup> Thought should precede speech because speech often leads to action. One's thinking, speaking, and actions meld into who one is—one's character. According to White, universal kindness, caring for others, and an informed mind increase a person's influence because a character informed by these traits attracts others.<sup>38</sup>

White believed these strategies for character development should be taught in the schools. Students should learn how to “know themselves” and be aware of their own tendencies toward good and evil. Self-discipline in schoolwork, language, employment, and recreation were habits that schools could use to improve character.<sup>39</sup> A self-controlled character not only benefits the individual student, but also enables the student to have a greater influence on society as a whole.<sup>40</sup> A student's character should be one of the best arguments for the uplifting benefits of Christianity.<sup>41</sup> White believed that if students learn to improve their characters while in school, then lifelong growth will more likely take place and the image of God be restored.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 237, 241.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 240- 241.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>40</sup>White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 61.

<sup>41</sup>White, *Medical Missionary*, 39.

## Service and Outreach as a Channel for Spiritual Development in Schools

Another emphasis of White's restoration theme is the idea of Christian service—outreach to fellow human beings. She emphasizes this point by citing the relationship between reaching out to others and the development of a strong character.<sup>42</sup> This service theme combines restoring the image of God in humanity, conversion, salvation, and character development into a tight-knit package of educational significance. Service to God is closely tied to service to humanity in White's perspective. Restoring the image of God speaks to the process of converted students being uplifted themselves and then uplifting humanity—leading others to a better way of life. Conversion initiates this progression while the process of salvation leads to a continual restoration in an individual's life. The aim is a mature, balanced, and well-formed character.

Within this context, White writes that an education involving service is the best type of education available in this world.<sup>43</sup> “The true object of education is to fit men and women for service by developing and bringing into active exercise all their faculties.”<sup>44</sup> She also considers the role of service as being “the great law of life”—a major theme found not only within the Scriptures but also enacted throughout nature.<sup>45</sup> As everything in nature has its essential role in the ecosystem, so each individual has a role to play in serving others.

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<sup>42</sup>White, *Education*, 264-265.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 309.

<sup>44</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 493.

<sup>45</sup>White, *Education*, 103.

For White, another reason for the existence of denominational schools is to teach students how to reach out to others. Frederick Harder, in writing about the philosophy of Adventist education, suggests that White links the gospel commission with the need for a worldwide denominational teaching ministry. This is based largely on White's counsels that see God as "creating, sustaining, enlightening and redeeming" the world through the ministry of Jesus Christ, and exemplified by believers serving those around them.<sup>46</sup> This servant-leader model underscores the foundational importance White placed on teaching students to be involved in community outreach and service because service to others is integral to restoring the image of God in the individual.

### **Uncompromised Mental Excellence and Restoring the Image of God**

#### Prologue: Glorifying God

Ellen White also extends her optimistic restoration theme into the realm of the intellect. As in the spiritual realm, she repeatedly points to the intellectual heights to which students may attain. However, she concurrently lists a number of negative elements that can interfere with these noble aspirations. For example, the consequences of the fall of Adam significantly weakened humanity. As noted in chapter 3, evil, for White, presents itself in the destructive efforts of Satan to dull the human mind and thus limit human potential (marring the image of God versus restoring the image of God). People may further compromise their mental faculties through squandering talents, destructive choices, and degenerate lifestyles. Christ, on the other hand, came to restore the ability of humankind to grow through choosing to cooperate with Christ.

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<sup>46</sup>Harder, 6. See also Knowles, 3.



Consequently, as individuals through God's grace begin developing their true potential, God is glorified.<sup>47</sup>

“Glorifying God,” according to White, includes promoting a strong ethic of growth for students. The spiritual and mental dimensions now come together to inspire students to become a blessing to society by making the world a better place through productive activity. She argues that teachers and administrators should encourage students to cultivate every talent while taking advantage of opportunities for intellectual achievement.<sup>48</sup> When White speaks of restoring the image of God, she speaks of the development of specific skills and enlarged capabilities in students' lives.<sup>49</sup> This section will focus on the concept of “glorifying God” through mental development.

#### “Independent Thinkers” versus Transmissive Education

As noted in chapter 3, White emphasized the importance of students developing the ability to think for themselves and the role of the school in fostering this development.<sup>50</sup> Samuel Butler (1835-1902), a contemporary of White, asserted a contrasting belief about the role and nature of Christian education. “It is not our business . . . to help students to think for themselves. Surely this is the very last thing which one who wishes them well should encourage them to do. Our duty [as Christian educators] is

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<sup>47</sup>White, *Education*, 270.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>49</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 537.

<sup>50</sup>For example, the section “Freedom to Grow” in chapter 3 of this dissertation discusses Ellen White's interest in this concept.

to ensure that they think as we do, or at any rate, as we hold it expedient to say we do.”<sup>51</sup> However, White expressed doubts concerning the effectiveness of a purely transmissive style of Christian education. Restoring the image of God motivates every person to discover and internalize truth for himself or herself. Perhaps this is why she wrote that every student possesses “a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do.”<sup>52</sup> After describing the great leaders who emerge when this power is developed, she suggests that the work of true education is to foster an environment where such independent growth can flourish. Education, therefore, is to train the youth to be “thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thoughts.”<sup>53</sup>

In addition to the ideal of independent thinking, White expressed the desire to train individuals who can “think and act” decisively. She recognized the danger of schooling that produced educated weaklings who did not integrate knowledge with practice, and she argued that the inability to act decisively based on biblical principle was counter-productive to the restoration of God’s image in individuals and to the development of a vital and productive church. As noted in chapter 1, she occasionally encountered people in the Adventist church who portrayed comprehensive educational training as counter to humble Christianity.<sup>54</sup> Naturally, Adventists of this persuasion were reluctant to improve themselves educationally. White, however, argued a different

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<sup>51</sup>Samuel Butler, quoted in Palmer, 138.

<sup>52</sup>White, *Education*, 17.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>54</sup>See pages 14-17 and 67-70 of chapter 1 for more background on this aspect of Adventist history.

line of thinking. She asserted, “Ignorance does not increase the humility or spirituality of any professed follower of Christ. The truths of the divine word can best be appreciated by an intellectual Christian.”<sup>55</sup> “Sanctification does not close the avenues of the soul to knowledge, but expands the mind and inspires it to search for truth as for hidden treasure.”<sup>56</sup> Every opportunity for advancement was to be seized and acted on. Students were encouraged to “advance as fast and as far as they can.”<sup>57</sup> Education was to discipline the mind, developing strong, capable, and knowledgeable leaders in whom the image of God was in the process of being restored.

White recommended that students go directly to the sources of truth, the “vast fields of research in nature and revelation.”<sup>58</sup> Although she certainly had a clear conception of what truth is, her restoration motif supported the assertion that discovering this truth was an extended intellectual and rational process. Students had a responsibility to discover truth for themselves—an experimental, personal knowledge unconfined by the commentaries of others. “The mind that depends upon the judgment of others is certain, sooner or later, to be misled.”<sup>59</sup>

Gordon Jackson, an advocate of process theology writing in the mid-twentieth century, laments that Platonic orthodox rationalism has reduced Christian education to

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<sup>55</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 361.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 449.

<sup>57</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 375.

<sup>58</sup>White, *Education*, 17.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 231. For White, “liberty of conscience” is an essential element of the great controversy. White, *Great Controversy*, 108.

the transmissive preaching and teaching of “right” doctrine. Thus, he intones that Christian education has “largely dealt with abstractions: with doctrinal ideas unrelated to truths emerging from disciplines other than theology.” Accordingly, there is resistance to new integrated truths.<sup>60</sup> His comments raise concerns about Christian education as expressed in similar terms by White a half century earlier.<sup>61</sup>

The risk of transmissive teaching is that it can reduce education to merely rote indoctrination, thus possibly leading to the ultimate stagnation of a denomination. Jackson further cautions that the risk of maintaining such a transmissive education results in sterility, bareness, lack of fresh connotations, and verbalism with the probable result being very little discussion, dialog, or growth.<sup>62</sup> Many Adventist founders, including James White, sought to avoid such stagnation—even to the point of opposing any creed for the denomination.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps such sterility is what Ellen White sought to avert by emphasizing the importance of developing students who can think on their own for the

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<sup>60</sup>Gordon Edmund Jackson, “The Doctrine of the Image of God and Its Implications for Christian Education” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954), 207, 209.

<sup>61</sup>Note that White’s concern for “mind development” is parallel to Jackson’s in this case, even though White was an educational leader writing from the perspective of education, while Jackson was a formal theologian writing about education. It is interesting that both authors voiced concern that intellectual and theological stagnation would hinder denominational development.

<sup>62</sup>Jackson, 210.

<sup>63</sup>See Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 21-24, for a detailed discussion on early Adventists’ fear of inflexible creeds and doctrines. See also Joseph Bates, “Doings of the Battle Creek Conference, October 5, 6, 1861,” *Review and Herald*, October 8, 1861, 148. Ellen White notes how God has led in the Adventist movement, “step-by-step,” illustrating the progressive nature of denominational beliefs. Ellen G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials: Letters, Manuscripts, Articles, and Sermons Relating to the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 2:789. Cf. idem, “The Work for This Time,” 17.

benefit of not just themselves but the church at large.

Restoring the image of God is a dynamic process that works best when it is connected to real life. Words such as truth, restoration, sanctification, regeneration, and individuality make better sense in a living and relevant environment rather than as isolated clichés reserved primarily for spiritual discourse. Jackson refers to a “lifeless accumulation of the dead past” when he speaks of the abstract nature of truths divorced from active and meaningful interaction in the lives of students.<sup>64</sup> White seemed to recognize this danger and implored students to initiate the mental process of rediscovering (and perhaps reevaluating) the beliefs of denominational founders and relating those beliefs to their own life and context. Such a process can be a positive step toward innovative thinking, fresh ideas, and new ways of expressing vital spirituality.

#### Academic Cooperation versus Competition: Ellen White’s Work Ethic

Ellen White frequently advocated a cooperative model of students and teachers working together to facilitate a more effective learning environment.<sup>65</sup> For example, the gifted student is challenged to utilize his or her talents to draw others toward “higher excellence.”<sup>66</sup> Assessment measures that rely predominantly on students competing against each other are portrayed as being counterproductive to achieving this “higher excellence.” She considered rivalry, selfishness, and the encouragement of class ranking obstructive to true learning while also detracting from the skills students needed to work

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<sup>64</sup>Jackson, 216-217.

<sup>65</sup>See White, *Education*, 285.

<sup>66</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 18.

together in the workplace. Such faulty habits lead to an over-reliance on “cramming” with its negative health and intellectual effects. Students at the lower end of this academic model frequently experience feelings of discontent and embitterment, which, in White’s eyes, work against the goal of restoring every student in the image of God.<sup>67</sup>

White’s restoration motif exemplifies her distaste for anything that does not have high educative or reforming value—anything less is wasted energy. She was suspicious of academic practices, amusements, sports, or other programs that did not directly serve a useful purpose by helping to develop character or intellect.<sup>68</sup> Understanding White’s work ethic is helpful in explaining her optimism toward student accomplishment, both individually and cooperatively. She believed that as doors are opened and opportunities for growth presented, Christians should unabashedly move forward. Therefore, she encouraged students to join together and take advantage of community service opportunities—even while still attending school. In this way the combined talents of the students would impact the school and the surrounding community in a positive way.<sup>69</sup>

This very act of pushing beyond one’s comfort zone encourages “trust in the wisdom and mercy of God” while enabling His providence to open the way forward.<sup>70</sup> White saw strength, time, and intellect as “lent treasures” to be consistently maximized.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>White, *Education*, 226.

<sup>68</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 274.

<sup>69</sup>White, *Education*, 267-269, 271.

<sup>70</sup>Ellen G. White, *Early Writings of Ellen G. White* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 205.

<sup>71</sup>White, *Education*, 57-58.

Learning to think clearly and independently by developing convictions based on God’s eternal truths, coupled with cooperative endeavors among students, highlight the work ethic White sought to instill in students. Such a cooperative and supporting environment would encourage each student to excel, a significant goal of White’s restoration motif.

#### What Serves as Truth? Science and Revelation

Previously in this chapter the spiritual dimensions of truth and its relation to White’s image-of-God motif were examined.<sup>72</sup> She listed three major sources of truth—the Bible, nature (science), and God’s leading throughout the pages of history.<sup>73</sup> Did White envision a dichotomy between the truths of science and the Bible? How does the concept of her restoration motif influence the relationship between the two?

White indicated that all truth derives from an all-knowing God.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, apparent dichotomies between nature and revelation are artificial constructs, exposing humanity’s inability to perceive truth absolutely. For White, science and revelation speak the same language as both come from the same God. Each should complement the other.<sup>75</sup> Restoring the image of God in students incorporates both these “heaven-appointed sources” of truth into the educational curriculum.<sup>76</sup>

What White intentionally omitted from her educational scheme was an over-

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<sup>72</sup>See pages 255-257 of this chapter, “Education and Absolute Truth.”

<sup>73</sup>White, *Education*, 248.

<sup>74</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 453.

<sup>75</sup>White, *Education*, 128.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 77.

reliance on the confining “opinions of men.”<sup>77</sup> Learning, as demonstrated by her understanding of the teachings and education of Christ, should be gleaned directly from the sources of truth—nature and the Bible.<sup>78</sup> White portrayed the educational system of the religious leaders of Christ’s day as magnifying things small and belittling things great—roadblocks to developing mental acuity in students.<sup>79</sup> She recommended that students should spend more time studying the original sources for themselves rather than merely reading what someone else said about truth.<sup>80</sup> By this emphasis she was not outright condemning the study of other people’s points of view; rather, she emphasized that the opinions (or commentaries) of others were not of equal weight with the “voice of God.” Every individual has the ability to reason just as do the experts. Consequently, she was more concerned with advocating the egalitarian virtue of each person employing his or her mind to discover truth rather than merely following someone else’s opinion.<sup>81</sup>

To understand the complexities of nature and science, White argued for a worldview wherein the biblical perspective provides the lens that brings all other areas of

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 17-18, 76-78.

<sup>78</sup>White believed that Jesus was educated primarily at home where he learned from heaven-appointed sources of truth—observation in nature, Scripture study, and communion with God in prayer. White, *Desire of Ages*, 70. However, other scholars think that Jesus probably attended the local rabbinical schools because all Jewish children were usually required to attend. See Clifford A. Wilson, *Jesus, The Master Teacher* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974), 13, 20-23; Norman Anderson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 8-9. White agrees that Jewish children were expected to attend rabbinical schools, but specifically asserts that Jesus resisted this requirement and that his refusal brought perplexity to Mary and Joseph. White, *Desire of Ages*, 69-70, 85-86, 90-91.

<sup>79</sup>White, *Education*, 77-78.

<sup>80</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 443.

<sup>81</sup>White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 106, 303-304.



study into focus.<sup>82</sup> The power that pervades the observable natural world around us is the same power that also works to restore humanity.<sup>83</sup> Truth and its discovery, therefore, is part of an integrated whole. Faith and learning can thus become firmly integrated in the quest for truth.

### Real-Life Problem Solving, Mental Excellence, and Restoring the Image of God

The importance Ellen White placed on students assimilating truth as part of her restoration motif led her to promote teaching methods that would best further this objective. School was not to be a place where the student would get “out of touch” with real-life problem solving. A successful education meant that long before graduation students were to be using their newly acquired intellectual skills in actively working for a better world. White explained that if a school’s curriculum is negligent in this endeavor, “God is robbed of the souls He longed to uplift, ennoble, and honor as representatives of Himself.”<sup>84</sup>

For White, the mental aspect of educational training was not divorced from real life; rather, she advocated that school *was* life, not just training for it. As noted earlier, service—getting out of the classroom and applying book knowledge in a real-world setting—is the most effective application for career training. White encouraged students to take advantage of every opportunity to utilize what they had learned in school by

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<sup>82</sup>White, *Education*, 134.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 99.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 265.

getting out in the community and utilizing their developing skills in practical service.<sup>85</sup>

### The Role of the Teacher and Restoring the Image of God

White celebrated teacher enthusiasm, clear goals, and distinct lesson plans that would persuasively lead students to understand the concepts being taught.<sup>86</sup> She also advocated the use of the latest and most innovative teaching materials available—“parents and teachers should constantly seek for improved methods [of explaining lessons].<sup>87</sup> She encouraged teachers to illustrate how every lesson affects actual life and why it is important for students to have a clear understanding of a particular topic.<sup>88</sup> She even advocated a form of the Socratic teaching method by recommending that instructors encourage students to ask questions—anything to make learning more meaningful as long as care was given not to encourage blind skepticism.<sup>89</sup>

Of course, she saw little value in innovative instructional methods if the teacher’s life contradicted his or her teaching. Restoring the image of God meant that teachers were to model the processes they wished their students to adopt.<sup>90</sup> White referred to the teacher as a “divine agent in the molding of the character of the youth.”<sup>91</sup> Teaching was

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<sup>85</sup>For example, White, *Education*, 226, 230; idem, *Fundamentals*, 368; idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 537.

<sup>86</sup>White, *Education*, 233-235.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 233-234.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 41, 188, 282.

<sup>91</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 47; idem, *Fundamentals*, 58.

not just a job; it was the guiding of a soul.<sup>92</sup> The teacher was to possess high values and be mentally well equipped to lead students into truth and righteousness.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, care was to be exercised in selecting instructors who would influence students in the restoration process. Adventist education scholar George Akers illustrates this point by reminding his readers that White saw teachers more in the inspiration than information business.<sup>94</sup> Another author noted that “Christian education is concerned with helping people become what their teachers are. . . . Truth and example are always to go together.”<sup>95</sup>

The holistic concept behind restoring the image of God meant that for White, both physical vigor and mental ability were to be hallmarks of quality teachers.<sup>96</sup> Even though high academic standards were expected from students, stifling, inactive busywork was to be discouraged. Balance between head and hand would make teachers and students happier, more cheerful, and more capable of carrying out their daily responsibilities. The skilled teacher was to constantly seek “higher attainments and better methods” while loathing dull, indolent, and loose thinking. Quality teachers were to possess a positive, optimistic attitude that would bring enthusiasm to the classroom. “In the work of such a

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<sup>92</sup>White, *Education*, 280.

<sup>93</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 104.

<sup>94</sup>Akers, 36.

<sup>95</sup>Richards, *Theology*, 30, 44-45.

<sup>96</sup>In her book *Education*, 275-282, Ellen White writes that every teacher should possess at least four major qualifications: a good moral character, sound health, strong qualifications in one’s field, and an aptness to teach.

teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his pupils.”<sup>97</sup>

Assisting students in mental development requires mutual trust as well. White felt that if an air of suspicion permeated schools, it would minimize the effectiveness of teachers to influence their students in a positive way. This attitude of suspicion also demoralizes school spirit. The mental growth and learning process for young people should allow an adequate dose of responsibility within well-defined boundaries. Self-reliance and self-control were goals that White saw as vital to a child’s development.<sup>98</sup>

Teachers should treat both the bright students and the less promising as though there were no limit to their potential. Every child was to “receive an education for the highest service.”<sup>99</sup> Restoring the image of God encourages the highest mental standards, therefore quality teachers should never accept second-rate work from their students. The whole idea of redemption was to stimulate the best performance from every pupil.<sup>100</sup> When students approach their subjects from this optimistic perspective they are better equipped to produce mentally. Even the apparently dull student needs to be encouraged to exercise all his/her talents and skills as part of maximizing his/her potential. In this way, every young person can excel and the image of God can be further restored.<sup>101</sup>

Enabling students to maximize their mental capacities requires intelligent orchestration of the school environment so that redemptive methods of discipline can be

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<sup>97</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 230-234; idem, *Education*, 276-281.

<sup>98</sup>White, *Education*, 287-289.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 266-267.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 232.

the norm. White wrote that rules are to be few and consistently enforced. The boundaries of acceptable student behavior are to be carefully specified so that there are few if any questions as to what behavior is expected. White noted on several occasions that the worst thing a teacher could do to a student was to stand idly by while the child is “fastened in the bondage of evil habit.”<sup>102</sup> Fostering a restoration process meant that the faculty would encourage students to a higher level by obeying the laws which God had given. In this way, the freedom that comes from cooperating with God would liberate students from being entangled by destructive habits—habits that might mar the image of God. Yet White reminds her readers that this process cannot be arbitrarily forced on an unwilling student. The only way improvement can be made is if the student’s own will is readily enlisted. In this way, the teacher and student can work together, by the grace of God, to restore the image of God through mental excellence.<sup>103</sup>

### **Physical Development and Restoring the Image of God**

#### **A Healthy, Balanced Lifestyle**

There are a number of characteristics to the physical dimension of humans that White viewed as important components in restoring the image of God in humanity. She cites the biblical example of Daniel and his friends who insisted on a healthy lifestyle by refusing to eat the king’s unhealthy food. Shortly thereafter, it was ascertained that they were ten times wiser than those who ate the traditional food at the king’s court. The story

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 290-291.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 74.

ends with Daniel and his friends being promoted to high-ranking diplomatic status in the ancient Babylonian and Persian empires.<sup>104</sup>

With this example in mind, White offers several reasons for Daniel's success. First, he embraced God's eternal principles found in the Bible and nature. Second, he chose very high standards for himself—mentally, physically, and spiritually. Third, he had a sense of responsibility that prioritized spiritual principles above worldly aspirations. Fourth, he was very careful to maintain his physical health for optimal performance. Above all, he exercised an unwavering trust in God. As a result, in “physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainments they [Daniel and his friends] stood unrivaled.”<sup>105</sup>

White believed that individuals seeking by God's grace to restore the image of God in their lives would be like Daniel. She asserts that those who through faith abide by God's laws and live a life in harmony with His precepts will be more capable than those who do not attend to holistic development. Accordingly, White attributes a major reason for Daniel's triumph to his fastidious habits of health. He refused to do anything that would weaken his physical constitution and compromise his ability to think and reason clearly.<sup>106</sup> Balanced attention to the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions was an important key to his success.

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<sup>104</sup>See Dan 1:1-21.

<sup>105</sup>White, *Education*, 55. See also idem, *Prophets and Kings*, 481-483.

<sup>106</sup>White, *Prophets and Kings*, 486. See also idem, “Give unto the Lord the Glory Due unto His Name,” *Review and Herald*, September 12, 1899, 581; idem, “True Wisdom,” *Youth's Instructor*, November 26, 1896, 386; idem, “The Avondale Health Retreat,” *Australasian Union Record*, July 26, 1899, 5-7.

This concept of “balance” is an important component of White’s restoration of the image-of-God motif. She defines restoring the image of God as an education that strengthens all one’s “powers,” the physical included, while simultaneously avoiding the ideas, habits, and practices “gained in the school of the Prince of Darkness.”<sup>107</sup> A significant component of education is to teach students how to balance the mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions. If a student’s education is restricted primarily to book learning, then he or she risks becoming unbalanced—diminishing the ability to learn.<sup>108</sup>

As noted earlier, White asserted that one of the main reasons for Adventist education was the development of this balanced program of study. She believed that public schools ignored the physical and moral training of their students. Therefore, “many youths come forth from institutions of learning with morals debased, and physical powers enfeebled; with no knowledge of practical life, and little strength to perform its duties.”<sup>109</sup> She instead advocated a well-balanced education where the “laws of nature” were seen as the “laws of God.” She believed that this unique balance would lead to “stronger minds and purer hearts.”<sup>110</sup>

White insisted that parents and teachers take time to examine the weak points in a student’s holistic development so that the mental powers could develop proportionally

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<sup>107</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 12.

<sup>108</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 321.

<sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, 325.

with the physical and spiritual.<sup>111</sup> In 1895 she wrote, “True education embraces physical, mental and moral training, in order that all the powers shall be fitted for the best development, to do service for God, and to work for the uplifting of humanity.”<sup>112</sup> Walter Howe, in his exploration into Adventist educational philosophy, wrote that White’s concept of harmonious educational development means that not even the spiritual dimension should crowd out the mental or the physical. The physical dimension of restoring the image of God includes much more than sports or recreational activity. It also encompasses school environment, diet, rest, recreation, light, posture, appropriate play, hygiene, growth, and physical labor.<sup>113</sup> The rest of this chapter will examine, from White’s perspective, how these aspects of the physical realm help to restore the image of God.

### Education, Health Reform, and Restoring the Image of God

Physical health is an important result of holistic lifestyle education for Ellen White. She believed that unhealthy bodies often led to unhealthy minds, and unhealthy minds prevented the truths of God from penetrating one’s thinking. This in turn impeded the restoration of the image of God in humanity. She once stated, “Health should be as

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<sup>111</sup>Walter Howe discusses in detail Ellen White’s use of this concept of balance. Howe, 44.

<sup>112</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 387; idem, *The Ministry of Healing*, 395-398. Note that White’s comments on these pages combine her holistic approach toward balanced education and her service-is-real-life-learning concept along with her uplifting of humanity motif.

<sup>113</sup>Howe, 38-41; White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:143; idem, *Counsels to Parents*, 295-296; idem, *Education*, 7-8.



sacredly guarded as the character” because she saw the two so closely entwined.<sup>114</sup>

God’s work of restoration is marred by those who live out of harmony with God’s health laws. Contrastingly, God delights to enable His creation to live in gladness and health.<sup>115</sup>

As noted in chapter 3, White’s expressed concern for health emerged well before she fully developed her restoration motif. Nevertheless, she regularly combined health and education prior to her overt application of the restoration motif in education.<sup>116</sup> In 1882, she wrote, “Physical health lies at the very foundation of all the student’s ambitions and hopes.”<sup>117</sup> If a student is unhealthy, it is very difficult to benefit fully from a quality education. Thus, she promoted the idea that students should understand the “definite and unvarying” laws of health.<sup>118</sup> She recommended that all students study physiology along with the workings of the mind by exploring methods of keeping their bodies in good health for optimum learning. In this way students could positively respond to her admonition to “know thyself.”<sup>119</sup> White believed that “right living depends on right thinking, and that physical activity is essential to purity of thought.”<sup>120</sup> She again spells out this connection by stating: “Recklessness in regard to bodily health tends to

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<sup>114</sup>White, *Education*, 195; idem, *Prophets and Kings*, 488.

<sup>115</sup>White, *Education*, 198; idem, *The Ministry of Healing*, 128; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 346.

<sup>116</sup>See pages 245-250 in chapter 3.

<sup>117</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 72.

<sup>118</sup>Note that White wrote a number of books outlining these “laws.” *The Ministry of Healing* represents her mature thoughts on health and lifestyle reform.

<sup>119</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 84.

<sup>120</sup>White, *Education*, 209.

recklessness in morals.”<sup>121</sup> Therefore, an integral part of a student’s education should include instruction along with practical experience for students to learn about health and lifestyle issues.<sup>122</sup>

White’s restoration motif demanded these high standards of health, hence, her restorative cornucopia of specific reforms. In her educational scheme, wrong habits in eating, drinking, dressing, and even in recreation needed to be corrected.<sup>123</sup> She felt that an Adventist school’s curriculum should be designed in such a way that every student would be taught principles of health—how diet and exercise dramatically affect the working of the mind and how this in turn influences the restoration of the image of God.<sup>124</sup> White even examined how something as simple as posture could affect student success. She believed it would impact not only the student’s own health but might also influence the way he or she is perceived by others. Using the voice properly to speak clearly and convincingly was tied to her concept of fostering a healthy demeanor. Even proper attire was discussed as playing a role in the health and success of students.<sup>125</sup>

In addition to the above, students were to be taught the importance of good hygiene and study habits. For example, studying where sunlight and fresh air are abundant creates a better learning environment. White advocated a vegetarian diet and the avoidance of harmful stimulants (tobacco, alcoholic drinks, and certain types of

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<sup>121</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 160.

<sup>122</sup>White, *Education*, 196.

<sup>123</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 126.

<sup>124</sup>White, *Education*, 197.

<sup>125</sup>*Ibid.*, 199.

condiments) as important elements in producing students who could think clearly and with moral rectitude. She believed that a poor diet damages physical health, which in turn negatively affects mental development.<sup>126</sup> Exercising self-control by avoiding those things that might destroy health or weaken the mind were virtues to be taught and practiced in the schools. Through Christ's grace, teachers were to help students develop an interest in healthy habits that would last a lifetime.<sup>127</sup> Developing these positive habits played an important role in restoring the image of God in students.

White placed much of the responsibility for health education in the hands of denominational teachers who themselves were to model healthy lifestyles.<sup>128</sup> Perhaps this is one underrated advantage of Adventist education over other systems of education. Rare is the public school that teaches lifestyle training to students as a priority. Yet White promoted health education and lifestyle improvement as integral to a curriculum that emphasizes the restoration of the image of God in humanity. In White's view, to do anything less would limit the Creator's plan for the individual. "Instead of marring God's handiwork, [students] will have an ambition to make all that is possible of themselves, in order to fulfill the Creator's glorious plan. Thus they will come to regard obedience to the laws of health, not as a matter of sacrifice or self-denial, but as it really is, an inestimable privilege and blessing."<sup>129</sup> Rather than the application of petty restrictions, healthy living becomes a means to an important end, the end being

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<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 202-206.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 198.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 176.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 201.

cooperation with God in restoring His image in the life. In this way health education and lifestyle training play a significant role in restoring the image of God in humanity.

### Environment and Restoring the Image of God

Christian educator Lois Le Bar, in discussing the Israelite “wilderness school,” focused on the importance of school location in an educational institution’s curriculum. Though writing in the mid-1950s well past the peak of progressive educational influence, she reiterates a number of themes that are similar to what White wrote fifty years earlier when the philosophy of progressive education was still in its incipient stage.

Le Bar postulated that “learning is integrally bound up with the environment. . . . The learner is profoundly affected by his physical surrounding” and the people around him.<sup>130</sup> Similarly, White had written earlier, “Our young people need to be surrounded with wholesome, uplifting influences.”<sup>131</sup> White believed that the environment where young people are trained plays a significant role in restoring the image of God. Citing Moses as an example, she emphasized that discipline and self-mastery were character traits he developed in order to uplift an entire race of people—the Israelites. Moses’ wilderness environment helped shape this character by teaching reliance on God alone—away from the distractions of the cities of Egypt. Living in an environment deep in the heart of nature provided the atmosphere that enabled Moses to be more attuned to the workings of God. White notes that even the Apostle Paul, immediately after his

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<sup>130</sup>Le Bar, *Education*, 89.

<sup>131</sup>Ellen G. White, “Notes of Travel—No. 5,” *Review and Herald*, July 19, 1906, 7-8.

conversion, selected a protective, natural environment where he could focus his energies on spiritual training and development.<sup>132</sup>

Meredith Gray, writing about the history of the first Adventist educational institution, noted that the foremost reason for establishing denominational schools deals with environment—protecting the young people from the “immoral influences of worldly schools.”<sup>133</sup> Adventist education, under the watchful eye of White, advocated schooling that would avoid artificiality and showiness while seeking to shun educational practices that would “poison the fountain of morality and religion.”<sup>134</sup> As a natural consequence, White sought to establish superior schools located in a safe environment away from the negative influences of the cities. Denominational institutions were to exert an optimistic and uplifting influence that would produce students who would be positive agents for good. The school was to throw a protective curtain around the students, creating a “homelike” atmosphere to help guard against worldly temptations and immorality.<sup>135</sup> She envisioned a nurturing and invigorating environment where the student’s mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions could be restored in the image of God with few distractions.<sup>136</sup> Students, motivated by this positive atmosphere, would then be better suited to apply their education to the practical challenges of the workplace. Students

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<sup>132</sup>White, *Education*, 63-65.

<sup>133</sup>Gray, 55.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>White, *Counsels on Education*, 52. See also Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 57.

<sup>136</sup>White, *Education*, 100-101, 211-212, 293.

were to serve “in the world” as Christian leaders, yet were to avoid being unduly influenced by it.

White feared the power that various temptations had in deceiving students to follow a path that would mar their characters.<sup>137</sup> This fear of lurking temptation is illustrated in the following quotation, highlighting her distaste for the urban school locations of her day:

It seems cruel to establish our schools in the cities, where the students are prevented from learning precious lessons taught by nature. It is a mistake to call families into the city, where children and youth breathe an atmosphere of corruption and crime, sin and violence, intemperance and ungodliness. Oh, it is a terrible mistake to allow children to come in contact with that which makes such a fearful impression on their senses. Children and youth cannot be too fully guarded from familiarity with the pictures of iniquity as common as in all large cities.<sup>138</sup>

It was quite common in the nineteenth century for intellectual society to rage against the evils of urban living.<sup>139</sup> James White, Ellen’s husband, also charged that the corrupting influences of the world could largely be avoided if Adventists separated

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<sup>137</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 495.

<sup>138</sup>White, *Spalding and Magan Testimonies*, 186.

<sup>139</sup>For example, public educator William Phelps wrote in his introduction to Page’s *Theory and Practice of Teaching* (originally published in 1847) that rural living was far healthier than residing in the filthy cities (7). The Romantic Movement cherished a “heightened interest in nature” while upholding strong convictions toward individual rights—both of which were often compromised in cities. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Romanticism,” CD-ROM (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992, Microsoft Bookshelf 1994 Multi Media Reference Library). Melissa Brotton has written an interesting comparison between the lives of children living in the city and those who lived in the country in the context of Georgian England. Although referring to a generation earlier than that of Ellen White’s America, many of the dangers found in filthy cities remained well into the twentieth century. In the early years of the industrial revolution, children who lived in the country fared better than their urban counterparts did. Melissa Brotton, “Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Juvenilia* and Children’s Culture in Georgian England: An Introduction to ‘Julia or Virtue’” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Dakota, 2004).

themselves from it.<sup>140</sup> The cities during this time were very unpleasant, with the air polluted by soot from coal and wood fires. The city environment was further degraded with the pungent odor of dung-filled streets. In many inner cities, sanitation laws were nonexistent or weakly enforced. The physical degradation abounding in city life was compounded for Ellen White by the moral challenges of vain, self-seeking, and idle urban living.<sup>141</sup> Cities emphasized the artificial works of men, while in the peaceful countryside the creations of God seemed more conducive to an education focused on restoring the image of God in students. In the countryside, it was easier to hear the voice of God than in the spiritually diminished clamor of city life.<sup>142</sup>

To implement her belief in the importance of physical activity, White also insisted on significant tracts of school land. Not only was she concerned about protecting the school environment from the temptations that might creep in from the surrounding community, but she also advocated work-study programs to learn practical trades, especially agriculture.<sup>143</sup> Fostering a lifestyle that cherished “true re-creation” meant that the location of the school was critical. “Those with whom mental and physical well-

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<sup>140</sup>James White, “Sabbath-Keepers’ Children,” *Review and Herald*, August 20, 1857, 125-126. Early Adventism was generally separatist in nature. “Separation from the world” required developing a set of social institutions that would allow Adventists a type of safe haven from the temptations of the cities. See Godfrey T. Anderson, “Sectarianism and Organization: 1846-1864,” in *Adventism in America*, ed. Land, 38, 51, 66. From these havens, Adventists were to reach the world with their unique message. The development and recent waning of this “separatist” ideology are analyzed in depth in Bull and Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary*, 2nd ed., 244-255.

<sup>141</sup>White, *Education*, 33-34.

<sup>142</sup>White, *Fundamentals*, 320.

<sup>143</sup>See Ellen G. White to Dr. and Mrs. John Harvey Kellogg, 27 August 1895, Letter 47a, 1895, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

being is of greater moment than money or the claims and customs of society, should seek for their children the benefit of nature's teaching and recreation amidst her surroundings."<sup>144</sup>

From the very beginnings of Adventist education White held that physical inactivity coupled with inordinate rote mental exercise "strains the brain" and leads students to immoral amusements. The solution was to induce students to connect book learning with wholesome outdoor exercise. Thus, she advocated agriculture, kinesthetic industries, and recreation in the pristine environment of nature—and all on the school grounds if possible.<sup>145</sup> For similar reasons, the aesthetics of the school grounds were also considered important. Students were to perform a significant role in keeping the grounds attractive, which would not only give them useful employment but also refine their taste for a quality environment.

In this model, the best-situated schools had abundant opportunities for recreation in nature. For example, White extolled the area around Pacific Union College and St. Helena Sanitarium as being among the most scenic properties she had ever seen, a superior environment for hiking and communing with God. Because of this conviction, she frequently encouraged ever-larger land acquisitions that would enable the grounds to be exclusively tailored to the holistic needs of students and patients.<sup>146</sup> An environment

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<sup>144</sup>White, *Education*, 212.

<sup>145</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 288; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 3:155; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:522; idem, "Proper Education," *Signs of the Times*, April 29, 1875, 199; idem, *Education*, 208-209, 211.

<sup>146</sup>Arthur White, *The Lonely Years*, 244. St. Helena sanitarium served as a hospital where patients could enjoy the scenes of nature out in the sunlight and fresh air. White believed that getting patients outside on relaxed nature walks was therapeutic and assisted in regaining health.



that could be totally dedicated to restoring the image of God through lifestyle and educational opportunity was important to her.<sup>147</sup> The natural world that surrounded Adventist schools was to serve as a tangible object lesson reminding students and teachers of the great controversy while illustrating how good can eventually conquer evil. Even though sin blights the face of nature, God’s redeeming power can still be seen. Meditation amid such scenes was to uplift students’ minds to the Creator.<sup>148</sup>

White felt that teachers should maximize these educational assets by teaching students the value of taking time out of their hectic lives to enter this natural world to quietly commune with God. Students would learn to reflect while listening for the voice of God. In this way they could experience physical, mental, and spiritual renewal and so become better able to heed the uplifting influence of the Holy Spirit. Such a lifestyle would lend a fresh perspective on life, strengthening and refreshing the mind.<sup>149</sup> Schools were to provide a natural environment that celebrated adjusting to “God’s pace”—restoring the image of God through introspection, inspiration, and wholesome recreation.<sup>150</sup>

### Experiential Education and Active Learning

In addition to stressing the importance of a school’s geographical environment,

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Both Pacific Union College and the St. Helena Sanitarium are located in California’s scenic Napa Valley region.

<sup>147</sup>For example, White, *Counsels to Parents*, 187.

<sup>148</sup>White, *Education*, 100-101.

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*, 250-252, 260-261.

<sup>150</sup>*Ibid.*, 250-252.

White also emphasized dynamic interaction between students and teachers. She described the preferred environment of the classroom as a place where heavenly angels can feel comfortable visiting.<sup>151</sup> Teachers were to be a “channel of light where the Lord can use them as His agents to reflect His own likeness of character.”<sup>152</sup> Thus, it was very important that teachers themselves be accountable for restoring the image of God in their own lives.

White advocated that students learn to apply their knowledge practically, actively, and experientially—the basic hallmarks of what later became the tenets of progressive education. Citing the biblical Eden school, she listed three experiential elements relevant to true education. First was communication with God—the source of all truth—through an active, vibrant spiritual experience. Bible reading, prayer, and Christian fellowship play a key role here, and should be an integral part of every student’s education. Second, individuals can learn more of God’s workings through close observation of nature (the natural world) while attentively noting nature’s laws (science). Useful occupation was her third method of improving the educational experience—learning by doing.<sup>153</sup> The overarching principal seemed to be that all of these experiences could be maximized through emphasizing physically active learning processes. The next several pages will examine the dynamic interaction of these three areas in more detail.

Reacting against the often-sedentary nature of nineteenth-century education,

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<sup>151</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 170.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup>See White, *Education*, 21.

White stated, “The whole body is designed for action, not inaction.”<sup>154</sup> She believed that part of the educational process must be directly related to physical activity. This is why manual and vocational endeavors were integral to her experiential educational scheme.<sup>155</sup> She suggested that graduates should be proficient in diverse self-sustaining tasks such as preparing a meal, responding to emergencies and accidents, treating diseases, and gaining the skills to build a house or church. She wanted to develop balanced students—students who possessed practical abilities in addition to book knowledge.<sup>156</sup>

A student was never to withdraw from the “real world” while studying at school. Instead, students were to shoulder the responsibilities of everyday life, while their teachers assisted them in developing habits of thrift, industry, and practical skills in addition to what they were learning in the classroom. Because traditional schooling frequently fails to educate both head and hand, students often fail when attempting to translate theory into practice.<sup>157</sup> The solution, White believed, was to encourage real-life activities by combining classroom studies with practical and experiential learning, rather than relying on detached theories alone.

Well-structured excursions, field trips, and recreational activities would be integral to the educational experience.<sup>158</sup> White preferred for these activities to be conducted out in the natural creations of God, where the intellectual benefits of

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<sup>154</sup>White, *Counsels on Education*, 92.

<sup>155</sup>See Knowles, 6.

<sup>156</sup>White, *Education*, 221.

<sup>157</sup>*Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>158</sup>*Ibid.*, 213.

observations in nature would be combined with kinesthetic movement. The spiritual dimension would also be strengthened as the mind would be directed toward God's creation.<sup>159</sup>

In the context of limiting the desire of students' attraction to peer-induced fashion, she recommended activity in the great outdoors as a corrective educational tool. She encouraged recreation on the river or lake, climbing the hills, gazing on sunsets, and exploring the treasures of wood and field as well as cultivating plants and flowers.<sup>160</sup> From skilled teachers providing definite learning objectives and aims her "lab styles" of learning were to include teaching biological concepts of how things grow.

Taking students outside to work with their hands brings them into constant contact with the "mysteries of life" and the "loveliness of nature" which White believed sharpened the mind, "refining and elevating the character."<sup>161</sup> Fastening her philosophy of physical activity firmly in her restoration theme, White wrote that manual labor is a "part of God's great plan for our recovery from the fall" and provides a safeguard against temptation by checking self-indulgence while promoting the virtues of industry, purity, and firmness.<sup>162</sup> Learning and working in the great out-of-doors were to give the student a healthy dose of common sense and much practical wisdom to actualize theoretical knowledge.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup>For example, see White, *Counsels to Parents*, 80.

<sup>160</sup>White, *Education*, 248.

<sup>161</sup>*Ibid.*, 111-112; 218.

<sup>162</sup>*Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid.*, 220.

Practical work on campus or service to the community is beneficial to the educational program as it encourages close observation and independent thought while developing an awareness of cause-effect relationships. White wanted to develop useful, intelligent, physically fit, and hard-working students who would be proficient in things practical as well as intellectual.<sup>164</sup> An Adventist education that combined intellectual with practical learning was seen as a great educational advantage—designed to give the student a more comprehensive education than they might receive elsewhere.

White believed that God favored a comprehensive education that would make provision for satisfying legitimate wants and developing noble aspirations. To help accomplish these ideals, it is important to foster social interaction. Feasts, celebrations, socials, and similar activities, when properly conducted, could help enhance the learning experience.<sup>165</sup> Education is always to be participatory and experiential. All activities of the school are to foster a sense of loyalty and solidarity with the school's purpose for existing. Even the arts are to work toward this end. For example, White noted the important role music plays in uplifting the soul. Music that impresses the heart with spiritual truth and praise for God is a powerful educational tool that can improve the learning experience.<sup>166</sup>

Object lessons, astronomy, scientific discoveries, field trips, introspection in the woods, and even the observation of animal behavior are to help students perceive and

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 47, 222.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 41-43.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 39, 167-168.

appreciate the lessons of natural law.<sup>167</sup> Through these experiences, the student would sense the integrated wholeness of God’s creation and the possibilities of reintegration and wholeness within the human experience. From White’s perspective, such an experiential education turns the “world into a lesson book, and the life [into] a school.”<sup>168</sup> This was the same teaching style Jesus used—interpreting the scenes of nature and the events of daily life to convey timeless lessons.<sup>169</sup>

Experiential education for White happens when students are taught to search in nature for scriptural insights. Because the Author of both nature and Scripture is the same Being, every object in nature can speak of the Creator, ensuring that for the perceptive student the world will never be a lonely and desolate place. Instead, the natural world becomes a “messenger of hope” by demonstrating the power of God’s restorative work in His creation.<sup>170</sup>

This type of education, however, insists on new paradigms—for as students develop an observational acuity of the world around them, they become more active learners, innovatively applying the concepts they are studying to their understanding of the physical and spiritual world. As a consequence, properly educated students “see” significantly more in the routine of everyday life than do many of their peers. As a result,

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<sup>167</sup>Ibid., 248, 102, 117-119; White, *Counsels to Parents*, 457.

<sup>168</sup>White, *Education*, 100, 120.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid., 102-103. Note that White dedicated an entire book, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, to giving specific examples as to how Christ used “object lessons” (parables) in His teaching and how such teaching strategies can be beneficial today. For example, see White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 17, 21, 24-25, 80, 82-83, 87-88.

<sup>170</sup>White, *Education*, 26-27.

they derive rich and holistic educational benefits from sources that for most students go unnoticed.

### **Summary**

White characterized non-Christian teachers as unaware of the holistic principal of restoring the image of God in students—physically, mentally, and spiritually. This restoration takes place in the spiritual realm by utilizing a biblical worldview throughout the curriculum—integrating faith and learning. Discovering the eternal truths of God as exemplified in the scenes of nature and the Bible provides a solid framework for Christ’s regenerative grace to transform the lives of students and teachers. Service to the community is the natural outgrowth of such an education.

White’s optimistic perspective of humanity’s potential for restoration also extends into the mental realm. She advocated developing well-educated students who could think clearly and independently, yet possess the skills necessary to work cooperatively to solve real-life problems. White’s restoration motif utilizes a broad concept of education, extending the curriculum into the physical realm to include health and lifestyle instruction within a protective environment. Daily exercise in the outdoors, experiential and cooperative learning strategies, plus a conscious effort to promote student health are important components of White’s educational vision. It was White’s hope that as students were exposed to experiential learning in the natural realm, this would in turn lead them to an experiential knowledge of God in their individual lives as the

“wholeness” of His creation is absorbed. A personal knowledge of God is the essence of White’s image-of-God motif.<sup>171</sup>

Reaching toward this ideal became a major justification in her eyes for Adventist schools. In this respect, the comprehensive style of education that White recommended insisted on significant commitment from students, parents, teachers, and administrators. She envisioned schools that would actively integrate the eternal laws of God into every class and, as a result, develop exceptional students. Fortified with such an education, students would continue venturing out into the larger community, encouraging and assisting others to improve their lives through a lifestyle characterized by the holistic principles of God. In this way, schools would perform an important role in restoring the image of God in humanity throughout the world.

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<sup>171</sup>Erling Snorrason provides a helpful summary of White’s “experiential knowledge of God” concept as it relates to her philosophy of education in his dissertation. See Snorrason, 105-112, 243-247.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: THE RESTORATION MOTIF AND NEW DEGREES OF RELEVANCE

#### **Summary and Analysis**

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, White wrote, “The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul.”<sup>1</sup> Adam, though originally sinless, chose to sin and thus marred the image of God for every subsequent generation. The plan of salvation was then implemented to initiate the process of restoring God’s image in humanity. “To bring him back to the perfection in which he was first created is the great object of life—the object that underlies every other. It is the work of parents and teachers, in the education of the youth, to cooperate with the divine purpose; and in so doing they are ‘laborers together with God.’”<sup>2</sup>

As noted in chapter 2, there were others besides White who recognized the need to restore the image of God in humanity. The idea of a cosmic battle between good and evil is something that dates back to the legends of antiquity. Despite the similarities, however, Herbert Douglass suggests that it is likely no one other than White has

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<sup>1</sup>White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 595.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

interpreted *education* through the lens of the great controversy theme.<sup>3</sup> The conclusions of this dissertation add additional evidence to the claim that the *combination* of the great controversy theme with the image-of-God motif as applied to education does seem to be a unique understanding. Yet as George Knight notes, whether or not someone else has used the restoration theme exactly as did White does little to change the fact that the redemptive theme seems largely absent in the writings of modern Christian educators (2006).<sup>4</sup> If others spoke of similar topics, it still appears that only White thoroughly transposed these themes into an operable educational strategy.

Regardless, the restoration of the image-of-God motif is foundational to the Seventh-day Adventist educational perspective. Restoring the image of God in students speaks of constant advancement: mentally, physically, and spiritually. For White, salvation must include a restoration process. This philosophy distinctively defines the nature of every student and clarifies what is most needed for the human condition—the saving grace of Christ that enables restoration. She implied that this philosophy would lead to an educational system so comprehensive that it would be superior to any non-holistic curriculum.

Yet, during her lifetime, she faced significant challenges in implementing her educational vision. As noted in chapter 1, the earliest attempts at Adventist schooling led to curriculums that were very traditional. There was little “creative vibrancy.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 108.

<sup>4</sup>Knight, “The Devil Takes a Look,” 186-187.

<sup>5</sup>For example, see Hilde, “Bookmarks,” 61-64.

Compounding this dilemma, shortly after White's death, a somewhat fundamentalist tradition took root in certain sections of Adventism.<sup>6</sup> As explained in chapter 1, White's lofty ideas for Adventist education were not fully realized in her day, although perhaps the Australian school at Avondale came closest.

White's goal of "continual advancement" in restoring the image of God disallows the claim to sinless perfection. The fullness of the image of God is absolute perfection and can only be represented by God's perfect character alone. For educators and students, growth toward perfection is a continual process that will never achieve the level of an infinite God. White noted that even before the fall of Adam, human beings were created to grow ever more fully into God's image throughout eternity. She advocated that students and faculty associated with Adventist education should constantly seek deeper understandings of the natural laws of God as exemplified in nature and biblical revelation. As such, Adventist schools were to offer a superior education that would invite all humanity to make it their lifestyle to explore fresh truths from God. For the same reason, White's educational concepts preclude a blueprint (one-size-fits-all) model of education. Instead, her restoration motif encouraged applied innovation in developing a curriculum based on principles whose applications would vary by local conditions and circumstances.

White was not satisfied with just nominal improvements to the traditional education model of her day. Instead, she envisioned an educational system that would

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<sup>6</sup>See chapter 1, pages 67-70. These tendencies were probably due in part to a reaction against the earlier traditional classical curriculums that dominated Adventist higher education through the early 1890s.

continually advance toward higher degrees of excellence. This is why she believed that the Adventist school should not “pattern itself after the popular schools.”<sup>7</sup> In White’s opinion, educational systems that did not acknowledge the existence of God’s objective truths simply could not compete with “true education.”

White sought to develop an innovative and optimistic kind of schooling, one that went beyond what she saw as the limiting dimension of one-sided, theoretical, classical education. Rather than viewing White as advocating a reactionary, fundamentalist style of education, she should instead be understood as dynamically seeking to develop a unique approach to education that was more relevant than what was being offered in her day. As we have seen in chapter 2, she did not reject, but partially embraced, the pragmatic approach of vocational training (A&M pattern) and even aspects of Dewey’s experiential, hands-on style of progressive education. But despite this seeming affirmation, she did not conclude that either progressive or vocational models of schooling were the ultimate standards of education. Instead, she accepted a definition and purpose that embraced as its primary aim an experiential knowledge of God, which is foundational for restoring the image of God in humanity.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, she was frequently experimenting with fresh educational methods and ideas throughout her life.

A. W. Tozer advocated a similar approach when he charged Christian educators to “stop imitating and start innovating.”<sup>9</sup> In an attempt to capture a mythical past, educators

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<sup>7</sup>White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:61.

<sup>8</sup>See Snorrason, 99-106, for additional scholarly input on this observation.

<sup>9</sup>A. W. Tozer, quoted in Le Bar, *Education*, 49. Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897-1963) was an American Protestant pastor and author who emphasized innovative mission work.

who compulsively look backward instead of forward to new heights, risk being formalistic, defending the status quo instead of improving society through innovative discoveries of the eternal truths of God.<sup>10</sup> George Knight notes that White herself was constantly interacting with contemporary conditions to develop a superior, holistic educational system. Ultimately, this compelled her to advocate a high level of academic accountability, which led to the later decision to accredit all denominational schools. She believed each generation needed to rediscover and update the insights and innovations of the past in order to maintain relevancy in changing times. The restoration theme provides a philosophical framework and theological foundation that can inspire educators to seek new and creative innovations relevant to the twenty-first century.

Restoring the image of God motivated White’s entire philosophy, yet she seemed comfortable with various methods for achieving this—from the agricultural-based program at Madison under Sutherland, to the academic rigors of Magan’s College of Medical Evangelists and the liberal arts programs of both Emmanuel Missionary and Pacific Union colleges. Rather than pitting denominational schools against each other by calling one “right” and another “wrong,” she challenged all schools to improve within their own distinctive sphere. Perhaps this is why she wrote in 1901, “The Lord has not designed any one special, exact plan in education.”<sup>11</sup> She realized that for Adventist education to survive, it needed to be dynamic, distinctive, and exceptional. It was to be

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<sup>10</sup>White continually advocated the progressive nature of one’s understanding of truth; the idea of progressive “light” is integral to her great controversy theme. White, *Great Controversy*, 164.

<sup>11</sup>White, *Manuscript Releases*, 10:305.

based on an encompassing philosophy rooted in biblical theology. These principles would inform practices and these practices would be shaped by needs.

In the preface to the 1941 edition of White's *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, the trustees of her publications boasted that many of her educational themes since 1872 were now being advocated by progressive educators.<sup>12</sup> They felt that the ideas espoused by White were indeed on the forefront of educational thought. Yet to canonize her educational writings from any one particular stage of her life could make it difficult to follow her overall example of continual growth and improvement within the theological and philosophical framework of her restoration motif. Her perspective seemed to be more progressive in nature than status-quo or conservative. Because the emphasis on "progressivism" as a separate movement in education gave way after the 1950s to modernistic and postmodern perspectives, White's dynamic model becomes even more important in keeping denominational education relevant.

In harmony with this model, a goal of this dissertation has been to re-examine White's educational concepts and philosophy. Walter Howe, in discussing the philosophy of Adventist education more than fifty years ago, reiterated White's perspective that Adventist education should be uncompromising in excellence.<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that in recent years a number of Adventist schools have been recognized as offering a high quality of education.<sup>14</sup> Such distinction would probably

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<sup>12</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 5.

<sup>13</sup>Howe, 48.

<sup>14</sup>*U.S. News and World Report*, 2005, college ranking guide, included a number of Adventist colleges and universities in their higher rankings.

please White, as high levels of educational proficiency were an important aspect of her restoration motif. However, some might argue that she envisioned this process as taking place from a more sectarian perspective, a perspective that saw the world looking to Adventists for educational innovation instead of Adventists seeking “worldly” affirmation. Additionally, some are fearful of what they see as a pluralistic approach that over-emphasizes reflecting the values and culture of the local community instead of boldly developing new educational vistas. Still others might express concern that the increase in academic quality is due to a preoccupation with mental acuity at the expense of the spiritual and physical dimensions.

### **Implications for Thought Leaders in Adventist Education**

Amidst these many voices, what might Adventist educational innovation include? What might be some creative tools that apply White’s image-of-God motif to contemporary education? First, teachers and administrators could continue emphasizing the *distinct lens* that Adventists use to view the world—the restoration of the image-of-God motif coupled with the great controversy theme. Accordingly, George Knight speaks of a student’s “infinite possibilities,” that is, the highest achievement possible through cooperation with God. Teachers are to develop “the good” in each student—a process of transformation.<sup>15</sup> When the “mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God,” the effect on the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of humanity should be dramatic. This is what White considers “the highest education,” God’s model

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<sup>15</sup>Knight, *Myths in Adventism*, 105.

of development.<sup>16</sup> In this context, teachers serve as spiritual advisors to students, much like ministers.

*Lifestyle education* is another discipline where Adventist education can excel while building on White's restoration motif. Ideally, the faculty, staff, and administration of a school will play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and lifestyle of students in both formal and informal settings. White states that this endeavor should be a conscious educational effort, part of restoring the image of God in humanity. What one believes intellectually should directly inform how one lives, as they are inextricably interrelated.

In this context, *healthful practices* and exercise can be promoted as part of the educational system. Everybody wants to be healthy, and schools can build on this interest by providing many outlets for physical activity for all students. Adventist schools are already well known for their healthy food choices and sensitivity to the nutritional needs of students. It would seem natural then to influence students to exercise outdoors in the fresh air and sunlight as an integral component of an Adventist educational program.<sup>17</sup> To reach these goals a number of Adventist schools and retreat centers are currently exploring fresh methods of initiating and expanding *outdoor education, hands-on experiential learning, and physical education* for all students. Some Adventist academies and colleges are ideally situated on large acreages that lend themselves nicely to innovative efforts along these lines. Maximizing acreage assets to

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<sup>16</sup>Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1911), 126.

<sup>17</sup>Many Adventist schools have quality sports programs, which assist in the physical development of some students. A potential drawback of traditional sports programs is that only the better athletes excel, often relegating the majority of students to the bleachers.



improve the learning experiences of students gives denominational schools an advantage over many traditional and urban institutions.

Another of White's educational concepts is that there should be *no dichotomy between faith and a students daily life*. She stated that "true education is religion," not just something that parallels it.<sup>18</sup> Devotional activities in such a paradigm are not detached entities in students' lives, but in fact shape their experiences in every detail. From both teachers and the students, what is taught and what is learned is filtered through the grid of a uniquely God-centered world-view. A false dichotomy for White is to view spirituality and "real life" as separate and unrelated. Spirituality should inform the daily interactions and decisions of practical life. Restoring the image of God integrates one's mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions into a vibrant, cohesive whole.

In this context, *contemporary applications* are important. White's principles of continual advancement, growth, and development suggest that schooling strategies should not be limited to the way things were done before. While it is helpful to analyze how White herself implemented the restoration theme, to expect that her educational principles should be applied exactly as she did seems irresponsible in light of her philosophy. White lived in a frontier-industrial age quite different from the world we live in today or the world we will probably face in the future. The principles of restoration, holistic balance, exercise, sunlight, fresh air, experiential learning, and academic quality can be applied in as many ways as one's creativity might suggest. The concept of restoring the image of God in humanity goes far beyond an industrial-labor perspective or

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<sup>18</sup>White, *Counsels to Parents*, 108.

even a utilitarian approach. Attempting to impose nineteenth-century realities on White's principles of holistic development could limit creativity and stifle productive educational uses for school properties.<sup>19</sup>

Many schooling applications can be informed by the restoration of the image-of-God motif. The above are only a few examples. Lois Le Bar once stated that the biggest problem with Christians is that they tend to buttress the status quo, even if it means falling short of their objectives or even becoming extinct. Rather than improve methods or accept the risks that come with change, many organizations just quietly die out. Embracing only a provincial practice of schooling or shying away from significant educational innovations can be a serious liability in the end.<sup>20</sup> To escape educational degeneration, White's restoration motif and its optimistic outlook on human potential may serve as an effective barricade against irrelevance, stagnation, and mediocrity. As Frank Gaebelein wrote, "The call is for Christian education to lead the way to higher things."<sup>21</sup> For Ellen White, restoring the image of God in humanity fulfills that challenge.

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<sup>19</sup>For example, agricultural lands can be transformed into community gardens—growing food directly for the local community—while outdoor education programs could improve the quality of education at all levels of schooling. Additionally, outdoor recreation trails can improve the physical development of all students. Ellen White believed that these activities could provide good public relations for Adventist schools. Arthur L. White, *The Early Elmshaven Years: 1900-1905*, Ellen G. White 5 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1981), 222.

<sup>20</sup>Le Bar, *Education*, 195-196.

<sup>21</sup>Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Pattern of God's Truth: Problems of Integration in Christian Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 80.

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