1982

William Warren Prescott, Seventh-day Adventist Educator

Gilbert M. Valentine
Andrews University

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Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies

WILLIAM WARREN PRESCOTT: SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST EDUCATOR
VOLUME I

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Gilbert Murray Valentine
August 1982
WILLIAM WARREN PRESCOTT: SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST EDUCATOR

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Gilbert Murray Valentine

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ABSTRACT

WILLIAM WARREN PRESCOTT: SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EDUCATOR

by

Gilbert Murray Valentine

Chairman: George R. Knight
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH
Doctoral Dissertation

Andrews University
Department of Education

Title: WILLIAM WARREN PRESCOTT: SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST EDUCATOR
Name of researcher: Gilbert M. Valentine
Name and title of faculty adviser: George R. Knight, Ed.D.
Date completed: August 1982

Problem
William Warren Prescott, 1855-1944, was one of the most influential educators of the Seventh-day Adventist church. As a religious educator he also served the church as preacher, writer, editor, and administrator. His influence on the church was extensive but until now there has been no comprehensive investigation of his life or evaluation of his contribution to the church.

Method
This study investigated Prescott's life from the perspective of his work as a religious educator. It has used the documentary-historical method of research. Major sources included the extensive official correspondence in the Archives of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
Seventh-day Adventists and correspondence in the Ellen G. White Estate. Official records of organizations and institutions, church periodicals, newspapers, and miscellaneous archival materials were also valuable sources of information on Prescott.

Conclusions

Prescott's contribution to the Adventist church as a religious educator was extensive. As president of Battle Creek College and first education secretary of the General Conference, he helped shape Adventist education to a significant degree in its philosophy, its curriculum, and its institutions. His leadership in establishing formal theological education for the ministry of the church has had a lasting impact.

As a theologian Prescott helped change the focus of Adventist theology. His insistent emphasis on the doctrine of Christ contributed to changes in the understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity in the church and in prophetic interpretation. His scholarly studies in history have been of lasting benefit to the church through his writing and his editorial work.

As an administrator Prescott also had a significant influence on the organizational reforms in the church accomplished in 1901.

An understanding of Prescott's life illuminates the development of early Adventist education and the theological development of the church. The study should be of value in providing a helpful perspective for continuing development in these areas.
William Warren Prescott circa 1892
President of Battle Creek College
Dedicated to
Winifred Mary Valentine
a mother
who early encouraged her son in the fear
of the Lord and in the quest for
wisdom and knowledge
It costs something to be a true teacher of the people. He who administers genuine comfort to those in trial must himself pass through the furnace. He who speaks with authority must put his own life into his utterances. He who writes to move the hearts of others must dip his pen in his own heart's blood. He who preaches effectively the gospel of unselfish love must himself experience the consuming power of self-sacrificing love. The wise counselor must have wrought his own counsel into experience. This means that the teaching which really lifts people to a higher plane of thinking and living must be vivified by the very life-power of the teacher.

William Warren Prescott
1920
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PREFACE

Without question, William Warren Prescott was one of the most influential educators of the Seventh-day Adventist church. His work as an educator, however, involved much more than what is usually meant by the restricted meaning of that word. As a religious educator, Prescott was highly influential in the formal educational setting as a teacher and an administrator, but he also made a large contribution to the church in the wider context of religious education through his work as a preacher, writer, editor, and counselor. Even as a church administrator, one of his overriding concerns was the education of the church—particularly its ministry.

Beginning his work with the church as president of its leading educational institution at Battle Creek in 1885, Prescott very quickly rose to prominence in the central leadership of the church. During his fifty-two years of service, he moved in the top circles of the church administration (for forty-two years he was a member of the General Conference Executive committee), and his contribution to the church extended far beyond Washington. In 1887, two years after he assumed the presidency of Battle Creek College, Prescott was appointed as the church's first educational director. During his decade of service in this influential position, he had the responsibility of supervising a rapidly expanding educational program. He was instrumental, therefore, in shaping, to a significant degree,
not only the organizational structure of the educational program of the Adventist church but also the basic philosophy of Adventist education. Besides being the president of the college in Battle Creek, Prescott served as president of three other colleges operated by the church and also served as chairman of the Bible department in two of them.

For a period of seven years, during a critical period of the church's history in the first decade of the twentieth century, Prescott occupied the important position of editor of the Review and Herald, the general church paper. During this same period he served as the general vice president of the church (the first to hold this official responsibility) and as the founding president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association when it was reestablished in Washington, D.C. Later he served as editor of the church-sponsored Protestant Magazine and Liberty, besides authoring a number of influential books. For the last twenty-two years of his long career he served as field secretary of the General Conference. From this position he was able to significantly influence the education of the ministry of the church and the development of its theology.

A. G. Daniells claimed that Prescott was one of the most singularly gifted men in the denomination, while the editor of the Dartmouth College Alumni Magazine suggested that the professor's contribution to the church was such that "he would long since have been a bishop and held all kinds of doctorates if his people had any use for such decorations." Yet apart from two or three short articles, no serious attempt has been made to record the life of this prominent church leader or to try to assess his contribution and...
significance to the growth and development of the Adventist church. E. K. Vanue Vere in The Wisdom Seekers, a history of Andrews University, has given the most extensive study of Prescott yet published. The chapter he devotes to Prescott, however, covers only the period during which the professor was connected with Battle Creek College. Moreover, it was written before the extensive sources of the General Conference Archives had been made available. To the present time there has been no comprehensive investigation of Prescott's life. This biographical and critical study is an attempt to fill that lack.

The purpose of this study includes much more than just chronicling the major developments of Prescott's life. It involves an attempt to illuminate and assess Prescott's contribution as a religious educator both to formal Adventist education and to the church generally through his broader educational activities of writing, editing, preaching, and administrating. It is also hoped that, in an indirect way, the study sheds some light on his personality, character, and the background of some of the important decisions and events of his life.

Because Prescott served as the leader of the educational work of the church during its crucial early years, this biographical study provides a deepened understanding of the struggles and perplexities involved in the development of the denominational educational program. Furthermore, because the professor's career with the church spanned such a long period (1885-1937), during which time he was intimately involved with the major events in the denominational history of that period, this study of his life also sheds much light on the general development of the church. It is hoped that
these new insights into Adventism's past will better equip the church to comprehend the issues it faces today in carrying out both its program of formal education and its larger mission of world evangelism.

In the treatment of Prescott's life, a basic chronological approach has been adopted. Five distinct stages marked his career. These periods have provided the basic framework of the study. Within these periods, however, Prescott's activities have occasionally had to be discussed in a more thematic fashion. As far as possible a chronological sequence has also been followed in these discussions. Some evaluation and synthesis is offered along the way where it has been felt to be appropriate, but the major evaluation has been reserved for the final chapter.

As already noted, Prescott's basic approach to his life work was that of a religious educator. Thus, it is from this perspective that this study has viewed the various aspects of his career. Prescott, however, was also quite a theologian in his own right. Moreover, his theological views unquestionably gave definite shape to his ministry. Therefore, in order to understand the professor, it has been necessary to give some attention to these theological views and his involvement in various doctrinal controversies, though it has been outside the scope of the study to make an exhaustive and systematic analysis of his theology. It has also been outside the scope of this study to make an exhaustive analysis of his editorials and other writings, although these, of course, have been thoroughly surveyed to ascertain the nature of his general teaching and his major themes.
Every biographer faces the problem of bias either in favor of or against his subject. The present writer is not exempt from this difficulty. In view of this, an earnest effort has been made to maintain a well-rounded balance in the picture of Prescott that is drawn here. Of course, complete objectivity is neither possible nor desirable. Human beings are not objective creatures. Faults and deficiencies in the subject have not been overlooked, and where conflicting opinions are expressed in the sources, they have been presented. At the same time, however, and in order to provide understanding, an effort has been made where possible, to show why failings occurred.

Again, because this study focuses on Prescott, it is possible that the picture that is drawn of him in these pages may come across to the reader somewhat larger than life. It is probably helpful to remember, therefore, that other important individuals participated in the events narrated here, and contributed in significant ways. Prescott did not live in a vacuum. Nonetheless, he was a leading figure in the church. He towered above his fellows in many ways, and his contribution to the church necessarily reflects this. But to say so is not in any way to underestimate the important contributions made by his colleagues and associates whom he respected highly, with whom he interacted, and to whom he was indebted. One suspects that Prescott himself would be the first to downplay any notice of his own achievements. He would regard them simply as the result of the gracious working of Providence, rather than any inherent merit on his part. He would, of course, be right.

The major sources for this study have been the extensive

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collections of official correspondence housed in the Archives of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and in the Ellen G. White Estate in Washington, D.C. Other rich sources have been the official records of the major organizations with which Prescott was associated in his long career. Prominent among these are General Conference committee and officers minutes, college board and faculty minutes, and publishing house board minutes. Prominent church periodicals such as the Review and Herald, Australasian Record, Protestant Magazine, and other less prominent papers and magazines have also proved to be helpful sources of information. Historical society collections and institutional archives in various places in New England, the scene of Prescott's early life, also proved helpful. Interviews and correspondence with numbers of people who were personally acquainted with Prescott, particularly in his later years, have helped to round out the picture. A fuller discussion of sources is given in the bibliography.

It hardly needs to be said that the picture drawn in these pages has been governed by the available sources. Most of the correspondence available in one way or another generally relates to official matters. This, of course, gives a certain unavoidable bias to the picture. A redeeming feature, however, is that the correspondence between church leaders in the days before telephone communications were widely available dealt with matters rather fully. Furthermore, the official correspondence is generally characterized by a refreshing candor and a disarming frankness. Unfortunately, Prescott's personal and family correspondence appears to have been inadvertently destroyed after the death of his second wife in 1959.
Future discoveries of materials will undoubtedly clarify and possibly modify some details related in these pages and add further insights into the professor’s life. That is the self-correcting nature of good scholarship. In this investigation, every known source of information has been consulted. These sources have been abundant. That, together with the fact that Prescott lived a long time and was involved in so many different prominent positions in the church, accounts for the extended length of the study.

* * *

In the completion of this project, I am indebted to many people for their assistance. I would particularly like to express my appreciation to my committee chairman, George Knight: first for having interested me in the topic and, second, for his enthusiasm, encouragement, and constructive criticism. Thanks is also due to the others members of my committee: Roy Graham, Roy Naden, Richard Schwarz, and John Waller for their careful reading of the manuscript and their incisive and gracious suggestions for improving it.

I am grateful to the officers of the Australasian Division of Seventh-day Adventists who provided finance for tuition and a leave of absence for my doctoral studies. Both my wife’s parents, Rod and Mavis Cover, and my own, Winifred and the late Ernest Valentine, financed research trips to the small towns of New England that were the scenes of Prescott’s early life. This help was invaluable. Particular thanks is also due to Bert and Mary Haloviak for graciously offering the generous hospitality of their home to an impecunious graduate student during his lengthy research visits to Washington.

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I would like to express appreciation to Don Yost, Director of the General Conference Archives, and particularly to Assistant Archivist, Bert Haloviak, whose knowledge of denominational history and whose thorough acquaintance with the sources greatly facilitated my research in the General Conference's extensive collections. Additional appreciation goes to Louise Dederen of the Heritage Room at Andrews University, Kenneth Cramer and his staff at the Dartmouth College Archives, Robert Olson and his staff at the Ellen G. White Estate in Washington, Hedwig Jemison of the Ellen G. White Estate at Andrews University, and to Milton Hook of Sydney for checking sources I could not reach.

Others whose help is appreciated in the quest for sources are: D. Birkenstock of Helderberg College; Donald Bozarth of Washington, D.C.; Moses Crouse of Aurora College; Robert Dikon of Northfield, Vermont; Marie Donahue of the Old Berwick Historical Society; John Dunn of the New Hampshire State Library; H. I. Dunton of London; Jane Knowles of Radcliffe College; Elwood Mabley of Walla Walla College; Ellen Marsh of the Takoma Park Historical Society; Robert Melville of Biddeford, Maine; K. F. Mueller of Newbold College; Jim Nix of Loma Linda University; Harold T. Otis Jr. of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C.; Arthur Patrick of Avondale College; Arnold Reye of Avondale College; and Barbara Sokolosky of Harvard University.

Special thanks is also expressed to Paul Denton and Curt Dolinsky of the Andrews University Audiovisual department for their specialized help with the illustrations, to Joyce Jones without whose editorial pen these pages would be more difficult to read than
they are, and to Murray and Beverly Chapman for their invaluable support during the latter stages of the project. Finally, this study would never have been possible without the unstinting help and support of my wife Gail. To her willing and expert hands went the unenviable task of typing and retyping the bulky manuscript. For her partnership in the project I am, and will always be, deeply indebted.

It is my hope that these pages will contribute to a greater understanding not only of William Warren Prescott but also of the church to which he gave his life and of the way God has worked in the affairs of men to accomplish His purpose.
PART ONE
1855-1885
CHAPTER I

A QUALITY HERITAGE

It was September 1855. National attention in the United States was focused on the turbulent new frontier territory of Kansas where the problem of the extension of slavery had become an explosive national issue. It was the topic of the day and already tensions were beginning to divide the north from the south. In the quiet northeastern part of the country, however, in the rural village of Alton in central New Hampshire, in a home that William Miller’s advent preaching had touched, the major concern of Advent preacher James Prescott and his wife Harriet was their newly arrived third son--William Warren, born September 2.

On his father’s side William Warren was the product of eight generations of New England farmers who had become something of a landed gentry. In 1665, James Prescott, the ancestral head of the New Hampshire branch of the Prescott family, arrived in America from Dryby of Lincolnshire, England, bearing the Prescott coat of arms with its motto "He conquerers who endures." Settling at Hampton, New Hampshire, where he secured a farm, the young colonist three years later married Mary Boulter, the daughter of another English settler. Then over a period of years, successive purchases of property and

1William was actually the second living son. The first son, Lewis Morrill, had died at age five months.
outright grants from the town proprietors (of which group James Prescott was often the moderator) made the young farmer an extensive and very influential landholder.\footnote{William Prescott, M.D., The Prescott Memorial of a Genealogical Memoir of the Prescott Families in America (Boston: Henry W. Dutton and Sons, 1870), p. 229. The following discussion relies extensively on the data assembled in this work. See appendix A for a diagramatic outline of Prescott's forebears.}

The next three generations of William's direct forebears remained in the Hampton Falls district (see fig. 1). They actively participated in church and civic affairs, and some saw service in the war with France in 1755-56, and with England twenty years later. Jeremiah Prescott (1741-1817), William's great-great-grandfather, served in the revolutionary forces against England in 1775 and rose to the rank of colonel. Other important close family connections during this period were such historic figures as the notable Colonel William Prescott who, on June 8, 1775, commanded the opening military engagement of the revolution, the famous Battle of Bunker Hill. Another was the young Dr. Samuel Prescott who, on the night of April 18, 1775, had ridden with Paul Revere and who, after Revere's capture, rode on to Concord to warn the minutemen of the approaching British troops.\footnote{Richard Wheeler, Voices of 1776 (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1972), p. 39. A more extended discussion of Prescott's direct forebears may be found in Gilbert M. Valentine, "W. W. Prescott A.M., 1855-1944: The Early Years" (research paper, 1980), pp. 5-12, AUHR.}

It was about this time that Jeremiah Prescott had moved to Epsom in the Suncook valley where he had purchased a farm. The town of Epsom which lay just twelve miles east of the New Hampshire
Fig. 1. Scenes of Prescott's Early Years

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state capital, Concord, thus became the home town of William Warren's immediate forebears.¹

Continuing the tradition of his forefathers, William's grandfather, Amos Prescott (1806-1892), took up farming and settled on a property in Epsom. It was into the home on this farm that William's father, James Lewis, was born in March 1828. James Lewis spent his youth on the farm and attended the common school in the Epsom district. At the age of sixteen, in 1844, he broke with the family farming tradition and took up an apprenticeship as a shoe manufacturer. This trade he pursued until 1868 when he took employment as a traveling salesman for a stove-polish manufacturer.

In December 1847, in the Freewill Baptist church at Epsom, James Lewis married his sixteen-year-old fiancée, Harriet M. Tripp, forming a close and enduring relationship that was to last sixty-seven years. Like her husband, Harriet also inherited a tradition of fine New England breeding. (Her great-grandmother, Ann McClary, came to Boston from Ireland with her Scottish parents in 1720. She later married a very industrious Epsom farmer and artisan, Richard Tripp who also served as a revolutionary soldier during 1777-78.) Her forebears, descending from Scottish covenanters, were devout people of deep religious convictions and the family contributed much over the years to the Congregational church in Epsom. They passed on to Harriet a rich heritage of faith.²

¹The term "town" here refers not to a residential or commercial center but to a larger rural district.

²W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, April 6, 1915, EGWRC-DC. Florence (McCutcheon) McKee, McCutcheon (Cutcheon) Family Records; Allied Families of McClary, Tripp, Brown, and Critchett (Grand Rapids,
Thus it was that William Warren Prescott was born into a family that on both sides was proud of its important links with the very beginnings of things in America. Town records reveal that the family on both sides had a strong tradition of involvement in public affairs with many forebears taking an active role in the communities in which they lived. William's direct ancestors on both sides of the family had served in the military during the Revolution and as a result the family, thereafter, closely identified with the spirit of the republic and cherished the liberties America had won. William inherited this tradition and walked tall in the knowledge of it. At appropriate times in later life he would refer with justifiable patriotic pride to his links with America's beginnings.¹

For New England families, living close to the land and often far from each other, faith was an essential part of existence. Each community was marked and still is by the characteristic white, tall-spired church. Nothing in the records suggests that the early Prescotts were particularly devout although it does seem that the church played a central role in the life of the family. The McClary

and Tripp homes, however, were marked by piety and a stern Presbyterian tradition. It is no real surprise then that when the preaching of William Miller stirred New England in the 1840s, it found a ready response at Epsom.

William's grandmother, Lydia, had experienced conversion early in her youth and had joined the Free-Will Baptist church in Epsom. Grandfather Amos shared his wife's devoted interest and involvement. They had been married seven years when on the night of November 13, 1833, they witnessed the meteor shower that so startled New England. That night they shared the sight with their five-year-old son, James Lewis, and the scene made an indelible impression on the whole family. Reared in this pious and devout home, James Lewis experienced conversion in 1838 at age ten and joined the church of his parents.

Four years later in 1842, James Lewis, with his father, attended an Advent tent meeting in Concord, N.H., and heard Joshua V. Himes preach. Lydia joined her husband and fourteen-year-old son in accepting Miller's exposition of the prophecies. Convinced by their experience of 1833 and the forcefulness of Miller's arguments, they cast their lot with the Advent cause.

Disappointed in their hopes in 1843, James Lewis with his mother, attended the Exeter campmeeting at which S. S. Snow explained

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1 It is reported that grandfather Amos watched the scene the whole night and became convinced that Rev 6:13 was being literally fulfilled before his very eyes. W. W. Prescott, "A Sixtieth Anniversary." The event would later figure prominently in Prescott's eschatology. See p. 479 below.

his "seventh-month" idea and the date of October 22, 1844. So certain were they of the consummation of their hopes at that time that they did not harvest their crops. (The farm where the potatoes were left in the field was pointed out to William in later years.)

The date passed without event, however, and James as a sensitive sixteen-year-old, experienced intensely the bitterness of the disappointment. Nonetheless, neither he nor his parents were of a mind to give up their hope. It seems, in fact, that this experience matured James and deepened his religious experience. He continued in his anticipation of the Advent.

It was apparently shortly after this that James Lewis took up his apprenticeship in shoe manufacturing. Two-and-a-half years later, at nineteen, he courted and married sixteen-year-old Harriet and set up his own home. While the parents sold their land and moved to Vermont, the young couple stayed for a time in Epsom where James plied his shoe-making trade. A few years later they moved north to the district around Lake Winnipesaukee and for a short period resided in Alton and later for a time at Barnstead (see fig. 2).

During the early 1850s James Lewis was very active as a part-time preacher in the Advent cause. He was prominently involved in a group that later became the Advent Christian denomination—a group that until 1857 continued to readjust the prophetic time periods. At first, the group set the date of 1854 for the coming of the Lord, then 1857. After this third disappointment, time setting was eventually abandoned altogether by the movement. The young James' 

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1W. W. Prescott, "Morning Bible Study, Grand Ledge Camp Meeting, August 1936," NAP, AUHR.
self-supporting ministry took him among the many scattered believers in central New Hampshire and he was often called to pray for and minister to the sick. He recounts many experiences of healings of such ailments as peritonitis, sprained ankle, and tumors. As a very kindly, devout, and spiritual man his pastoral visits were greatly appreciated. In later years after he retired from his business and settled at Battle Creek, he again took up the work of pastoral visitation. Even in his declining years when the family moved to Washington, D.C., with the new Seventh-day Adventist church headquarters just after the turn of the century, he continued his work. Charles Boyd, a nephew of church administrator E. R. Palmer, and just a boy in 1909, remembers J. L. Prescott visiting around the community with his shiny black horse and buggy.

It was not until 1858, apparently, that the family was introduced to the seventh-day Sabbath. James had been traveling in Vermont and stayed with a Sabbath-keeping family. After becoming acquainted with the scriptural reasons for seventh-day observance, he decided to join the movement and kept the very next Sabbath. Thus began a practice he continued until his death fifty-seven years later. His parents also commenced Sabbath keeping about the same time.

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2 See p.15 below.


4 "Obituary" (Lydia Prescott), RH, November 27, 1888, p. 750.
In the home that James and Harriet provided for their nine children, the qualities of kindness, gentleness, and spirituality were valued. For four years before the arrival of their first child, Harriet without the burden of new babies had supported James in his work. These years they had used to develop a warm and secure relationship. They were people of independent thought and intense religious conviction and their belonging to a small and often sociably unacceptable group served only to deepen this religious commitment. Although as the years passed the stigma associated with their series of disappointments began to lessen, the family's adoption of the Sabbath nevertheless ensured that they remained identified with an unpopular minority group in the community. These Prescott parents, however, had long since demonstrated that they were more concerned with truth and with their standing with God than with their standing in the community. Quietly instilled into William in childhood, these qualities were tested early when during his time as a student at Dartmouth College and in his early career he was often the only Sabbath keeper in his community, but they remained with him and became characteristic of his life.

Although in these early years the family seems not to have suffered undue economic hardship, it appears that material things were very much a secondary consideration. The intensely eschatological nature of the Advent movement ensured this. Furthermore, in these early days of the movement, a regular form of support of the ministry had not yet been developed. William's father, busy preaching as often as opportunity would allow, supported his family by
manufacturing and selling footwear wherever and whenever he could. Thus William spent his early years in an environment where time was important and a high value was placed on industry and accountability. These values, too, significantly shaped William's character and fitted him for the large contribution he was to make to the church his parents had joined when he was but three years of age.
Because of the significant role that Prescott played in the development of education in the Adventist church, it is important to note his own school years in some detail. There is no question Prescott was largely influenced by this thorough New England education. The ancient maxim that one educates as one has been educated contains a measure of truth with regard to Prescott.

Sometime after 1855, the Prescott family moved south from Alton to Barnstead, where William's younger brother Charles was born in August 1857. Shortly afterwards the family moved to Penacook, a small industrial village on the Merrimack River six miles north of Concord. There the family must have made the acquaintance of the family of another shoe manufacturer, Jacob P. Sanders, one of the leading lights of the Advent cause in Penacook. A local history notes that he was one who gave up his business in the town prior to an expected advent of Christ in 1854 but returned to it the next day when the expectation failed.¹ In 1858, the year following the 1857 disappointment (after which the advent movement in Penacook collapsed), Mrs. Sanders began Sabbath keeping. The Prescott family began Sabbath keeping the same year. The Sanders' daughter, Sarah,

was but two years of age at the time and William but three. The acquaintance of the families, however, was to affect both children's destinies.¹

The year 1859 saw the Prescott family on the move again--this time to the coastal town of Wells, Maine. Five years later, in May 1864, the family again relocated, settling more permanently this time in the village of North Berwick, Maine. James set up operations in the village and, like many other shoemakers of the area, took contracts for cases of shoes, employing men and women to finish the shoes by hand. The shoes were then dispatched to Lynn, Massachusetts, for marketing.²

It was sometime during these years, either at Wells, or North Berwick, that William began his education. Little is known of his elementary education. Much more is known of his high-school years. In view of the fact, however, that high schools generally accepted only those who had adequate preparation and that William was able to teach classes in Latin and Greek before he finished high school, it seems certain that his early education must have been thorough. The family industry rounded out the education of these early years, for times were hard and the children had their share of duties in father's shoe trade. Mornings and evenings before and after school


²Max N. Christianson to G. M. Valentine, June 8, 1981.
were spent in the shop. By age eleven, William was quite proficient as a cobbler.  

At this time, Maine was feeling the inflation of the currency that followed the war between the States (1861-65). Wages were high ($1.50 per ten-hour day) and the cost of living had doubled. In the Prescott home, now grown to include six small children, times also were difficult. To improve his opportunities, William's father, in the spring of 1868, engaged as a traveling salesman for C. W. Greenleaf and Company, a manufacturer of Clark's "mirror" stove polish. In spite of the deteriorating economic conditions and the chaos following the stock market crash of September 24, 1869, James, with considerable foresight and courage, purchased the Greenleaf Company in early 1870 and in his own barn, commenced to manufacture "Prescott Universal" a stove polish that was eventually to become an internationally known product. This business too was a family affair and young William, assisted by his brother Amos, shared the task of transporting in a wheelbarrow the raw materials from the railway station to their home and then reversing the trip with the finished product.

In the years William attended high school, the business expanded rapidly. New lines were added, the plant was enlarged, and the Prescott name soon became a household name throughout New


2 The J. L. Prescott Co. . . . 1870-1945, p. 2.
England. In the business, which at this stage was employing about eighteen men, the older boys of the family, with William among them, learned the essentials of good business management. James came to be known in the community as "a man of strict integrity, scrupulously honest, and upright in all his dealings," and as one who "contributed liberally to the needy and to benevolent enterprises." The training William received during his school years, therefore, was not confined just to the classroom. Probably the most valuable training was received informally from his involvement in the family business. Business management, good judgment, and a fine moral sensibility developed from these experiences enabled William later in life to make a large contribution as an administrator at the highest levels of his church.

Important lessons were learned in other ways as well. The month of December 1869 brought bitter grief to the family. At the beginning of winter an epidemic struck the North Berwick district. On 4 December, George, William's six-year-old brother, died. A week later, three-and-a-half-year-old James succumbed and then four days later, three-and-a-half-year-old James succumbed and then four days later, three-and-a-half-year-old James succumbed.

1Ibid., pp. 7, 11. One very popular line was a shoe polish that sold under the trade name of "Prescott's Double Quick." The product name capitalized on P.D.Q., a slang phrase of the day for swift action. "Blackene" and "Enameline" were other well-known Prescott products. With good quality products and an aggressive approach to marketing, the business enlarged rapidly both in the United States and overseas. William's older brother, Amos, took over the business in 1888. In 1896 the plant was relocated in New Jersey closer to major markets. The business is still in the Amos Prescott family. It has diversified in its products and now majors in household chemicals. In 1979 the firm employed 400 persons and had annual sales of $24 million. New Jersey Directory of Manufacturers (Hokokus, N.J.: Commerce Register, 1979), p. G 214.

later on 15 December, baby Frank, aged one-and-a-half. The family reeled from the triple tragedy and a pall of gloom settled over the Prescott home. Christmas was not happy that year. The sensitive fourteen-year-old William was sobered and matured beyond his years by the experience.

The year 1870 again saw an epidemic. This time it was black water fever and Amos, William’s older brother, almost died. The doctor, after a number of visits, had given up but the family continued to pray and afterward attributed the boy’s recovery to angelic intervention.\(^1\) Another family funeral for baby Fred toward the end of Prescott’s first year at college again reminded him of the tenuousness and seriousness of life.\(^2\) Fred had been born in early 1871, a little over a year after the three younger boys had died, but he lived only three years. The death of this little three-year-old toddler, the last of the children, must have been particularly painful, being now the fifth child his parents had lost.

Recalling his sorrow in later years, William wrote:

> I have looked upon the faces of my beloved dead and have seen their lifeless forms consigned to their resting places in the city of the dead, and I have turned away with a biting grief in my heart which refused to be soothed. . . .\(^3\)

Such struggles with the harsh realities of life contributed to the sensitiveness of Prescott’s nature and made him keenly

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\(^1\) "James L. Prescott Memoir," p. 8, PC 21: PMRF Fld "Personal," GCAr.

\(^2\) North Berwick Record Book, compiled by John Elderidge Frost, p. 52, MHSL.

sympathetic to others' feelings. These attributes of personality and reservoirs of experience later enabled him as a very popular public speaker to effectively sense an audience's needs and communicate with his hearers. People did not just enjoy listening to Prescott's richly resonant voice—he had experienced life and had something to say.

The high school that William attended during his teens was Berwick Academy. It is one of the oldest and probably the most prestigious school in Maine. Although other high schools were actually closer to his home, it seems this one, located ten miles away in South Berwick, was selected by the family because it was a religious school, having been founded to promote "piety, religion, and morality." The Academy also had a boarding house that "afforded comfortable accommodation in private rooms for pupils whose families do not reside in the village." Whether Prescott lived in the school home as a boarder is not known. Since the school was ten miles from his home it seems probable that he did, at least during the week. In this light, we may more readily understand his familiarity with and willingness to add school homes to Battle Creek College when he became president there in the mid-1880s. The facilities at Berwick Academy were more in the nature of "school homes" than military-type barracks. The catalogue advertised that boarders would enjoy "the most valuable advantages of home" and that the "kind and discreet

"guardians" would give due attention to "the important subjects of health, manners and deportment."\(^1\)

The annual catalogues also announced clearly the basic religious orientation of the school program. "This school is established upon the Bible as its basis. . . . Appropriate religious exercises, so essential to moral training and the foundation of character, are daily observed, . . . "\(^2\) Instruction was given in biblical geography and antiquities, and punctual attendance was required at Sunday worship services. The school was non-sectarian, however, and students were allowed to attend the church of their preference. John K. Lord, one of the school's founding fathers and later a president of Dartmouth College, had established a special trust fund to foster religious interests. From this fund Bibles were purchased and donated to each student. The trust also stipulated that the student must read a chapter from the Bible each evening and morning. A former student quietly admits, however, that this was "more honored in the breach than the observance."\(^3\)

Berwick Academy offered two courses, English and Classical, both rather rigorous. The program was designed as a preparation for college and, in view of Prescott's later studies at Dartmouth, it would seem that he elected the classical course and pursued the study of ancient languages. By the time he had finished at Berwick he was

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\(^1\) Catalogue of Berwick Academy 1857 (Boston, Mass.: Press of T. R. Marvin and Son, 1857), (no pagination), NHSL.

\(^2\) Ibid.

already well acquainted with Virgil, Anabasis, Sallust, Cicero, and Homer. There were diversions, however, for the approximately 160 students. Baseball was a favorite pastime and there are reports of sleighing parties, Women's Christian Temperance Union lectures, and concerts. 

For some reason Prescott did not finish his schooling at Berwick Academy. After three years he returned in the fall of 1872 to Penacook where the family had lived thirteen years earlier. There he enrolled at Penacook Academy. Although his obituary notice seems to indicate that Prescott spent his last full year at Penacook Academy and graduated there, the school records indicate that he attended as a student only during the fall of 1872. He did teach, however, while at Penacook: ten hours of Latin and five hours of Greek a week. Thus he helped to pay his way.

Penacook Academy was very similar to Berwick Academy, different only it seems in that it was of much more recent origin and therefore possessed a less prestigious heritage. Instructors were advertised as being "tried and true disciplinarians" and "devoted with Christian fidelity in their profession." Courses were basically the same as at Berwick except for the addition of some

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1 Ibid., p. 41.


3 Academy Records, NHHSL. This is a handwritten enrollment register. Prescott may have done his teaching in the winter and spring.

4 Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Penacook Academy 1870 (n.p., n.d.), p. 13, NHHSL.
practical subjects: bookkeeping, chemistry, and natural history.\(^1\) The school building still stands (see fig. 3).

The "finishing" year at Penacook was a watershed year for Prescott in other ways. Fellow Sabbath-keeper Sarah Sanders had first enrolled as a student at Penacook in the summer of 1870. At sixteen she was beginning her third year when, in 1872, seventeen-year-old William enrolled. It may well have happened therefore that Sadie, as she was called, was one of the scholars in "Mr. Prescott's" classes. Whether they were attracted to each other is unknown, but without doubt an acquaintance was made that in later years developed into romance.\(^2\)

Before going to Penacook, William attended the campmeeting at South Lancaster in Massachusetts. The family had attended campmeetings previously, "when he was just a lad"\(^3\) as Prescott recalled later, and he had often heard James and Ellen White preach. At the 1872 campmeeting, G. I. Butler was the leading speaker. J. N. Andrews, who at the time was residing near Boston finishing his work on the History of the Sabbath, also attended. Butler reported to Review and Herald\(^4\) readers his opinion that the meeting was hardly as "spiritual and profitable" as some of the other meetings of the season, but for William it was a high point. During the meetings it seems he

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 14. \(^2\)Academy Records, NHHS.

\(^3\)W. W. Prescott, "Morning Bible Study," August 1936, NAP, AUHR.

\(^4\)This periodical has gone through several changes in nomenclature since its inception in 1850. Perhaps the name most widely used to identify the magazine in the United States is Review and Herald. At the present it is called Adventist Review. Hereafter, in the text the abbreviation Review will be used.
Fig. 2. James L. and Harriet M. Prescott circa 1880

Fig. 3. Penacook Academy Building, Penacook, New Hampshire as it appeared in 1980
responded to the call to accept Christ as a personal Saviour and was baptized by J. N. Andrews.¹

William's new decision was soon to be rigorously tested by a stay of four years at Dartmouth College. He was the only Seventh-day Adventist enrolled. No doubt the choice of Dartmouth had been formulating in his mind for some time and while he was at Penacook he had opportunity to talk with Sarah's older brother, Charles, who was just completing some engineering studies there.² Dartmouth was prestigious. It was a religious school and it was less than 100 miles from home. In the fall of 1873, therefore, William made his way to Hanover and with eighty other freshmen enrolled in the academical department of the college.


²Brown, p. 393.
CHAPTER III

OFF TO COLLEGE

By 1873, ten or twelve years of schooling had given Prescott a significant variety of educational experiences. Now these experiences were to be broadened and deepened with a college education at Dartmouth.¹ The following four years provided an education which was regarded as among the very best that America could provide. At Dartmouth Prescott the youth developed into mature manhood. Leadership qualities emerged that characterized his later life; here they were given opportunity to mature and expand. At Dartmouth his intellectual and social horizons broadened as he mixed with some of the brightest minds New England had produced. Here he received the equipment of a scholar which enabled him to make such a lasting contribution to his church. And here a philosophy of education was impressed on him that only years of trial, an encounter with one who claimed to be God's messenger, and a revolution in his own spiritual experience would modify.

A little more than a century before Prescott was to fill out his admission forms for Dartmouth in the fall of 1873, England's King George III had granted a charter for the establishment of a school in

New Hampshire for the benefit of the Indian youth of the district. In his single log hut erected under the terms of the charter in 1770, founder Eleazer Wheelock soon discovered that educating America's native sons was more difficult than he had anticipated. He therefore turned his attention to the more immediately rewarding task, also included in the charter, of educating "English youth and any others." The ensuing one hundred years of producing quality graduates made the college eminently successful and gave it the best of reputations.

Students came almost exclusively from the more prominent and highly placed New England families. Academic entrance requirements were rigorous. Fees alone, however, acted as a major preselection factor and placed the college out of reach for many. Tuition for the two twenty-week terms in Prescott's first year was $70.00. With board, room rent, lighting, and heating the Catalogue suggested a total estimate of $267.00. In Prescott's last year tuition was raised to $90.00 and the total yearly package to $292.00. The college historian, Leon Burr Richardson, estimates a total investment


2 Candidates were examined in Greek, Latin, Mathematics, and English and were expected to be thoroughly familiar with all their high-school texts. Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Dartmouth College for the Academical Year 1873-74, p. 35, ADBML.

3 Ibid., p. 48. By contrast, at Battle Creek College, tuition at the four-year scholarship rate plus full board made annual expenses total approximately $100. Many students struggled to meet even this figure. From this it would seem that Prescott came from a family that was stationed considerably above the average Battle Creek Adventist family at this time. Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Battle Creek College 1876-77 (Battle Creek, Mi.: Review and Herald, 1876), p. 14, AUHR.
for the four years at Dartmouth in the 1870s at approximately $3,800.¹
With William at Dartmouth, and two years later his younger brother
Charles at the equally expensive Boston law school, it would seem
that the Prescott family's prosperous new business venture in North
Berwick had come none too soon.

Religious Atmosphere

Dartmouth College in the 1870s was not a secular school. Its
president had always been a clergyman and the objectives of the col­
lege aimed at developing the moral and spiritual nature of the
student as well as his intellect. In later years Prescott recalled
that when he entered Dartmouth "there was a strong, religious senti­
ment pervading the institution."² Students were expected to attend
religious services seven days each week. A prayer meeting was held
for each class on Sunday, and Monday began with a lecture on the
Greek New Testament.

For the young Sabbath keeper, the only one at the school,
regular Saturday morning recitations presented a problem. An early
interview with the college president, however, and an explanation of
his religious principles succeeded in securing a pass for the whole
four years of his stay.³ Prescott recalled that the experience was
somewhat nerve-racking but it strengthened his faith. Since Hanover

³"Student Secures W. W. Prescott's Life Story," Student Movement, October 27, 1932, p. 3, AUHR.
had no Adventist church Prescott must have spent most Sabbaths quietly by himself. A Roman Catholic classmate humorously declared in later years that Prescott was so conscientious at Dartmouth he would not even snore on the Sabbath. Yet he participated enthusiastically with his classmates in the other activities of the school. His faithfulness to his convictions and his cheerful Christian sincerity won the respect and admiration of his peers.

Sports

The school records indicate that in regard to general discipline the seventies was a period of some trial to the Dartmouth faculty. Intense class rivalry after the English public-school tradition led to some celebrated incidents during Prescott's time. A "hat rush" in April of 1875 by Prescott's sophomore class damaged a considerable amount of college property, and a giant-sized "football rush" the next year disrupted the entire school program. Whether Prescott was involved is not known, but such high spiritedness was probably to be expected given the heavy emphasis on study and lack of an adequate recreational program. No doubt, during his later career, with the perspective that only age allows, Prescott reflected on these experiences. They seem to have provided the seedbed out of which many of his own educational policies grew.

1 The remark is reported by Elizabeth Francis, "Our Teachers: W. W. Prescott," p. 9.

2 Faculty Records, April 11, 1875; September 7, 1876. A "rush" occurred when members of one class (e.g., sophomores) descended on an activity of another class (e.g., freshman) and snatched away either the ball they were playing with or a hat or cane. A general fracas resulted.
An increasing emphasis on sports at Dartmouth toward the end of the century diminished the traditional unruliness of student behavior. A gym was built in 1867.\(^1\) In 1875 an athletic association was formed, and the first local field meet was held that autumn. Prescott, a strong, agile youth, participated eagerly and with some prowess.

In the first two-day meet, October 13 and 14, 1875, Prescott entered three events. He must have practiced hard for he placed first in all three—the 18½ lb. hammer throw and the 440-yard and 100-yard sprints. At the next meet in May 1876, he won the shot put with a toss of thirty feet, four inches, but was unplaced in the hammer throw and wheelbarrow race. He redeemed his honor the following year by again taking first place in the heavy hammer throw and the shot put.\(^2\) Prescott's enjoyment and appreciation of these activities at Dartmouth manifested themselves later in the program and facilities he endeavored to provide at Battle Creek.

**Academic Program**

Academics, however, was the major reason Prescott was at Dartmouth. The college offered several alternative courses. These were taught in the Academical Department, the Thayer School of Engineering, the Chandler School of Science, and the Agricultural Department. If the short teaching career that Prescott embarked on immediately after graduation indicates that teaching was his primary

\(^1\)Chase, *History of Dartmouth*, 1:394.

\(^2\)These details are taken from various printed programs in the *Comstock Scrapbook*, ADBML.
career goal, it is understandable why he chose the classical course in the Academical Department. Furthermore, he had prepared for this in high school. His goals were set so he stayed with the classics. The course was rigorous. Of the eighty freshman who started with Prescott, only fifty-six graduated.

The subjects studied by Prescott each year are of some interest. They are characteristic of most college classical courses and reflect in the main the classical course that Battle Creek College offered later.

**Freshman Year:**
- **First Term:** Greek, Latin, Math
- **Second Term:** Greek, Latin, Math

**Sophomore Year:**
- **First Term:** French, Greek, Latin, Math
- **Second Term:** Grammar, Greek, Latin, Mechanics, Rhetoricals

**Junior Year:**
- **First Term:** Logic, Greek, Latin, Physics
- **Second Term:** Astronomy, Greek, Latin, Physics, Rhetoric

**Senior Year:**
- **First Term:** Psychology, English Literature
- **Second Term:** Evidences (Christian), Geology, Morals
- **Third Term:** English Literature, Political Economy

Prescott's academic performance in these subjects indicates his intellectual capacity and scholastic aptitude. Each year he ranked in the top levels of his class. Examinations were both written and oral and grading was done on a one-to-five scale, one being the perfect score which, on principle, was never awarded, and five equalling zero. Only four of his eighty classmates ranked above Merit Roll, ADBML.
his 1.18 in his first year. Three ranked above his 1.27 in his second year, six ranked above his 1.25 in his junior year, while six ranked within .02 of his 1.16 in his senior year. Prescott apparently had a natural aptitude for study.¹

On two occasions during his studies he took time out to teach in nearby district schools, a practice customary in schools of the day. Prescott taught during the spring of 1874 at North Berwick (and was therefore at home when his young brother died), and during the winter of 1875 at Wells in Maine. This meant that by the time he had finished his education he had already taught for at least a full year and knew rather well the nature and conditions of the classroom. Prescott was apparently not above using this teaching internship arrangement to his advantage. A rare faculty minute dealing with discipline during the winter of Prescott's senior year noted with a slight sense of irritation, that senior Prescott was absent from the college "but was not engaged in teaching." It was voted to write him "for an explanation."²

It seems evident that by the time he left Dartmouth, Prescott was already aware of the great debates over reform that were swirling in educational circles—debates in which he would later be involved while at Battle Creek. In the discussion over "electives" between Charles Eliot of Harvard and James McCosh of Princeton, Dartmouth's president Smith sided strongly with McCosh, complimenting him in 1873

¹Ibid.

²Faculty Records, January 15, 1877.
on his firm line. Smith, a thorough disciplinarian and classicist, saw great danger in what he called the "restaurant system" in education.

Another reform issue Prescott would have to face later and that was introduced to him in his Dartmouth days was the question of manual labor and agricultural training. Dartmouth had established an agricultural department in the 1860s, but there was some disquiet on the matter among the alumni and constituency. Apparently, some ill feeling also existed among the students on the issue. The academical men regarded the agricultural men almost as second-class citizens.

In early 1876, Prescott's junior year, the faculty were embarrassed and angered when the student magazine The Dartmouth published an article criticising the agricultural school for its admission standards, arguing also that its requirements for graduation were "beneath contempt." The same article also criticized the science program. The faculty, apparently very sensitive over the issue, had forbidden the article to be published and demanded an apology from the editors and an acknowledgement that the faculty had a right of censorship over publications. The editors printed the apology but had the last word by announcing in the same issue that the publication could only exist if it rightly represented student opinion. Seeing that this was not possible the editors announced

1Chase, History of Dartmouth, 1:546.
that the magazine would therefore not be published for the remainder of the year.\textsuperscript{1}

Prescott, an editor of the magazine when it resumed publication the next year, was undoubtedly aware of the issues in the discussion. The incident may also help to explain Prescott's apparent sympathy toward the expression of student opinion on school affairs illustrated in the student debate at Battle Creek that helped close down the manual labor department in 1889.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Dartmouth offered many opportunities for the development of Prescott's interests and abilities. His interest in music was fostered by his joining the Handel Society, which gave performances in the town and local districts and was much appreciated by the faculty for providing music for chapel and church services. Prescott also developed his public-speaking ability by participating in the literary societies on campus. These fraternities held extensive libraries and planned regular debates. One such debate was between Prescott and classmate Carrigan at Wednesday afternoon chapel in February 1877. The subject was "State's Rights."\textsuperscript{2}

Prescott's entrepreneurial abilities were also afforded some experience in his senior year. As a private venture he organized a history competition charging an admission fee of fifteen cents. Prizes were ten dollars, five dollars, and three dollars for first,

\textsuperscript{1}The Dartmouth, April 1875, ADBML.
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., March 1877.
second, and third places, respectively. Whether he made a profit from the scheme is unknown.

As previously mentioned, Prescott also served as an editor for the student magazine during his senior year (see fig. 4). The magazine was published weekly on Thursdays. The skills in writing and publishing gained at this time apparently laid the important groundwork for the almost twenty years he was later to spend in editorial and publishing work.

Prescott's effective leadership qualities and personal charisma were recognized by his classmates. Known by them as "Billy," he was chosen as president of his class in his junior year. In this capacity he was responsible for organizing the annual junior-class exhibition presented May 3, 1876. His own six-minute oration, a coveted honor given on the basis of class grades, reveals that he was already reflecting on the purpose and function of education in society—his title, "Representative Men, The World's Educators." During his senior year he was also elected to class office, this time vice president, and again on the basis of academic merit he had

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1 "History Competition," (flyer), Comstock Scrapbook.

2 H. L. Moore to W. W. Prescott, August 13, 1917, RG 17: Field Secretary--W. W. Prescott Fld 1916-17--Unfiled, GCAR. Occasional correspondence between Prescott and his former classmates at Dartmouth reveal a continuing spirit of cordial collegiality. See W. W. Prescott to J. H. Comstock, November 22, 1916, RG 17: Field Secretary--W. W. Prescott Fld 1916-17, GCAR.

3 "W. W. Prescott File"; "Class of 1877 Junior Exhibition Program," Comstock Scrapbook, ADBML.
the honor of giving a commencement oration. His subject "Office of the Thinker"\(^1\) was almost prophetic.

Graduation

Commencement for the "Class of '77" was scheduled for the weekend of June 26-28. New Hampshire Secretary of State and Republican candidate for governor, Benjamin F. Prescott, was the guest speaker.\(^2\) Prescott's four years, in retrospect, had passed quickly, but the A.B. he took with him from Dartmouth included a rich store of experience and an able preparation to contribute to the interests and well-being of society.

According to college policy, Prescott could have requested a Master's degree in 1880, three years after his graduation. The degrees were awarded "in course," not as an award for taking further classes or for presenting a thesis. The degree was nonetheless highly esteemed, but it seems that Prescott did not see the need for the recognition until he was called to Battle Creek as president in 1885.\(^3\)

Commenting years later on the influence of Prescott on the educational system of the church, Everett Dick stated that Prescott with his A.M. stood at the peak of the church's fledgling academic structure. He added, "How far he was ahead of his day educationally

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\(^1\) "Class of 1877 Commencement Program," Comstock Scrapbook, ADBML.

\(^2\) "Both Benjamin F. and William were descendants of an earlier Prescott. See William Prescott, M.D., Prescott Memorial, p. 545."

\(^3\) "Trustee Records, 1875; Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Dartmouth College 1876-77 (Hanover, N.H.: Dartmouth College, 1876), p. 48."
is indicated by the fact that for the next 31 years of a long line of
eight Presidents [at Union College] not a single one held the
Master's degree.¹

In later years Prescott maintained periodic correspondence
with the Dartmouth alumni association and news of his activities was
published in the alumni journal. He later came to see that the
education he received at his Alma Mater may have had some weaknesses
viewed from a Christian perspective, but he nevertheless ever afterwards recognized his debt. The training he received was made
available to the church through his administrative abilities, his
preaching, and his scholarship. In this respect, the church too
stands in some debt to Dartmouth College. The years of youthful
preparation now behind him, Prescott was ready to step onto the stage
of life and demonstrate what a "Dartmouth man" could do.

¹Dick, Union, p. 344.
CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL BELLS AND CHURCH BELLS

The first eight years of Prescott's career prior to his employment with the Adventist church in 1885 were divided between publishing and education. Not surprisingly, it was in these same areas that Prescott spent most of his time in church employ. Apart from the years he spent in general church administration (some of which were, in any case, largely occupied with theological institutes for the continuing education of the church's ministry), Prescott spent sixteen years in college administration and teaching and almost fifteen in writing and publishing.

Twenty-one years of age when he graduated from Dartmouth (see fig. 5), Prescott had already spent the equivalent of a full year at teaching during his time at high school and college. The experience must have been satisfying for it was into the teaching profession that he entered after graduation. Northfield Graded and High School in Vermont needed a principal, and Prescott was the successful applicant. After a short summer break, and the celebration of his twenty-second birthday, Prescott took up his duties in Northfield in the autumn of 1877.

Northfield, a town of almost 3,000 in 1877, was nestled in the heart of one of Vermont's richest dairying areas just twelve
Fig. 4. Editorial Staff of The Dartmouth 1877. Prescott is third from left in back row.  
(Courtesy Dartmouth College Archives)

Fig. 5. William Warren Prescott Graduation Picture 1877  
(Courtesy Dartmouth College Archives)
miles to the southwest of the state capital, Montpelier. The school had been established seven years previously in 1870 with a roll of 331 pupils. Unfortunately, fire had completely destroyed the school plant in January of 1876. Not to be deterred, however, the town fathers had quickly contracted for a new school building on the same site. The school had been erected and furnished at a cost of $11,000. Exceptionally well built, the stately two-story structure was still in use as a school in 1980 and stands with dignity, overlooking the township from its vantage point on Schoolhouse Hill (see fig. 6). When Prescott took charge of the school in 1877 the building was less than a year old.

With an enrollment of approximately 300, the school was divided into five or six elementary grades plus a high-school section. Prescott's task involved classroom teaching in the upper high-school grades as well as supervision of the entire school. The weekly salary for this his first job after graduation was approximately $24.00 per week. The school's annual operating budget was between $2,500 and $3,000.

Quiet little Northfield village held Prescott for two years. His predecessor at the Northfield school had gone to Montpelier, and at the end of the 1878-79 school year Prescott followed him to head

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3 Ibid., p. 242.
up the main school in the state capital—the combined Washington County Grammar and Montpelier Union School. Opportunity for advancement and promotion seems to have been the major reason for the move. His annual salary took a jump from $960 to $1,200, and the school was larger, having an average enrollment of nearly 350. His staff consisted of seven other teachers beside himself and a janitor. The fact that the school was in the state capital, a block or two from the observant eyes of the state legislature, may also have had some attraction for Prescott.

The Washington County Grammar School in Montpelier was a large three-story structure with four classrooms on its lower two floors and an assembly hall on the third. Equipped with a well-stocked library and laboratory, the school had developed an excellent reputation throughout the state as a "fitting" school. Many of its graduates had gone on to such schools as Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth, Amherst, and Williams. The Montpelier community was very education conscious (in Prescott's year as principal only eight of the district's potential school population of 623 were not in school) and they had high expectations of the principal.

Prescott's duties defined in the school catalogue included

1"School Committee Report [1879]," Montpelier Union School Records dating from 1860-1880, VHSL. The report is undated but the fact that it refers to Prescott as having been engaged "for the ensuing year" indicates that it was the report for the year ending 1879.

2The janitor served also as playground supervisor and general policeman. Catalogue of the Montpelier Union School and Washington County Grammar School, 1884 (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Watchman and State Journal Press, 1884), p. 25, VHSL.

responsibility for "the discipline and instruction of the Academical and High School and also the general oversight of the lower departments." He was to hold meetings of the teachers "to secure harmony and unity of action and to attain a more uniform and perfect system of drilling and teaching." Monthly reports were to be made on "attendance," "deportment," and general progress to the school's prudential committee. These duties provided an excellent opportunity for Prescott to expand his talents for administration and to gain worthwhile experience in the company of the noted men of one of Vermont's most important towns.¹ His duties brought him into contact with many prominent citizens and legislators.

All was not hard work during 1879-80, however, for the young schoolteacher was in love. Where and when his relationship with Sadie Sanders began to deepen remains an intriguing question, but doubtless there was correspondence and visiting as often as time and opportunity permitted. As already noted, Sarah was a student at Penacook Academy in 1872 when Prescott had his first taste of teaching there. She stayed on at the academy finishing her work in the winter of 1874. Sometime afterwards she apparently took some courses at Harvard University in Massachusetts. It seems probable in light of her later readiness to teach college-level classes at Battle Creek.

¹Music seems to have been one of Prescott's curricular innovations. The treasurer's report indicates that he spent a considerable sum on new singing books for the school. "Financial Records," Montpelier Union School Records dating from 1860-1880, VHSL.
that she may have occupied some teaching positions in the years after her study at Harvard.¹

Sarah's father, Jacob Sanders, was of German ancestry, his forebears having settled in Pennsylvania, where he was born in 1822. After a time in New York state and Michigan, he established himself in business in Penacook in 1848. As previously noted, the Sanders' home was devout and the family was deeply involved in the Advent awakening. Sanders was also an astute businessman. His business prospered and he was able to erect a three-story commercial building on Main Street housing his own retail store and other stores, halls, and offices. Sarah's step-brother, Charles, eventually took over the business.²

Charles, who had studied architecture, also designed and constructed the family's large and graceful romanesque-style home in 1871 (see fig. 7). Standing on the highest elevation in town, the house commanded an excellent view of the rest of the village. It was

¹A. G. Daniells mentions that Sarah took the "women's course" at Harvard University. "The Death of Sis. S. F. Prescott," RH, June 23, 1910, p. 23. She apparently did not attend the Harvard Annex—her name does not appear in enrollment lists—but may have attended one of the Women's lectures instituted at Harvard in 1862 or she may have attended the Summer School where courses in Biology and Botany among others were offered to women. Attendance lists for these are not extant. Jane S. Knowles (Radcliffe College Archivist) to G. M. Valentine, August 12, 1981. Barbara A. Sokolosky (Curatorial Associate, Harvard University Archives), September 10, 1981.

²Brown, History of Penacook, pp. 391-92. The town library was also housed in Sanders' store which was advertised as the only one in town handling ready-made clothing for men and boys and "a first class assortment of boots, shoes, rubbers, and rubber clothing." Quarterly Catalogue of the Penacook Academy and School of Practice (Wilmot Sentinel Print, 1880), NHMSL.
Fig. 6. Northfield Graded and High School Building as it appeared in 1980

Fig. 7. Jacob P. Sanders Home in Penacook, New Hampshire as it appeared in 1980
here in the bride's home on July 8, 1880, that William and Sarah were married.¹

William had chosen wisely. Sarah was refined and gracious. Her intellect, it was true, was a match for her husband's, but more importantly, her natural cheerfulness provided a balance for William's tendency to melancholy. Both valued spiritual matters highly, Sarah having experienced conversion sometime in 1873. They therefore shared a common faith. Their relationship was one of close and tender affection. Sarah was to be a constant and valued helper who took a keen interest in William's work, shared his burdens for the church, and accompanied him on his overseas trips. Her judgment and counsel were appreciated by William and by other church leaders who at times sought her advice. She was by his side during the most important and productive years of his life, and he was broken and bitterly grieved at her death in 1910 after thirty years together.

Early 1880 was a time for important decisions for the husband and wife to be. While preparations were in progress for the forthcoming marriage, Prescott was also thinking seriously about whether he should stay in the teaching profession. According to Prescott the school committee in Montpelier was anxious to retain his services, but a proposal to go into business with his younger brother Charles won the day and thus his change in marital status was accompanied by

a challenging change in the course of his career.¹

William's younger brother, Charles, who had just completed law school in Boston, had been admitted to the York County Bar in 1880, but he apparently had not found law to his liking. Together in mid-July, aided no doubt by some of their father's capital, the brothers purchased their home county newspaper, the Biddeford Union and Journal, based in Biddeford. For William and Sarah there was little time for honeymooning; the first issue of their paper was due one week after their marriage.

¹"Student Secures W. W. Prescott's Life Story," p. 3.
CHAPTER V
INKY THUMBS AND PARTY POLITICS

Biddeford was a town of about 10,000 when Prescott and his bride settled there in mid-1880. Situated on the southern coast of Maine near the mouth of the Saco River, the town had developed as an industrial center with cotton milling as one of its major industries. (The change from the stately homes and thickly timbered hills of Vermont to the bare landscape of this coastal port must have been noticeable for Prescott.) The town's newspaper, with its office located on the main street, had announced on July 9 that the owner, G. A. Hobbs, had been bought out and that the next issue would be published by the new owners, the Prescott brothers. Thus began Prescott's five-year adventure in newspaper publishing.

One of the first changes William and Charles made to the paper was to change the name from Biddeford Union and Journal to Biddeford Weekly Journal.¹ Published each Friday morning, its columns carried a variety of features and items. Miscellaneous columns that included a story of some kind with a moral, and some advertising commanded the front page. Local district news, politics,

¹Journal, July 9, 1880. A microfilm copy is found in McArthur Public Library, Main Street, Biddeford, Maine. A good account of the paper's history before the Prescots' ownership may be found in Alan Robert Miller, The History of Current Maine Newspapers (Lisbon Falls, Maine: Eastland Press, 1978), pp. 62-70.

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and editorials occupied the center spread, while the back page carried a temperance column, poetry, miscellaneous items, and advertising. The new editors were encouraged by what they perceived as a favorable reception.  

From the very outset it was evident that the brothers were thoroughly enjoying their new venture. The tone of the paper reflected this enjoyment and exhibited a noticeable change from a previously bland, matter-of-fact approach to a vigorous, light heartedly provocative and almost saucy style after July 16. An exchange in their third issue illustrates the new owners' characteristic enthusiastic and spicy journalism. A neighboring newspaper, The Miniature, had welcomed the newcomers by commenting in its columns, "As the new proprietors of the Union and Journal are quite young men, we expect to see the fire fly." The Prescotts' reaction to the compliment was "Spare our blushes Watson. We'll try not to burn anyone."  

The editorial banter between the state's papers continued into the upcoming state election campaign of that year. When the local Democratic party secured office space in the same building on the floor above the Journal's publishing office and succeeded in draping a large Democrat banner over the front of the building, there was considerable joshing of the Prescott brothers by other editors because the Biddeford Weekly Journal was supposed to be staunchly Republican. The style of the exchange and the nature of the inter-party, inter-paper rivalry is also illustrated well by the Journal's

1Journal, July 23, 1880.  2Journal, July 30, 1880.
reaction to a report in the Argus, a rival paper. The Argus had reported that at a Democratic meeting in Saco, the Biddeford members were there with 200 torches. The Journal replied, "The Argus fully sustained its renowned reputation for veracity in its report... we saw them [the number of torches] and by a careful count there were exactly 32." Then with tongue in cheek it concluded "the report however did not convey any wrong impression for it is always customary to make at least 75 percent allowance for what the Argus says."^1

Tense feelings were aroused at times, however, as the campaign that year drew to a close and on election night after a victory parade by the Republicans, stones were thrown through the office windows of the paper. Such episodes did not dampen the Prescotts' high-spirited style, however, and eighteen months later they were assuring their readers as the year 1882 was about to open that the paper would continue to be "lively without being sensational, aggressive without being coarse, and will strive to be fearless and independent in the championship of right."^2

Just how involved William Warren was with the actual writing in the Journal is not clear, for none of the articles was signed. In view of the fact, however, that the same wit and lighthearted provocative style is also evident in the later paper with which he was associated, it would seem that in many of the articles and comments one sees the twenty-five-year-old enthusiastic, confident, and aggressive William Prescott himself.^3

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^1Journal, August 13; September 10, 1880.
^2Journal, December 30, 1880. ^3See p. 50 below.
Other issues beside politics also concerned the editors, although it seems that politics had the ability to somehow attach itself to most other things. On the temperance cause, for instance, the editors took a strong stand and in January 1882 they were complimented by the Bridgeton News for their "yeoman service" in publishing the names of convicted rum sellers. Two months later, though, they were criticized for not supporting an independent, third-party temperance candidate. The Prescotts responded that they saw no light in a third party and even though their Republican candidate was not a temperance man their paper was "not so bigoted but that it will [not] continue to fearlessly denounce the shortcomings of its own party."

Under the Prescotts' management the paper prospered financially with an increased demand for advertising space leading to an increase in the size of the paper by December 1881. The circulation gradually swelled until by June 1882 it had reached 2,400. The paper's editors had made many valuable friends. They had become well acquainted with the leading members of the two major parties and had opportunity to mix freely with the prominent citizens of the community. Nearly two years publishing with his brother led William to feel confident enough to launch out on a bolder publishing enterprise of his own early in 1882.2

Whether there were difficulties between the two brothers that led to the parting of the ways, or whether the family considered it

1Journal, January 6, March 3, 1882.
2Journal, March 17, 1882.
to be an appropriate time to expand their publishing interests is unknown. Although Charles was no longer a Seventh-day Adventist when he bought out William's interests, it is likewise unknown whether this caused tensions between the two. Whatever the reasons for the move, the dissolution of the partnership was announced by the paper in May 1882, and by the end of the month William was settling again at Montpelier. He had purchased Vermont's oldest and most influential Republican newspaper, the Vermont Watchman and State Journal.

Assuming ownership of the Vermont Watchman and State Journal was no small undertaking for the twenty-six-year-old Prescott. Two other weekly church newspapers and a well-established book publishing company were associated with the main newspaper thereby making the

1 Some hint that this may have caused a problem could be inferred from the fact that immediately after William departed, the paper's office reverted to a six-day week and opened again on Saturday mornings for business. Editorial policy also changed considerably. A serialized detective story began immediately after Prescott left, the temperance department was reduced in size, and the tone of the paper became more subdued.

Charles Prescott's management of the paper proved eminently successful in later years. Besides the weekly, he founded, soon after William's departure, a new daily paper which became the town's largest and longest surviving newspaper. Charles also became one of the most prominent businessmen of the state. He was president of a railroad company, a newspaper, and two banks, and he also served as a director of a number of other companies. Active in politics and public life he served as a representative to the state legislature in 1883-84 (at 26, he was the youngest member of the body), as a state senator in 1895-96, as York County Treasurer in 1887-91, as a member of Governor Cleaves' staff in 1893-97, and as a member of the Governor's Council in 1901. He failed in a bid for the governorship himself in 1904 but maintained an active interest in the Republican party. His large involvement in charitable organizations was greatly appreciated by the community. See Biddeford Daily Journal, December 19, 1923; also Maine: A History, Biographical, Centennial Edition (New York: American Historical Society, 1919), p. 281.

2 The paper actually changed hands on April 3, 1882. See Watchman, April 5, 1882.
business one of the largest commercial enterprises in the town. Having its origin at the turn of the century, the paper had absorbed along the way a number of other smaller papers, most notably the State Journal in 1836 (an anti-Mason paper). Over the years the Watchman had established a fine reputation as a leading spokesman for the Republican party and it was read widely even outside the state. Built up as a strict party journal by its two previous major owners, Ezekiel P. Walton and Sons and Joseph Poland, it spoke with considerable influence and authority on Republican affairs.¹

As Prescott took over the editorial chair, the previous owner felt confident that the paper would continue in good hands. Joseph Poland, who was held in high esteem by the community and whose recommendation was therefore valuable, did his best to pass on the good will of the business. He introduced Prescott to the paper's patrons as one who "... is in the early prime of manhood, of liberal education and culture, and with the advantages of several year's experience as an educator and journalist." He commented further that Prescott was "governed by thorough Christian principles and convictions, and is withal an outspoken advocate of the temperance cause." He urged that old patrons of the office support him.²

Prescott's "thorough Christian principles and convictions" attracted early attention. In spite of warnings and protests from his employees about financial disaster, Prescott insisted that the

¹Abby Hemenway, Vermont Historical Gazetteer: A Local History of all the Towns in the State (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Watchman and State Journal Press, 1882), 4:512. The Vermont Watchman... Souvenir Edition, p. 5, VHSL.

²Watchman, March 29, 1882.
publishing office be closed from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday and hung a notice to that effect in the window. Though a five-day week was unheard of and seemed like economic madness, the business actually prospered. Prescott’s principles also insisted on rejecting offers of free passes from the railway companies in return for favorable mention of the company’s political candidate in the paper, a practice his predecessors had allowed. The stand lost Prescott some friends, but he considered that such friends he could do without and the business prospered anyway.¹

In his first issue of the Watchman, Prescott set out his objectives for the paper. He was going to do more than just report the news. "It will be our aim" he wrote, "to make the paper, as it has been heretofore, a true exponent of republican principles, and the friend of temperance, education and all true reforms."² In adopting such a platform he probably expected controversy. He was not disappointed.

The other two church papers that were associated with the business, Prescott left pretty much as they were. The New Hampshire Journal served the Congregationalists of New Hampshire and had its own clergyman editor. He followed the same policy with the Vermont Chronicle which served the Congregationalists in Vermont. Prescott appears to have sustained very cordial relations with the clergymen

¹ "Student Secures W. W. Prescott's Life Story," p. 3.

² Watchman, April 5, 1882. Though Prescott also employed Arthur Ropes in full time editorial work, it seems clear that Prescott himself was responsible for the paper’s leading editorials. See the discussion in Valentine, "W. W. Prescott A.M., 1885-1944: The Early Years," pp. 68-71.
with whom he worked and the fact of his being a Seventh-day Adventist was apparently no impediment.

No time was wasted in addressing with vigor the concerns Prescott had mentioned in his objectives. Educational reform received attention first. In his second issue of the paper he editorialized on the matter of teacher certification. Complaining of the inadequacy of the testing procedures he urged that "dummys" not be placed in the schools and encouraged superintendents to be bold enough to withhold certification from teachers who were not qualified. "Even at the risk of an occasional error in judgment" he wrote, "... without fear or favor, license only those undeniably qualified to teach." Superintendents who did any less were not doing their job and should be removed.¹

Again, in mid-August the paper carried a lead editorial on education. In even more strident tones, Prescott lambasted the Vermont Teachers Association which had had its annual meetings earlier in the month. In his opinion the "slumberous character" of the gathering well represented the languid interest in education throughout the state. Attempting to be constructive in his criticism, however, he suggested four ways in which the association could be reformed. Some remedy was quickly needed he asserted to redeem it from the "... insinuation that it is a sort of fossilized mutual admiration society."²

The editorial attack brought a vigorous reaction. According to "Reform," an anonymous but sympathetic correspondent, sharp and

¹Watchman, April 19, 1882. ²Watchman, August 16, 1882.
bitter criticism of the editorial appeared in other newspapers. Coming to Prescott's defense "Reform" wrote, "I know of no better way to reform it [The Teachers Association] than by public criticism through the Press," and concluded by saying, "I believe the influence of your editorial will be felt in the cause of education long after the bitter and vindictive strictures upon your position will be overlooked and forgotten." At least Prescott was being read.

Other aspects of educational reform also interested Prescott, and through the Watchman one sees some of his educational concepts forming. His associate, Dr. Hosking, who cared for the paper's agricultural department, opined in a piece published just before Prescott went to Battle Creek in 1885, that public school education was "mischeviously inadequate" because it lacked among many other things industrial education. A practical education for men and women who labor with their hands was an urgent need, he argued. Prescott's later experience as president of Battle Creek College indicated that it was much more difficult to implement such reforms than to publish editorials about them.

Prescott's introduction to another educational reform idea came during his first year in Montpelier when he became acquainted with Dr. Vincent, who was visiting the capital advocating his Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. Through the Watchman, Prescott indicated that he was impressed by Vincent's idea of summer educational institutes. It would seem that in this encounter the

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1Watchman, September 20, 1882.  2Watchman, July 15, 1885.  3Watchman, September 20, 1882.
ground was laid for Prescott's later predilection for these kinds of institutes which he utilized as a means of upgrading ministers' and teachers' effectiveness. Some of his most effective work, in fact, was done through this medium.

After his stinging attack on the Teachers Association, Prescott did not apparently lose all his friends. In 1884 he was given the honor of being elected to serve as one of the trustees of the Washington County Grammar School where he had formerly served as principal. He also served as a member of the prudential committee of the Montpelier school district.1 These duties doubtless gave him added insights into the educational enterprise from a perspective other than that of a teacher or student and helped prepare him for his later important educational responsibilities.

Prescott had concerns other than education to share through his editorial column, however, and a variety of matters came in for comment. Among them were labor unions, railway regulations, civil-service election reform, Republican conventions, and general politics. As already noted, Prescott had at the outset expressed his intention of making the paper a true exponent of Republican principles, but surprisingly it was in this area that he received the most criticism and apparently aroused the most controversy. Prescott's independent stand on some issues made him something of a party maverick, at least in the eyes of the purists.

Controversy reached fever pitch during the congressional

1Catalogue of the Montpelier Union School 1884, VHSL. Prescott may in fact have served as a trustee for a longer period. The 1884 catalogue is the only one extant.
campaign of 1884 when factional strife disrupted the Republican cause in Vermont. The Watchman's endorsement of the candidacy of Judge Poland and its exposure of some shady, behind the scenes, plotting at the convention did not help matters. Charged with disloyalty by other Republican papers, Prescott again, however, was not completely without friends and was able to call some to his defense. In reply to what he called "...one of the St. Albans Messenger's childish bits of gibberish..." he was able to cite "the encouraging rejoinder" of a correspondent of the Vergennes Vermonter who had written, "the view that The Messenger takes of party fealty leads one to doubt if that journal really embraces the real principles of true republicanism."

Almost a year later controversy was still swirling around in Republican circles when in the July 8, 1885 issue, Prescott announced to his readers that he was selling the paper to D. D. Dixon (the owner of the Messenger with whom Prescott had often crossed editorial swords). In spite of his explanation that an invitation to accept the presidency of Battle Creek College in Michigan was the only cause for the change, rival newspapers quickly charged that Prescott was getting out because the paper had lost money, the insinuation being that his unpopular stands and poor management had brought this about. Prescott replied in the following issue that there was "absolutely no ground for such statements" and went on to explain that in actual fact the subscription list had generally retained its old names and "had received steadily increasing accessions of new subscribers...."

¹Watchman, September 20, 1884.
He argued that the paper had indeed prospered during the last three years and that "its prospects were never brighter under the present management than at the time the recent contract to sell was made."  

The business changed hands on July 24, 1885. In the last issue before that date, Prescott bade his readers farewell and offered a defense for the course he had pursued. It is evident that while still lively and assertive and convinced of the correctness of his position, Prescott did seem nevertheless somewhat chastened, mellowed, and more mature. He began his "apology" by expressing his dislike for what he saw as a recent form of Republicanism that asserted "immaculateness" and "stolid straightness of party alignment" without regard to convictions of fundamental right and wrong. Admitting that although his writing may have been provocative at times, it was not, he claimed, without respect for his opponent.

We leave the editorial chair cherishing only feelings of good will for those with whom we have differed or whom we have opposed. Our conduct may at times have been somewhat impetuous, but it has been imbued with a feeling of genuine respect for an open and manly antagonist, as it has quite uniformly been characterized by candor and frankness in the treatment of disingenuous opponents. After the fight we have been ready to shake hands with those whom we have encountered in the lists. . . .

Concerning other major issues to which he had given attention, he noted that the schools, agriculture, and moral force, and the material means of the state's growth had been particular areas of interests. Here he had also been aggressive and commented that the Watchman had pursued its work "with a zeal and enthusiasm that not infrequently, have drawn fervor and endurance from the obstacles,  

1Watchman, July 8, 1885.  
2Watchman, July 22, 1885.
natural and artificial, which have sometimes encumbered the way."¹

It was politics and the charge of disloyalty that Prescott appeared most sensitive about, however, and in this last issue he made a final defense. He acknowledged that he had received from his predecessor an important political trust and that earlier the Watchman had assisted in the formation of the national Republican party. Without betraying this trust in any way, he claimed, the paper had tried to educate citizens regarding all sides of political questions. "It has dared to be liberal and independent," he wrote, trying "to lead, not follow public opinion, ..." He acknowledged that the paper had probably been more frank and candid with its readers than some "ardent journals which have been visiting maledictions on our head." But forcefully he declared, "we have not been wanting in loyalty to the Republican party or in regard for its best interests."² Prescott's lengthy defensiveness indicates the degree of hostility he seems to have aroused in some quarters and also his sensitivity to criticism--the latter being a problem he would have to face with pain and some frequency in later life.

The incoming editor, D. D. Dixon, a party purist, appears to have gotten the last word, however, in a rather backhanded way. In his introductory remarks he mentioned that he was a Republican who would not be found wanting in the enunciation of sound Republican principles, and then, tongue in cheek, he fired a parting shot at Prescott. "With no intent to reflect censoriously upon the political course of our immediate predecessor, with whose views we have not

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.
always been in accord," he wrote, "it will be our earnest endeavor to make THE WATCHMAN, in the stability of its political character, what it was under the control of those able and veteran editors, WALTON and POLAND." As far as Dixon was concerned, Prescott had been an unfortunate parenthesis for the Watchman. But Prescott's stand and his policies were vindicated somewhat when in 1888 a group of the county's businessmen bought Dixon out and reestablished Prescott's old associate, Arthur Ropes, in the editorial chair.2

If there had been controversy, however, the paper had nevertheless prospered under Prescott and his defense of its financial soundness seems valid. Just nine months prior to the changeover, Prescott had substantially enlarged the paper because of the demand for more advertising space, a sure sign of financial health. At the same time he had built up the office plant by purchasing a number of new pieces of equipment to improve the paper. Three months later in December of 1884, he reported that "the steady growth of THE WATCHMAN in popular favor is attested by its growing subscription list" and asserted that "the circuit of its influence had never been so wide as the present."3 His recent takeover of two rival newspapers had helped in this, for their subscription lists had been absorbed into the Watchman's. Contrary to the charges of his critics, therefore,

1 Watchman, July 29, 1885.
2 Arthur Ropes had resigned when Prescott sold the paper and had set up an opposition paper, The Rural Vermonter. County businessmen later merged the two papers and Arthur Ropes became manager of the new company and editor of the paper. The Vermont Watchman--Souvenir Edition, p. 32, VHSL.
3 Watchman, September 24, December 31, 1884.
Prescott's astute and aggressive management of the paper had indeed made it prosperous. But why then did he accept the invitation to become the president of the struggling and financially strapped college in the midwest?

It was not a sudden decision. In fact, for some time prior to the summer of 1884, Prescott had been more and more impressed that the Lord was calling him to take a more active part in the work of the church. Perhaps it was the preaching of Ellen White and G. I. Butler at the campmeeting in Montpelier in 1883 that started his thoughts more positively in this direction. But whatever initiated it, Prescott felt impressed to respond. The campmeeting held in September 1884 at Burlington where Ellen White and Uriah Smith were the guest speakers was a time of spiritual renewal for many. Prescott attended and took the opportunity to approach Uriah Smith, who was representing the General Conference, and made known to him the burden that he had felt for some time. Prescott later related how Uriah Smith encouraged him to believe that the Lord would open the way, and he greatly appreciated Smith's kindly expressions of interest and sympathy "at this time of a turning point" in his life.¹

Nothing more happened, however, and for a year Prescott waited.

Meanwhile at Battle Creek the denomination's first college was struggling. Opened again in 1883 after a year's recess because of disciplinary problems and a conflict between the faculty and the board, the college was being managed temporarily by the blind pastor, W. H. Littlejohn. Not much progress had been made toward implementing

the board's objectives for the institution, and Littlejohn, not
trained for such work, keenly realized his limitations, as did the
trustees. W. C. White, writing from California in early July, re-
ported that the trustees had already tried hard to get Sidney Browns-
berger of Healdsburg College (the first principal of Battle Creek
College) to come back to take the presidency again. Failing in this,
they then tried hard but unsuccessfully to get Prof. Grainger who was
also at Healdsburg.1 According to White, the trustees were "in a box
on the manual labor business" and thought that the men from Healds-
burg could help out.

Frustrated in California, the trustees decided to elect young
"Will" Prescott. In early June,2 he was invited to meet with the
General Conference president, George Butler, and Uriah Smith at the
campmeeting in Pennsylvania to talk over the proposition and Prescott
agreed that if he could sell his business he would come. Less than
a month later with the sale of the business in Montpelier wound up,

1W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, July 3, 1885, W. C. White Lb
A, EGWRC-DC. The letter reports approaches that must have actually
been made in late May or early June.

2The trustees voted to secure Prescott's services on June 17
(see BCC Bd Min, June 17, 1885), but Prescott relates that he had
actually been asked to take the presidency in early June when he was
asked to meet with General Conference leadership at the Pennsylvania
campmeeting which according to the Review was held June 4-9, 1885.
Cf., RH, March 10, 1903, p. 7 and June 9, 1885, pp. 368, 376. The
intent of the note in the minutes of the board that a motion to
retain the services of Littlejohn "was about to be carried" when
Littlejohn suddenly resigned is problematic. Were the trustees not
sure of getting Prescott or were not all the board members including
Littlejohn (who was not a board member) aware of the negotiations
that had already apparently been going on?
Prescott wrote to notify the board that arrangements were complete and that he was coming to "take charge" of the college.¹

Just approaching thirty, Prescott had already enjoyed and profited from an enriching variety of work experiences. He had taken on important responsibilities with confident aggressiveness and had carried them well. He had developed a high reputation as a teacher and his education had continued through his early career as he had lived and worked among the leading citizens of three New England towns among whom he had made many warm friends.²

In one sense though, all this was but a preparation for a life work that was just about to begin. Prescott's move from the confines of New England to Michigan's Battle Creek was more than just a move from one state to another. It was, in fact, a move that eventually brought him into the limelight of a church organization whereby in a very real way the sphere of his influence was to include the whole world.

¹BCC Bd Min, July 12, 1885. The Watchman had announced the sale, July 8, 1885.
²RH, August 18, 1885, p. 525.
PART TWO
1885-1897
CHAPTER VI

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

It was a deep religious commitment that led Prescott to give up a promising career in publishing in order to work for the church. The drop in his income was substantial. Even as an unmarried principal of the Montpelier school in 1879, six years previously, he had received a salary of $1,200. His first year's salary as president of Battle Creek College in 1885 was $700 rising to $900 in 1886. But Prescott had not come to Battle Creek to earn money. He had come because he felt a large burden to contribute more directly to the advancement of the Advent cause, and his arrival in Battle Creek in the late summer of 1885 marked the commencement of a career of fifty-two years of service to the Adventist church that ended officially with his retirement in 1937. His nine-year term as president of Battle Creek College has been exceeded in length only by Richard Hammill who served as president of the institution's successor, Andrews University, for thirteen years.

A former Battle Creek College student recalled Prescott as being "somewhat above medium height, with chestnut hair and dark red beard, square cut and parted in the middle... he presented a

\[\text{BCC Bd Min, October 30, 1886.}\]
handsome appearance . . ."¹ (see frontispiece). Of large build, Prescott always dressed immaculately, and with his deep, rich resonant voice he inspired a sense of awe in his students and staff. Naturally a highly gifted person, he was both confident and capable, which when compounded with his training and experience, made him an almost overpowering personality. When called to the presidency of Battle Creek College he was one of the most highly qualified persons for the post in the denomination.

The new president commanded immediate respect and generated in the college the feeling that here was someone who really was in charge and knew where he was going. The local newspaper caught the new note of optimism and confidence that his arrival had aroused and reported halfway through his first term, "The College under the efficient management of its new President, Prof. W. W. Prescott, is in a flourishing condition. The professor evidently understands his business, and by his presence and timely remarks . . . gives a new impetus to the college work."² Without a doubt Prescott cut an impressive image in the community.

It was not only students, staff, and community members who were impressed. Church leaders and trustees, too, felt at last they had found their man and that the college was now on stable ground. Excited by Prescott's first year, the stockholders of the college passed the following resolution in November, 1886: "We hereby


²Battle Creek Daily Journal, October 24, 1885.
express our full confidence in the present management of the college and we are thankful to God for the marked prosperity which has attended it of late." Reporting to the General Conference a year later, Butler noted that "there has been difficulty in the past in finding a suitable principal for the school but they have been fortunate enough to obtain the services of Prof. W. W. Prescott, and now the school is in good standing..." By 1889, Prescott's reputation for successful management had become an established by-word. General Conference secretary Dan Jones, writing to his old colleague Butler, remarked concerning the thirty-four-year-old Prescott's managerial abilities, "... you know what Prof. Prescott takes hold of generally comes out about right."¹ Prescott was making his mark. It was not, however, without hard work.

Building A College

As a regular reader of the Review, Prescott would have been aware of the crisis of identity the college had experienced during the difficulties of 1881-83. At that time its managers had attempted to make the college the same as any regular degree-granting institution of the state, and in the resulting conflict with the trustees it had been closed down for a year. Although not fully aware of how to implement the ideals espoused by the founders of the college, Prescott nevertheless established right at the outset in a clear statement to the stockholders, that he would "do all in his power to carry out the design of the founders of the institution..."

¹BCC Bd Min, November 23, 1886; GC Bulletin, November 18, 1887. See also RH, April 26, 1887, p. 266. D.T. Jones to G. I. Butler, November 26, 1889, RG 21: 8x 59 Lb 2, GCAr.
Thus the primary objective of the institution and therefore of his administration as he saw it was "... to fit up workers for the cause of God,"¹ not simply to provide educated teachers for the public-school system. Such an objective for Prescott did not mean a lesser standard of work, however, and the very first major task to which he addressed himself was to make the college what it claimed to be: a college.

Adamantly opposed to seeing institutions stand on what he called "an inflated basis," i.e., advertising themselves as something they were not, Prescott saw that the standard at Battle Creek needed to be upgraded. Just before his connection with the college, in fact, the trustees had debated at length whether the school was a high school or a college, and they had voted to continue granting only diplomas—not degrees, although trustee J. H. Kellogg, aggressive head of the Sanitarium across the road from the college, urged the faculty to improve the curriculum so degrees could be granted.² Although somewhat disillusioned with "degrees" at a later date, Prescott at this stage in his career saw the need to improve the work of the college.

As a step toward upgrading the school at the end of his first year, Prescott unsuccessfully attempted to pass off the primary grades to the management of the local Battle Creek church.³ The


²GCC Min, March 25, 1889; BCC Bd Min, May 11, 1885.

³"Twelfth Annual Meeting," SDA Yearbook 1887, p. 80. Battle Creek did not start its own church school until 1901.
church was not interested. Frustrated, he turned his attention to the upper levels and endeavored to upgrade the work there making it his policy to "hold as far as possible, young men and women of suitable age and ability" in order to raise up a "more thoroughly trained class of workers." When he introduced to the board in September of 1886 the idea of the college conferring degrees, a lengthy and "animated" discussion resulted but no action was taken.¹ Three years later, however, in 1889, the board was finally persuaded and it voted that "the usual degrees" be granted for the scientific and classical course.² When Prescott drew up his catalogue for the 1890 school year he must have felt some satisfaction that the college was now truly a college.

Prescott had commenced his term as president in 1885 with a plant consisting of two major buildings. The main college classroom building provided room for 300 students (see fig. 8), and a newly erected three-story dormitory accommodated only half those who desired lodging. With noisy manual-arts rooms and regular recitation rooms in the same building, Prescott immediately saw the need for expansion. The stockholders too were very conscious of the burgeoning youth population of the church and of the desperate need for trained workers. At their annual meeting in November of Prescott's

¹"Educational Work," SDA Yearbook 1890, p. 76; BCC Bd Min, September 30, 1886.
²BCC Bd Min, November 21, 1889. Prescott reported at the end of 1889: "regular courses have been remodeled and the work brought to a higher standard." SDA Yearbook 1890, p. 76. Not long after the policy of offering degrees was adopted by Battle Creek College, Prescott, it seems, began to slowly change his opinion of them. The change appears to have been brought about by his reassessment of the basic curriculum Battle Creek was offering. See chapter 9.
first year they established a committee to explore the need for
enlarging the college's facilities. Happily for Prescott, his father,
J. L. Prescott, who was a delegate to the General Conference session
that year, was elected a member of this committee. Thus the new
president had a persuasive advocate for his plans for expansion.\footnote{SDAES 11th Annual Meeting," p. 976; "General Conference
Proceedings," RH, November 24, 1885, p. 728.}

Indicating his own commitment to the upgrading of the school, William
generously donated $5,000 to the building program from the proceeds
of the sale of his publishing company.\footnote{According to W. C. White,
Mrs. White felt sorry when she saw Prescott "rapidly disposing of
what he had accumulated by hard labor." She urged him not to give
such large amounts so that later he would be able to give smaller
gifts to help many people. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, January 3,
1911, JLMcCC, Bx 1 Fl 1, AUHR.} The committee recommended an
addition to the main college building to double its classroom
capacity as well as the erection of an extra dormitory. The class­
room addition was a logical first, and during the winter months the
trustees authorized plans to be drawn up.

Unfortunately for Prescott, the strains and stresses of his
last months with the Watchman, his transfer, and the first few months
at Battle Creek had taken their toll on his health and he suffered a
severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism. At the beginning of the
spring term of his first year he was confined to bed, his hands too
painful even to take minutes for the college board which met at his
bedside. Worried by the work load looming in front of him in the
coming year, he consulted with the trustees who voted him a four-
month leave of absence to recoup his vitality. A hasty series of
board meetings to complete planning the building program of the
college followed. The sick president pressed the adoption of the plans for the south extension to the main building and urged that building proceed at once.\(^1\) He then left Battle Creek on April 13 and apparently returned to Vermont. His health greatly improved after the summer's rest, he came back in late August in time to help supervise the furnishing and final preparations on the new addition.\(^2\) A power house that housed the carpentry shop was also built during the summer.

With adequate classroom space, with plans already afoot to put up an additional student residence in the near future, and with renewed energy and vision, Prescott launched immediately upon his return into a recruitment campaign. His appeal was to young men and women who could serve the church, and he made his pleas at Sabbath School institutes, at campmeetings, and through announcements in the Review. While the recruitment drive did not immediately increase the enrollment, Prescott was undeterred and continued to promote and to agitate the subject of education whenever he had the opportunity. His annual tours of the summer campmeetings became a regular feature on his calendar, and they did much to increase the denomination's awareness of its needs to educate its youth. His constant theme was that Battle Creek College was different from other literary institutions, that the cause urgently needed rightly trained workers, and Battle Creek College was the place for such training. "The importance of this special education for a specific work in connection with

\(^1\)BCC Bd Min, March 25, 26, 27, April 1, 1886.

\(^2\)Battle Creek Daily Journal, April 12, August 20, 1886; RH, August 3, 1886, p. 496.
the closing message . . ." was his thrust at many campmeetings. One conference president, R. M. Kilgore, reported that Prescott's efforts were "highly prized" and would be "felt all over the state." Others wished that his "burning words of truth" could have been heard by more than just those who attended the campmeeting.\(^1\) Prescott himself, in fact, had probably become the best advertisement the college had.

Eventually Prescott's enthusiasm and his aggressive promotion paid dividends for Battle Creek College. Enrollment hovered around 400-450 through the late eighties and then climbed steadily during the early nineties to a peak of about 720 in Prescott's last two years.\(^2\) These were regular students and included those in the college division as well as those in the primary and preparatory departments. With the enrollment of the yearly General Conference Bible Schools added, overall attendance in the last few years of his presidency averaged around 850 and on one occasion numbered over a thousand.\(^3\)

The long planned new residence hall was erected in the summer of 1887 in time for the commencement of Prescott's third year in

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\(^2\) RH, January 31, 1893, p. 80.

\(^3\) Rapidly expanding enrollments, however, were also characteristic of colleges and high schools throughout the nation. Thus the experience of the Adventist church to a large extent reflected society at large. See H. G. Good and J. O. Teller, A History of American Education, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 221, 237.
Battle Creek. First taken up seriously by the board in March of 1887, a modest building was planned that would cost no more than $15,000. Later an appeal was made for a larger vision and so the $15,000 limit was rescinded. In early April after new plans were considered a decision on location was taken. The building built in brick, was to be located in the southwest corner of the grounds, and construction was to start immediately under the supervision of W. C. Sisley (see fig. 9). Finally, at a cost of $19,000, this L-shaped, four-story brick building, known as "West Hall," was completed and became home for the college president, for the preceptor, and 150 students. Here too was the dining room, with a capacity of 300, that was to become the focal point for the new "school home" idea that Prescott was to make emblematic of his presidency.  

The president was not at all perplexed over adding these new buildings to the campus and thus contributing to what was described later as the great centralizing of interests in Battle Creek. When the first residence hall had been built in 1884, Ellen White herself had said in dismay that it was not a fourth large enough.  

Things turned out differently in relation to the last of Prescott's building activities in 1893 however.

With enrollment escalating, the college had been much overcrowded during 1892 (400 in college and 321 in preparatory). In spite of the fact that colleges had been started in other places (such as Walla Walla and Union, both of which also had fairly large

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1BCC Bd Min, March 6, 20, 28, April 3, 1887.
2"SDAES 10th Annual Meeting 1884," SDA Yearbook 1885, p. 52.
Fig. 8. Battle Creek College Main Building 1885

Fig. 9. Battle Creek College Campus 1891. Sanitarium buildings are in upper right corner of picture.
enrollments), Battle Creek College with its regular college program plus the annual General Conference Bible School was still greatly pressed for room. The worship rooms in the dormitories were being used for classrooms. The reception room and the library had also been taken over for the same purpose. To relieve the pressure there seemed no alternative but to build an addition to the existing classroom block.¹

The board approved the idea in late December and Prescott announced the board's decision to his faculty. In late February the trustees voted to spend $15,000 on the project, plans were drawn up, ground was broken, and excavations were well underway by March 28. Not long after work on the building had been started, both Prescott and Kellogg received letters from Mrs. White suggesting that Mt. Vernon Sanitarium be turned into a school instead of putting up the addition. In view of the fact that they were planning to do that in any case, a fact which would not diminish the enrollment problem and that building work had already been started, the trustees went ahead.²

Mrs. White, feeling keenly the want of funds in Australia, protested strongly in a letter mailed in September. She stated that she felt quite pained over the matter. Prescott was apologetic but felt helpless and perplexed, "My mind is greatly exercised by what you write, and I hardly know what my duty is in the matter. . . . I certainly

regret that we have used any means in building up the work here, which ought to have gone to other fields." But by September it was too late; the building had been finished and now with the new wing the college had classroom space for 1,000\(^1\) (see fig.10). Prescott had learned something, however, and took care in future years to counsel with Mrs. White before erecting a building about which there was some doubt.

During the nine years of Prescott's term, buildings were erected that represented a total capital investment of some $49,000. Although the college debt rose from $19,000 when Prescott arrived to almost $49,000 in his last year, considering the capital improvements he undertook, it would seem to be a tribute to his financial abilities that he was able to keep the increase so low.\(^2\) The college, in fact, had to operate and find capital for improvements entirely from within its own resources, for these were days when subsidies from the denomination for capital investment or operating expenses had not been thought of.\(^3\) A $3,000 annual subsidy from the church would have solved the debt problem completely, but the General Conference itself

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\(^2\)E. K. Vande Vere's comment that "Financial discernment was not one of this man's special talents," seems unjustified. "W. W. Prescott: Administrator," (unpublished manuscript, AUHR), p. 3. Years later, Prescott was asked to take the presidency of Union College for the purpose of helping it out of its financial difficulties. See chapter 20.

\(^3\)Everett Dick remarks about the indebtedness of Union College in 1896-97: "The brethren . . . did not understand that with a clientele of only moderate means, it is impossible to support a college on tuition alone," Union, p. 89. See also p. 97.
was heavily in debt. Although school fees were low students struggled as it was and would have found it impossible to have paid more. Prescott’s struggles with the finances of the college in this respect again reflected the financial struggles that most other colleges of this period were facing.¹

School Homes

As president, Prescott also wore the hat of business manager and evidently kept a close watch on financial matters in the college. He was nonetheless always sympathetic to students in need. It was evidently his practice to try to keep in touch with students who he knew were in need, and to help them where he could to find assistance.² Students usually found him very generous in this regard and in later years he continued to invest in worthy students from his own resources. Such students remembered him with deep gratitude.³ But while concern for student finances effectively kept Prescott in touch with his students, his decision to live with them in the new West Hall proved even more helpful.

For its first decade, Battle Creek College had no dormitories. Students boarded with church members or boarded themselves in the

¹See Good and Teller, pp. 236, 237, 281-288. Debts increased for most schools nationwide during the 1890s in spite of spiralling enrollment. Schools were still largely expected to be "institutions of the poor."

²Mac. Avery to G. R. Avery, November 19, 1887, Bx 2 Fld 7; January 22, 1888, Bx 2 Fld 8, GRACC, AUHR. "Prof. Prescott came to me the other day and said he did not know as he could arrange it so I could stay in school as easily as he had thought, . . . [He] said he would try to do the best he could, to keep me in school."

³Mrs. Alice Perrine to G. M. Valentine, February 1980.
community. Such an unregulated arrangement, however, presented enormous discipline problems for the school. The building of South Hall in late 1884 and Prescott’s strong hand at the helm in 1885 obviated much of the discipline problem, but Prescott had become convinced that more was needed to solve the problem completely.

In his own school days Prescott had had experience in school residences but these though good, were somewhat lacking. During his long convalescence in the summer of 1886, Prescott concluded that what was needed was a "school home." Why could not culture and refinement be inculcated in a residence where faculty who taught in the classroom also lived in the residence, dined with the students, and acted "en loco parentis"? The plan was actually an old one, having been followed at some of England’s best schools for centuries—primarily because of its academic and cultural benefits. The idea was uncommon in America, however, and apart from a small attempt at Healdsburg begun in 1883, the idea was new to Adventism. Besides, Prescott wanted to give the concept a unique Christian setting, and therefore he utilized the idea much more for its spiritual benefits than its academic advantages.

Accordingly, during the early summer of 1887, while West Hall (see fig. 11) was being built and South Hall remodelled, Prescott rearranged his tight campmeeting schedule so that with Sadie, his wife, and Matron Effie Rankin, he was able to fit in visits to various institutions in the east that were operating student housing. Holyoke Women’s Seminary, Wellesley College, Hampton Institute, and Oberlin were all inspected. They all differed in their approaches but nevertheless all provided helpful insights. When Prescott
Fig. 10. Battle Creek College Main Building 1894

Fig. 11. West Hall--Prescott's "School Home" 1894
returned he consulted with the trustees. Together they studied his written report along with Mrs. White's counsels and then laid out an entirely new plan for the coming year.¹

The plan Prescott and his trustees worked out became a pattern that was to stamp itself on Adventist education around the world for decades. Such graduates from Battle Creek during Prescott's era as E. A. Sutherland, Sarah Peck, Walter Irwin, C. B. Hughes, Hattie Andre, and J. L. Shaw planted the idea at many other colleges in the United States and overseas. In some smaller colleges and academies the plan was still followed in the 1960s.²

The twin foci of Prescott's new approach were the chapel and the dining room. In the dining room Prescott's attempts to inculcate refinement and quality were nobly assisted by his gracious wife and Matron Rankin. Occupying the central table they endeavored to set an example of correctness and decorum. If what was eaten proved at times to be a source of difficulty and embarrassment, concerning the manner of eating there was no question. Students were assigned to their tables where a host and hostess from their particular company were assigned to wait on them. Table company was changed at monthly intervals and only the personal permission of the president granted the rare exception. Occasionally the president would attempt to

¹RH, May 10, 1887, p. 304. Mary E. Lamson, "Evolution of the School Home in the S.D.A. Educational System," pp. 6-8, AUHR, (typewritten manuscript). This account claims to be based on a 1925 letter from Professor Prescott to Mary Lamson.

²Longburn Adventist College in New Zealand which this writer attended in the early 1960s followed the plan. The preceptor and preceptress dined with the students in the dining room and talks were given on courtesy. The plan has since been modified.
improve the students' "good form" by reading from his "don't book" on dining room etiquette, and sometimes extended his remarks to what constituted "good form" elsewhere in the school home. Concerned that regularity and punctuality be valued by his students, Prescott expected such. In October 1889, he could boast that for four years "the time of the meal has been known but once to vary 5 minutes from the program."  

In the classroom and around the campus, Prescott set the same pattern. Neatness of dress was expected. Quietness and orderliness in the corridors was demanded, and diligence in attending to studies was the order of the day. Photographs reveal neatly kept lawns and trimmed edges, and students recalled bright, attractive flower beds. Prescott's campus outdoors matched the ideals he tried to inculcate indoors.  

The Pastor-President  
The daily religious chapel period at 9:30 a.m. was the other anchor point of Prescott's new thrust. It was not that he undervalued academics, for in fact he insisted on a high standard in that department and encouraged the intellectual development of his students by reforming the discredited literary or rhetorical societies and frequently participated in them himself. Not teaching students in the classroom, however, Prescott gave his attention to the

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1 Sybil Macomber to G. R. Avery, February 5, 1885, Bx 2 Fld 8, GRACC, AUHR. GC Bulletin, October 22, 1889. Ruth Haskell Hayton, "Memories of College Days," RH, August 1, 1929, p. 23. Hayton began her college career in 1887 and was one of the first students in "West Hall."

spiritual welfare of his students. Thus the chapel was basic to his thrust. He was a pastor-president in the tradition of Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby.\(^1\)

It was Prescott's policy at Battle Creek (practiced also in his later schools) that whenever he was on campus (and he was away frequently in later years), the daily forty-five minute chapel period was his. He would have some talk on his oft-repeated theme of character development or would read morning by morning from a biography of some noble life that he himself had recently finished. A voracious reader, Prescott was a talented and interesting speaker and chapels were never dull. Students who attempted to study during that hour remember being silently rebuked with a stern look.\(^2\)

Friday evening prayer meetings and Sabbath afternoon social meetings were also much enjoyed by students, and Prescott often used them to further impress his students with eternal realities. Likewise, the Thursday night missionary society meeting, which Prescott actively encouraged, provided many opportunities to present his students with the challenge of mission fields abroad and at home. Many were inspired by these talks.\(^3\)

His concern for the spiritual welfare of his students appeared to be stronger than his concern for their cultural

\(^1\)Arnold Whitridge, Dr. Arnold of Rugby (London: Constable and Co. Ltd., 1928), pp. 89-111.


\(^3\)Sybil Macomber to G. R. Avery, February 5, 1885, Fld 2 Fld B, GRACC, AUHR.
development and refinement. As opportunity offered he would visit Mrs. White and urge her to come and address the students. Weeks of Prayer were highlights of the year and were preceded by careful preparation. Ruth Hayton recalls that when absent on one occasion during a Week of Prayer, the president sent a telegram to the students: "3 John 3 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.'" In creating this religious environment for the college, Prescott was again assisted by his wife who occasionally conducted the evening worship services and frequently conversed on spiritual matters with students around the campus and in their rooms.

After 1888, Prescott also saw to it that the new emphasis on righteousness by faith, eventually caught hold in the college. This did not happen without a struggle. At the beginning the college was caught in the crossfire. When the General Conference officers had suggested to the college before Minneapolis that A. T. Jones be engaged as Bible teacher, the antagonistic board, apparently under Smith's influence, refused to act. After Jones' aggressive performance at the historic conference, they appointed F. O. Starr instead. Only after a joint session of the board and the full General Conference committee, with others invited, was the deadlock resolved and Jones engaged to teach--albeit with strictly written out instructions that he would not teach anything other than what had already been taught by the denomination, a restriction some of the brethren had tried to introduce as a resolution at Minneapolis and which Mrs. White had strenuously opposed. (She continued to do so.) Later

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1Hayton, "Memories of College Days," p. 23.
Prescott arranged for E. J. Waggoner also to be invited to teach in the college for a time assisting U. Smith. The divisive tensions, however, remained for years afterwards.¹

Religious revivals at Battle Creek College during Prescott's presidency were not frequent; they were nevertheless far reaching in their effects. The revival associated with the Week of Prayer at the end of 1890 (which stemmed from the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference), was notable. Even more so was the revival of late 1892. Both show Prescott as a sensitive and deeply spiritual leader. On both occasions he made public confession in front of the student body with strong emotion and weeping. The revivals also reflect the spiritual concerns of the students and the church at large in the 1890s. The 1892 revival in particular is worth noting.

Around 1887, the National Reform Association had begun to initiate a movement to enact Sunday legislation which resulted in a number of bills being considered in Congress. Adventists interpreted these developments as the fulfillment of their eschatological hopes and during this period they had a greatly heightened sense of the imminence of the Second Advent. Conjointly with these expectations, the new Christocentric theme of righteousness by faith had recently thrust itself into the church's hearing and these two developments led Ellen White to announce in November 1892 that the long hoped for

time of the "loud cry" had commenced.\(^1\) Prescott not only shared these views but actively propagated them in the church.

On November 29, 1892, while Prescott was away from the campus visiting Walla Walla College, revival broke out at Battle Creek, precipitated by a disciplinary situation involving a mixed group which included the president's nephew. The group had absented itself from the campus without leave a few days earlier but had sought forgiveness.

The faculty acted with patience and grace. A letter from Mrs. White in Adelaide, Australia, received by the president's wife and read during the chapel on November 30, the day after the faculty's decision, encapsulated the gospel. It talked of the Christian as one who was "content to receive without deserving." To him "the treasures of eternal love are a free, everlasting gift."\(^2\)

The impression on the school was profound. Chapel lasted four hours that morning and classes were cancelled. During the next two weeks the school program continued to be disrupted as the work of revival went on. Prescott returned on December 15, two days before the Week of Prayer was scheduled to start. At chapel on the last day of the term, December 22, the president, after reading another recently received testimony, broke down and then made a straight-forward confession about his own past experience. This again stirred the

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\(^1\)E. G. White, "The Perils and Privileges of The Last Days," RH, November 22, 1892, p. 722. See also the reference to A. T. Jones' Sermon in the Tabernacle the following week, RH, November 29, 1892, p. 752.

\(^2\)E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, October 26, 1892, EGWRC-AU. Both Olsen and Prescott were away and the mail was apparently directed to Mrs. Prescott.
student body and chapel that day continued until 6 p.m.; a break was taken and then the resumed meeting continued until 10:15 p.m.¹

During the Christmas break that followed, students scattered everywhere sharing their new found faith. Prescott, motivated by a strong sense of the eschaton and very much aware of the alienation and disunity that existed among church leaders, spent the next two months laboring effectively among the church leadership for reconciliation and reform. Some, like U. Smith, saw the whole movement as nothing more than an "excitement" and consequently received Mrs. White's rebuke.² For Prescott the episode was a demonstration of the grace of God.

The episode illustrates something of Prescott's values and priorities. Valuing the spiritual welfare of his students more than the routine of his timetable and their keeping up their classwork, he was prepared to dispense with the latter when necessary, sometimes incurring the displeasure of his faculty.³ Prescott was an open person. He felt he must maintain an openness to the unexpected initiatives of God. While holding strong convictions and being very much an independent thinker, he was nonetheless far from being bigoted. This openness led him on occasion to make mistakes such as in the case of Anna Phillips in 1894 and in his adoption of some of Waggoner's strained ideas in the late 1890s. This same sensitive

¹See Ron G. Graybill, "AD 1892: Revival Comes to Michigan," Insight, March 30, 1971, p. 307. See also DF 256d, EGWRC-DC.

²E. G. White to I:iah Smith, November 30, 1893, EGWRC-AU.

³BCC Fac Min, January 29, 1893. In the case cited here Prescott was actually voted down by his faculty.
and responsible openness at the same time meant that he was also open
to seeing his error and rectifying it.\footnote{See pp. 153ff.} This characteristic while
causing him some painful experiences enabled him to become a very
strong and dynamic leader who wielded an enormous influence for good
in his church.

**Disciplinarian**

One of the important objectives of Prescott's "school home"
idea was to ease the problem of discipline. Discipline problems had
brought the college to its knees in 1881 and Prescott recognized that
firm discipline must be one of his primary objectives. Improved dis­
cipline, in fact, was one of the first things the trustees noticed

Prescott held up high standards for his students. Courtship
and flirtation were out of place at college. Even attendance at good
entertainments in town (those approved by the faculty) was limited to
six per term. Attendance at classes and religious exercises had to
be regular and punctual. In maintaining these high standards Pres­
cott, like his predecessors, early found himself somewhat at cross
purposes with many parents and the general church membership. In two
sermons preached in the Tabernacle in January of 1888 he protested
plainly that ever since he had come to Battle Creek in 1885 he had
worked against a sentiment of criticism and indifference to college
rules on the part of the church members. He appealed for more
support. The differences in standards and requirements between the homes and the college was not helpful, he asserted. Then, citing specific examples such as children walking the streets during church services, or sitting in the balcony without their parents, young people roaming the streets at night, and parents not knowing where they were, he questioned, "What has become of the good old-fashioned way that we followed in New England?" The sermons brought results. In a Sabbath afternoon meeting in the Tabernacle the church membership formally endorsed the positions Prescott had taken.

Yet in spite of the resolve of the membership, discipline continued to be a large burden on Prescott's shoulders. In his early years, punishment was usually public. Prescott required the offender to make an apology in chapel before the whole school; if the punishment was expulsion or suspension, the matter was again dealt with publicly. Prescott, affectionate and gentle by nature, could nonetheless be stern and severe. Faculty minutes indicate that toward the end of his presidency the number of disciplinary cases dealt with publicly declined substantially, although occasionally, because of the public nature of a wrong, a public reprimand was given. In this matter, it seems that Prescott came to understand more of the redemptive aspects of discipline and he profited from the repeated, helpful, and kindly expressed counsel he received from Mrs. White. His

1W. W. Prescott, "The Use and Abuse of This World," RH, January 17, 1888, p. 33; January 24, p. 64.

2BCC Fac Min, March 19, 1893. E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, September 10, 1888, EGWRC-AU. Mrs. White had an affection for the young Prescott and his wife, addressing them as "My dear Brother and Sister whom I highly esteem in the Lord," or "My respected Brother and Sister."
larger theological understandings which developed gradually as he reflected on the Christocentric thrust of the Minneapolis conference of 1888 also modified his approach to discipline.

Sportsman

While Prescott's approach to discipline changed slowly, it appears that the number of cases to be dealt with did not materially shrink. To try and keep a healthy balance of physical and mental activities and thus avert discipline problems, Prescott inaugurated regular gymnasium work and allowed student sports. The need for this increased after the manual labor program was phased out in 1889. At first the faculty protested the introduction of gymnastic equipment and decreed that "Swedish movements" should be used instead. Sometime later it seems that opposition ceased and then mindful of his own exhilarating days at Dartmouth, Prescott encouraged the setting up of gymnastic equipment in the basement of the north wing and he himself ably demonstrated many techniques and maneuvers to admiring students. Students were expected to spend three regular forty-five-minute periods in the gym each week for exercise, but the class was not popular and students constantly sought to be excused from it—much to the annoyance of the faculty.¹

Much more appealing to the students were the outdoor sports and games on the south lawn that were a popular pastime. Play periods were allowed each day from 2:45 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. Out of these activities developed the "matched" football and baseball games that

¹BCC Fac Min, September 21, 1890; April 1, 1893. "Newton Memoir," cited in Vande Vere, The Wisdom Seekers MS, p. 28.
were sweeping across college campuses in the United States. Sunday afternoon games drew large crowds of spectators from the community to the college grounds, and eventually, in mid-1891, Prescott was forced to move for their discontinuance, at least on Sundays. But their popularity continued and the "matched games" of football became one of the talking points of the town by 1893. Football matches were set up between teams from college and the office, local industries, and even groups from neighboring towns. One particular game made headlines in a local newspaper.

Mrs. White, learning of these things while visiting Dr. Caro in New Zealand in 1893, was horrified. Dr. Caro had related to Mrs. White that her sons and their Maori friend, Maui Pomare, who were students at Battle Creek, had had a real struggle to give up their football when they became Christians and here they were at a supposedly Christian school in America enjoying such things. She was mortified that she was paying so much money for her boys' education when the school was apparently no better than schools to which she could have sent them in New Zealand. Mrs. White was highly embarrassed and wrote a stiff letter to Prescott. The troublesome


2 Either Mrs. White or Dr. Caro had been sent a copy of the newspaper. Mrs. White was irritated that this particular knowledge should have been transported to New Zealand. E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, October 2, 1893, EGWRC-AU.

3 E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, October 2, 1893; October 25, 1893. Prescott related that prior to his receiving her letter he had already begun to take corrective measures but that they would certainly do more. He stated that he was "greatly grieved" that the work had been made harder in other places by what had happened on his
football was stopped although other games were allowed to continue.

Games on the college campus had actually been a Sunday attraction even from Prescott's first year and probably before, but it seems that their popularity increased after the trustees dispensed with the manual training program in 1889. The adoption of a manual education program at Battle Creek had actually been voted by the trustees two months before Prescott's arrival at the college, but it became one of the most frustrating problems Prescott faced. Although he operated the program for four years and was committed to the ideal, he did not seem to know just how to make it successful in the face of so much latent opposition from students and parents.

The difficulties confronting the program were twofold; how to make the program instructional and at the same time financially viable. Trustees and stockholders realized that the whole idea was undermined by the fact that many of the students were short term and wanted to get their money's worth in the classroom not, in work projects. At the same time, most parents it seems, were not in favor of work projects on the college grounds. At the same time, Prescott very delicately tried to explain that the Caro boys were not the easiest to handle and that perhaps Mrs. Caro had not been given "the best view of matters here." He went on regarding the eldest boy, "... [he] blames the college for results which he and we together ought to have cooperated to prevent." W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, October 5, 1893, EGWRC-AU. Two years later Prescott apparently had the opportunity of visiting with Mrs. Caro herself in her home in Napier, New Zealand. The visit enabled him to better understand Mrs. Caro's perplexities. See W. W. Prescott to [College Principals], August 1, 1895, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR.

Battle Creek Daily Journal, August 2, 1886. Edson White had a team that played several other teams from the village on the college grounds.
of the idea and worked against it.\(^1\) In May 1888, Prescott visited General Armstrong's Hampton Institute in Virginia to study a work-study program for colored students. The occasion of the visit was "rich in ideas and suggestions," Prescott reported, but it did not seem to help Battle Creek.

Eventually, in 1889, after experiencing continuing losses and lack of interest (according to C. W. Irwin, a student debate voted against it), the trustees voted to scuttle the program and in its place to require all students to spend one to two hours each day in domestic work. This plan apparently worked successfully. It enhanced Prescott's school-home idea and greatly impressed the Michigan State board of visitors. Not until Prescott's last year was industrial education tried again.\(^2\)

Administrator

Administration and organization were unquestionably Prescott's strong points. In his early years as president he was very

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\(^1\)SDAES 1887. GC Bulletin, November 18, 1887, p. 1. E. K. Vande Vere suggests incorrectly that Prescott was a man whose hands had known "no callouses" and because of his background was not really interested in manual training. Wisdom Seekers (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), p. 57. The evidence suggests, however, that Prescott was committed to the idea but did not know how to overcome the inertia that worked against it. As educational secretary he urged adoption of the plan at the 1895 and 1897 General Conference sessions, encouraged it at Union College and Walla Walla College, and planned for it in the college he hoped to start in England in the late 1890s.

\(^2\)C. W. Irwin, "The Divine Remedy for Our Educational Ills," RH, July 12, 1923, p. 10. Fifty-Fifth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the State of Michigan with Accompanying Documents for the Year 1891 (Lansing: Robert Smith and Co., 1892), p. 335. Prescott presided over other important curricular changes at Battle Creek but these, being related more closely to his developing educational philosophy, will be discussed in chapter 9.
closely involved in the small details of the operation of the school and made sure that everything functioned smoothly. In this way he was able to maintain close contact with his staff and students. As his responsibilities outside the college became more numerous in early 1888, however, he found it necessary, and the trustees encouraged him, to delegate more and more responsibility to his staff for "the minor details of the management of the college." He himself still had to care for the school's bookkeeping until the beginning of the 1889 school year when the board authorized him to employ a private secretary and bookkeeper.¹

Prescott discovered early that using standing committees relieved him of much of the burden of the detail of administration. Such committees cared for discipline, academic standing of students, and religious activities. Prescott expected his faculty to follow through on the procedures on which these committees operated. Correct reporting of disciplinary cases was a major point. Another committee was formed that dealt with curriculum changes and professional development of the faculty, while other temporary committees planned for a special lecture series for the students. There was no permanent social activities committee, for social activities as now known were not a prominent part of Prescott's program.²

In later years, when Prescott was frequently absent from the campus due to his responsibilities as educational secretary, a principal was appointed to act in his absence. From 1890-93, for

¹ BCC Bd Min, February 8, September 8, 1889.
² BCC Fac Min, September 5, 9, 1890.
example, Prescott was absent from more than a third of the faculty meetings and relied heavily on his principals, Eli B. Miller and William T. Bland. The fact that Battle Creek College was expected to provide teachers and educational leaders for the growing number of Adventist schools made life for Prescott very difficult at times. In 1889, after losing his principal, George W. Caviness to South Lancaster Academy, Prescott urged the General Conference to let him resign from Battle Creek College in order to relieve the pressure on his health. He argued that this would allow him to give more time to the development of the general educational work of the church. The General Conference committee was not persuaded by his arguments, however, and he continued to hold both positions.2

Although Prescott was a strong leader, his style of administration for the most part does not appear to have been autocratic. In working with his faculty, he followed a pattern of consultation and consensus building which seems to have made for happy and meaningful working relationships. This style of leadership combined with the fact that he was continually losing his able lieutenants made it difficult in his later years to carry out reforms he considered necessary. However, Prescott worked closely with his board, and kept them on his side so that when the faculty became too recalcitrant in effecting changes (as they did in late 1893), he was able to call the trustees to a joint session and push through his plans.3 Such an

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1 Prescott was absent from 45 out of 128 faculty meetings during this period.

2 GCC Min, March 25, 1889.

3 See pp. 182ff.
approach did not win friends, and apparently the seeds of alienation were planted on this occasion that later led to his appointment to Britain for his four years of "Siberian exile."¹

One of the features of Prescott's administration was his interest in the enrichment and professional development of his faculty. During the 1890-91 school year, for example, topics were appointed and various faculty members presented half-hour thought papers on such subjects as "Mathematics," "History," and "Education Values." Two respondents were appointed to briefly discuss each presentation. Later the colloquium idea took a religious turn, and the first hour of each faculty meeting was spent in serious study of some Bible topic or book.² This latter development grew out of the notable Harbor Springs Convention. It seems that Prescott was seeking through this avenue not only to build a consensus and a spirit oriented to reform but also to help his faculty analyze their own educational activities in order to see where reforms were needed.

It is probably not too surprising that Prescott was rather slow to implement some reforms suggested by others. One notable reform was the move in 1891-92 to introduce a totally non-meat diet. Both students and faculty were sharply divided on this issue. One faction felt the college was already too strict and should not judge in matters of meat and drink. The other felt it was wrong to serve meat. Apparently Prescott conscientiously felt that such a move was extreme, even fanatic, but he tried to maintain a balance between

¹See pp. 130, 226ff below.
²BCC Fac Min, September 5, 28, 1890; October 25, December 20, 1891.
the two factions. There also seems to be some evidence that Prescott's reticence to adopt the reform was influenced by the too vigorous approach of its advocate (J. H. Kellogg) as much as the reform itself. E. A. Sutherland who introduced the idea had picked it up in mid-1891 from P. T. Magan who had in turn been persuaded by Kellogg. Sutherland took the idea to his Bible class, and a petition was circulated and signed by 150 students.\(^1\) Vegetarians wanted at least equal opportunity, and that meant some soups should be prepared without meat.

Both Prescott and J. H. Kellogg were very gifted and able leaders. Both also had strong personalities and convictions. A clash had occurred between the two men as early as September 1890 over plans for the courses to be offered in summer school. Informing L. C. Chadwick of the dispute, D. T. Jones commented that Prescott decidedly opposed Kellogg, who got "a pretty correct idea of the Prof.'s feelings...." He added that "the result was something like an irresistible force meeting an immovable substance." Another dispute had occurred a few months later when Kellogg encouraged numbers of Battle Creek College students to leave the college early to take studies at the sanitarium. Prescott, at the urging of his faculty, complained to the General Conference committee about the problem; at the same time he pointed out what he saw as major difficulties with the training of physicians at the sanitarium. His

\(^{1}\)BCC Fac Min, December 1, 1891. E. A. Sutherland, taped autobiographical address presented at College of Medical Evangelists, c. 1946, Madison Alumni Association Office, Madison, Tenn. Cited in Warren S. Ashworth, "Edward Alexander Sutherland: His Life, Work, and Philosophy," (research paper, Andrews University, 1978), AUHR.
concern was that the medical-training side was predominating and the missionary part of the training was neglected.\(^1\)

The spirit of cooperation between the two institutions and the two men had not improved much when in January 1892, Kellogg, having received further complaints from a number of students about the college diet, brought up the matter again at a board meeting.\(^2\) Some groups of students had already been boycotting the dining room, and the Sutherland-sponsored petition requesting the discontinuance of a meat diet and addressed to the trustees had been circulated. Prescott was apparently sensitive to the divisive agitation of the issue and, according to Kellogg, he reacted strongly when it was proposed that an investigation be made into the bill of fare at the college. The discussion degenerated into an argument over fried carrots.\(^3\) Kellogg actually did not advocate immediate elimination of all meat; he argued for slow changes, including the elimination of pickles, vinegar, and "fried" carrots. It seems that Prescott may have been unduly sensitive over the matter. Kellogg acknowledged that his own belligerence probably did not help the situation, but he considered

\(^1\)D. T. Jones to L. C. Chadwick, September 23, 1890, RG 21: Bx 60 Lb 4, GCAr. BCC Fac Min, April 26, 1891; GCC Min, April 28, 1891.

\(^2\)The sanitarium was also having problems with vegetarianism. Kellogg was at the same time urging a totally non-meat menu in that institution. See D. T. Jones to R. S. Donnell, January 5, 1891, RG 21: Bx 60 Lb 6, GCAr.

\(^3\)BCC Fac Min, December 1, 1891. Prescott asserted that he knew what fried carrots were and they were not served in his dining room. Kellogg replied that carrots cooked in oil or butter were fried and they were served as part of the college's menu. J. H. Kellogg to W. W. Prescott, January 7, 1892; J. H. Kellogg to O. A. Olsen, January 8, 1892, RG 11: Fld 1892-K, GCAr.
it time something was done and was ready for war on the issue if necessary. A later meeting was called to try to achieve an understanding, but it did not clear the air much and, in fact, Kellogg complained that he was offended by "taunts and guffaws" from A. T. Jones and Prescott.  

Not until two years later were permanent dietary changes finally made. In May 1893, Kellogg again complained to Olsen (who was in Australia at the time), that meat was still being served once a week, was being added to soups and gravies, that the bread was sour, that butter was being used with too many dishes, and that in general the diet was not wholesome. Kellogg did add that the problem this time may have been someone other than Prescott, who he thought "would offer little or no objection."  

Ellen White wrote some strong criticism of the college diet a month or two later from Gisborne, New Zealand, shortly after the start of the 1893-94 year. (She was staying with Dr. Caro who seems to have been Mrs. White's informant.) In response, Prescott pointed out that he had indeed tried to effect a change. In order to do so, he had employed a series of three cooks who had all been trained in hygienic cooking at the sanitarium and had been personally recommended by Kellogg. The three cooks had either proved a failure or had not stayed long and the college had had great difficulty. Sarah Prescott herself had had to take on the job for a short time until a

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1 J. H. Kellogg to O. A. Olsen, January 10, 1892, RG 11: Fld 1892-K, GCAR.

replacement could be found. The Michigan camp cook recently had been
engaged and Prescott was now hopeful that the problem would be
solved.¹

In spite of the friction between the leaders of the sanitarium
and the college and their vigorous differences, Kellogg and Prescott
managed to achieve a reasonable working relationship and continued to
consult each other on common concerns. Clearly, though, in these
early disagreements, the groundwork was laid for the later rift that
proved so traumatic for the church.

Prescott was a man of many talents who found it difficult to
say no when he was asked to do something. As a result the last two
or three years of his presidency at Battle Creek were exceedingly
busy years. His work, particularly as the general supervisor of the
education program of the church made life exceptionally busy for him.
In September 1893 O. A. Olsen urged him to hire one or two men to
help him and thus lighten his load, and Mrs. White, fearing for his
health, wrote him in October 1893 urging him to take some rest.²
Prescott responded, acknowledging that the counsel was "very timely
and very applicable; but I know not how to carry out this instruc-
tion, . . . "³ Part of the problem was that Prescott also had to
carry the burden of many administrative details for the General

¹W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, October 5, 1893, EGWRC-AU.
²O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, September 7, 1893, RG 11:
Bx 5 Lb 10, GCAr. E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, October 25, 1893,
EGWRC-AU.
³W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 8, 1893, EGWRC-AU.
Conference while Olsen was on an extended visit overseas.¹ But basically he seemed to be simply too conscientious. He was an eager "burden-bearer" and found it difficult to leave duties unattended.

By mid-1894 Prescott was more than ready to lighten his load and he welcomed the opportunity to be free from the presidency of Battle Creek College. In April, the General Conference committee recommended that "he be relieved from special responsibility in connection with any local institution" so that he could give more time to the larger educational work of the church. Writing to Olsen after the committee's action, Prescott stated that he had resolved to take things easier "in order to recover some of the energy which has been drawn upon so seriously during the last two or three years."²

It was with some relief, but with some satisfaction also, that Prescott handed over the presidency of Battle Creek College to his deputy, G. W. Caviness, in July 1894. In his nine years he had seen the enrollment nearly doubled, he had seen the college plant expanded by the erection of four large structures, and he had seen the college slowly approach the fulfillment of the objectives expressed by the college founders—providing appropriately trained workers for the Advent cause. Prescott felt there was much more to be achieved in this last area and he evidently experienced a certain frustration over the slow pace of reform.³ Now that he was free from

¹See pp. 136, 137 below.
³See pp. 326ff below.
local management, he felt that perhaps he could hasten the process by giving more time to educating the church at large in the ideals of Christian education.
CHAPTER VII

EDUCATION DIRECTOR AND PRESIDENT AT LARGE

When Prescott vacated the president's office at Battle Creek College in 1894 the reason given was that the educational work of the church had grown so much that "more careful supervision" was necessary. In actual fact, much of the growth was a direct result of Prescott's own activities as educational secretary. This position Prescott had been asked to fill in 1887 just two years after he had taken charge of Battle Creek College. He soon realized it was a position that contained a large challenge, but it demanded so much of his time and energy that he found it difficult to do justice to both Battle Creek College and the General Conference. Thus in 1889 he appealed to the leadership of the church to allow his position of educational secretary to become a full-time job.¹ Qualified educational personnel, however, were in desperately short supply and it was not until five years later that the brethren felt they could act on his suggestion.

The initiative for the creation of the position of a secretary for education came from W. C. White at the 1887 General Conference session in Oakland, California. Before a vote was taken on the nominating committee report at that session, White pointed out

¹GCC Min, March 25, 1889. SDA Yearbook 1890, p. 76.
that the responsibilities of the General Conference president were
becoming so heavy, almost doubling every year, that it was essential
that he be provided help. He then urged that three new offices be
established: home missions secretary, foreign missions secretary,
and educational secretary. The move was vigorously supported by Mrs.
White who stated that she would refuse to vote for G. I. Butler's
renomination as president unless the help was provided.¹

W. C. White had to push hard to have the constitution appro-
priately amended and then to persuade the delegates to elect three
people to fill the positions, but on November 27, 1887, the nominat-
ing committee brought in their last report. In one of the last
actions of the conference, Prescott was appointed as secretary for
education. At the time, there were eight educational institutions in
the denomination. Battle Creek College, South Lancaster Academy, and
Healdsburg were the major schools, while Oregon State and Upper
Columbia Conferences had also recently started schools. Three smaller
schools were operated by local churches, but there was need for
many more. The total student body was about 1,155 and faculty
numbered approximately 50.²

In persuading the conference of the need for an educational
secretary, White pointed out that many more local schools needed to
be established but this was being prevented by local jealousies on
the part of already established schools. There was also need for
recruitment of teachers and for general supervision of the

¹GC Bulletin, November 21, 1887, p. 2.
Educational Secretary," GC Bulletin, October 23, 1889, p. 42.
educational work as a whole. Not having attended the Oakland session, Prescott wrote White requesting further clarification of his new responsibilities. In his reply White stressed the great need for a general education for denominational ministers and workers. The lack of such an education, White argued, prevented many workers from exercising judgment or discretion in their work. Furthermore, they were unable to meet educated opponents. It was also necessary to overcome the general indifference (and in some cases actual resistance) on the part of conference presidents and committees toward the education of their workers.¹

White stressed the problem of sectionalism and pointed out to the new secretary how established schools jealously guarded their territory and were antagonistic toward new schools for fear of losing students. He cited, by way of example, the negative attitude of the Healdsburg school to the proposed establishment of smaller church schools in Los Angeles and Oakland. White felt that the best way to overcome these local jealousies was to develop a unified system under the supervision and control of the educational secretary. Thus, with a few suggestions from White as to where to begin, Prescott launched into his new role, which, according to the constitution, was simply to perform "duties such as pertain to that office."² It was a significant step in the development of the denomination.

Prescott's first task was that of crisis intervention at

¹GC Bulletin, November 21, 1887, p. 1. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, February 8, 1888, EGWRC-AU.

²W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, February 8, 1888, EGWRC-AU. SDA Yearbook 1888, p. 37. A job description was not developed until two years later, SDA Yearbook 1890, p. 116.
South Lancaster Academy. On his visit there (May 1888), he encountered first hand the kind of jealousies of which White had spoken. Apparently South Lancaster was antagonistic towards Battle Creek College because it was attracting students from the east coast-- territory South Lancaster considered its own. The school, according to Prescott's first annual secretary's report, for some time had been drifting away from the special purposes for which it was founded. Ten days of counsel with the board along with preaching and lecturing on the relationship of religion to education corrected the course of the drift and South Lancaster was again on the road to a healthy future. (Prescott was elected as a trustee of the school at the next annual meeting.)\(^1\) Thus the pattern was set for much of Prescott's later work. Although crises were not the usual fare, counselling with boards and committees was. Preaching and lecturing on the relationship of religion to education and the vital importance of the latter to the future of the church became Prescott's major summer activity for the next few years as he visited campmeetings and fostered the work of education among the churches.

As previously mentioned, Prescott's purpose at his first campmeeting promotion was to increase the enrollment at Battle Creek College, but after 1887 his concern for the larger educational programs of the church became paramount. Prescott's fresh, vibrant preaching was greatly appreciated by the people as he moved around the campmeeting circuit each summer. The visits also greatly

impressed him with the large number of youth for whom he felt the
church ought to provide educational opportunities. Concomitantly,
his stirring addresses on Christian education and his personal
eexample moved the hearts of an increasing number of youth who caught
a vision of service and felt the desire to attend an Adventist
college. David Paulson, founder of Hinsdale Sanitarium and Hospital,
related how he caught a greater vision of service when he attended
campmeeting in South Dakota in 1888.

I was all wrapped up in raising chickens, and I went to camp­
meeting with my head full of chickens; but when I saw that man
[Prescott] walk across the ground, he put a hunger in my life
for something that I did not have, and I never could get rid
of that hunger till I went to school.

Just by his bearing, his walk, Prescott engendered that feeling. He
engendered it in a whole generation of youth.¹

Another early task that Prescott addressed was the develop­
ment of a bureau of Adventist teachers. If many schools were going
to be established then teachers would be needed. Announcements in
the major periodicals of the church during the summer of 1889²
brought replies from nearly two hundred qualified Adventist teachers
who were not already employed in denominational schools. While a
directory of these names was drawn up and apparently maintained, it
does not appear that Prescott made extensive use of these names; he
chose rather to use those who had been trained at Battle Creek or
other denominational schools.

¹According to C. L. Stone, Paulson frequently told of the ex­
perience. Council Proceedings of the Education and Missionary Volun­
teer Department (Education Convention), 1915, p. 53. See P. T. Magan,

²RH, July 16, 1889, p. 464.
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Shaping Educational Policies

Before Prescott visited South Lancaster in early 1888, he had begun to establish policies and plans that would allow for the orderly development and enlargement of a united educational program. During April he submitted to the General Conference committee several recommendations which were adopted and became the corner stone of his policy. First, Prescott was concerned to eliminate unnecessary duplication of programs and to maintain standards. He therefore recommended that South Lancaster and Healdsburg should drop their "advanced" college courses and that these be offered only at Battle Creek College.¹ Some may have inferred from this that Prescott had vested interests in Battle Creek College, but his real concern was to maintain an honest standard of work. He felt that operating small classes with inadequate facilities and faculty for the few "college" students at Healdsburg and South Lancaster was neither economical nor sensible.

He further recommended uniformity of coursework in schools so that the same textbook could be used in the same grades and subjects. This made it easier for students to transfer. Schools were not to conduct any line of work beyond the "grammar grade" of the public schools and systematic Bible study was to be a feature of the work. Prescott found it necessary to reiterate these points when the schools evidenced some reluctance to comply with the new General Conference policy. (A year later it was again necessary for Prescott to draw the attention of the General Conference committee to the

¹GCC Min, April 5, 1888.
problem of schools advertising that which they could not really offer. He stated that it was better not to start a school until adequate faculty and management were available. More importantly, a firm policy was established that all educational work was to be conducted under the advice of the central committee. Prescott further sought to bring about a unified program and overcome local jealousies by providing for an interchange of faculty among the schools. Recommendations to the three major school boards in April 1888 attempted to implement this program.¹

Prescott's early efforts to provide a unified structure for the educational program of the church and to ensure that as far as possible high standards were maintained proved generally successful. By mid-1890 initial resistance had been overcome and Prescott could happily write to Olsen that "there seems to be a disposition on the part of all those who have to do with the local management of our schools to act in harmony with, and place the general supervision of the work in the hands of the educational secretary."²

One exception to the spirit of cooperation was Healdsburg College. Prescott first visited there in May 1890. W. C. White had welcomed the visit and encouraged the school's administration to do likewise. He was hopeful that W. C. Grainger, the principal, might profit from any suggestions Prescott might make. To J. N. Loughborough he wrote, "I am sure that his [Prescott's] counsel will be of great value. I hope he will be free to speak plainly criticizing

¹GCC Min, March 25, 1889; April 5, 1888.
²W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, June 30, 1890, RG 11: Fld 1890-P, GCAr.
that which is faulty and advising as to how we can make improvement.¹

According to Walter Utt's account, Prescott was "shocked" at the informality of the western school and the lack of "culture" on the part of the president. How could anyone run a school where "anybody and everybody invaded the privacy of the presidential sanctum at will," and where "boys went in and out of the dormitory in their boots?"²

Prescott found excuses not to visit the school for another four years because of the tension. He felt that his relationship to the school was only a "nominal one" because, as he expressed to W. C. White, "I have had the impression that these Californians had a good opinion of their own ability to manage their affairs without special suggestion from outside. . . . " Worries about Healdsburg among the leadership of the church persisted, however, and Prescott was pressured into making another visit in 1894. On this occasion, the formal, conservative, "Eastern establishment" Prescott, on behalf of the General Conference, brought Healdsburg into line with the other denominational schools and effected a sweeping change in the administration of the school. The new principal, F. W. Howe, reported that the westerners did not appreciate Prescott's "high and lordly way," though he himself was very supportive of the radical

¹W. C. White to W. C. Grainger, May 16, 1890; W. C. White to J. N. Loughborough, April 16, 1890, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1, GCAr.

changes Prescott had to make. Prescott, though sensitive about such things, had to learn to live with such criticism if he were to accomplish his objectives.

As educational secretary, Prescott carefully supervised the establishment of new schools in order to integrate them with already existing institutions. He also ensured that a high quality educational program was offered. The result of this early centralization of educational effort gave valuable cohesion to the work and gave a solid basis for later development. It meant a large amount of extra work for Prescott who found himself burdened with the frustrating and sometimes onerous responsibility of providing faculty for the established schools and for filling the many calls for workers for new schools both in the United States and overseas. But the policy ensured stability and uniform development in the school system, and it did eliminate much of the rivalry and jealousy among schools.

Educating the Educators

One early suggestion that W. C. White had made to Prescott was the urgent need of a teachers' convention to facilitate the development of a unified and harmonious educational effort. Prescott saw light in the suggestion and accordingly, during the first few months of 1888, began to plan for the denomination's first teachers' institute. The meeting was held at Battle Creek from June 21-26,
1888, with thirty teachers in attendance. Prescott had planned that the topics to be discussed at the institute would be particularly relevant to Adventist teachers. The institute would deal much more with the philosophical issues of the rationale for Adventist schools—how religion might be integrated into the curriculum and how Bible subjects might be taught—than with the usual pedagogical theory and teaching methods. The meeting apparently did not produce any major practical initiatives in the area, but it seems to have served the purpose of raising teachers' awareness of the problem. The theme became characteristic of Prescott's later institutes and the discussions reflect not only his own continuing struggle but that of the whole church in making Adventist education genuinely Adventist—an education that truly served the church and prepared workers for the cause.

The institute also made a start in helping to bring unity to the educational activity of the church by recommending that new schools should be started by conferences, not local churches, and then only under "general supervision"—presumably meaning Prescott. Furthermore, it focused the attention of the leadership and educators of the church on the pressing need for further theological education of the clergy, a point forcefully brought home by the unfortunate fallout from the Minneapolis conference later that same year. Prescott's broad view of education is also to be seen in the recommendation of the institute that a reading course be established

\[1\] W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, February 3, 1888, EGWRC-AU. SDA Yearbook 1889, p. 70.
for the general edification of the church membership.\textsuperscript{1}

Although initial plans were laid for four other institutes, only two more were eventually organized by Prescott. Under Prescott's leadership, these two institutes played a large part in the shaping of the educational program of the church during his ten years as education secretary.\textsuperscript{2} The 1891 convention held in July and August at Harbor Springs in Michigan was the first "church wide" convention involving nearly one hundred participants including teachers and clergy. Following in the wake of the righteousness by faith debate, the institute had a very formative influence on the church's educational program. It focused particularly on developing a Bible-centered curriculum. A four-year biblical studies course was drawn up and recommended to the schools and some specific college-level Bible subjects were outlined. Though the schools had some difficulty introducing these new measures, the 1891 institute marked the commencement of a definite reform movement.\textsuperscript{3} Because the institute relates closely to the development of Prescott's own educational philosophy it is discussed in more detail in chapter 9.

Prescott's 1894 convention of Bible teachers and principals again grappled with problems similar to those addressed in the previous conventions. F. W. Howe reported that the question "How can our educational institutions be made of the most value to the work of

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{2}The institutes planned for 1889 and 1893 did not materialize because of last minute scheduling conflicts. See GCC Min, March 25, 1889; BCC Fac Min, March 12, April 1, 1893.

the denomination?” occupied more or less the attention of the institute in all its sessions. This theme was Prescott's one overriding concern throughout this period. A concomitant concern for Prescott was the spirituality of the teacher. The morning sessions were accordingly devoted to Bible study and devotional meetings. In his plans for the convention, Prescott had as one of his main burdens to encourage schools to make the Bible more central in their curriculum. He had spent two hours a day with A. T. Jones before the convention planning this emphasis. It was also his goal to put the doctrines of the church in a new Christocentric setting. In this he felt that the convention was eminently successful. 1 The development of a more detailed four-year Bible syllabus for college students (beyond the preparatory level) was in fact one of the major accomplishments of the convention. 2

Prescott's concern for the professional development of teachers also figured largely in this third convention. Participants ambitiously laid plans for a denominational graduate school of which Prescott as educational secretary was to be president. Requirements were established for Master's degrees and the Doctor of Philosophy degree and the institute even went so far as to select the graduate


2 The four-year Biblical Studies course planned at the 1891 convention seems to have been a "ministerial" training course. The four-year plan developed in 1894 was a Bible curriculum for other college students. Cf. GC Bulletin, February 23, 1893, p. 350 and F. W. Howe, "Proceedings....", p. 3, RG 47: Educational Secretary (1887-1901), GCAr.

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faculty. The resolution was to be considered by a small group of teachers and then presented to the General Conference committee at a later date, but this was apparently not done. Perhaps because Prescott himself was unenthusiastic about the plan it was shelved or allowed to die a natural death. F. W. Howe of Healdsburg, who may have spawned the idea, again attempted to resurrect the plan of one Adventist university with many campuses and a graduate school in 1896, but it was an idea born out of time.¹ Not until sixty years later was the church ready for such an ambitious undertaking.

One idea that the 1894 institute advocated and which did catch on after a time was an educational journal for the denomination. This had been discussed by Prescott in January 1890 and, according to O. T. Jones, had met the "hearty approval" of all the General Conference committee members. The matter had been left with Prescott who was authorized to start the paper whenever he thought advisable. Apparently he was just too busy and did not act upon the idea. In 1894 it was pushed with enthusiasm and determination. Prescott in his role of educational secretary was to be the editor. The matter was presented to the General Conference committee, but for some reason, no action was taken. Later, Prescott presented the idea to the 1895 General Conference session, but it was met with opposition from conference presidents and Review and Herald constituents who felt it

¹F. W. Howe, "Proceedings . . .," p. 8, RG 47: Educational Secretary (1887-1901), GCAr. GCC Min, October 16, 1894. F. W. Howe to O. A. Olsen, March 12, 1896, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.
would compete with the Review.¹ Not until 1897 was the journal able to get off the ground and then it flew very fitfully. Prescott apparently was enthusiastic about the journal but was just not able to get it operational. As a result, hands other than his eventually edited its pages.

Supervising Educational Expansion

Prescott's aggressive promotion of education at campmeetings and through Review articles gave great impetus to the expansion of the educational program of the church. One of his first successes was the "deep interest" aroused at the Minnesota campmeeting in 1887 and 1888. As a result a school with an enrollment of eighty was started in Minneapolis, and C. C. Lewis was sent from Battle Creek to take charge of it. Under similar circumstances a school had also been established at Ottawa in Kansas. This effort was in harmony with the recommendation of church leaders who in December 1887 had urged that "schools in many different localities" be established.²

By 1889, however, Prescott had become acutely aware of the very meager resources of qualified personnel available to the denomination for such a program. As Prescott saw it, a policy of "schools in many different localities" was just not viable at that time. A new initiative was needed and Prescott thought he had one.

¹D. T. Jones to W. W. Prescott, January 24, 1890, RG 21: Bx 59 Lb 2, GCAr. GCC Min, October 17, 1894. GC Bulletin, February 20, 1895, p. 249; February 26, 1895, p. 358; February 27, 1895, p. 371.

As a result, a great amount of Prescott's time was taken up with the establishment of Union College and Walla Walla, two institutions that are enduring testimonies to his foresight and vision. The fostering of smaller local conference and church schools was left to the labors of E. A. Sutherland and P. T. Magan a decade later.

Union College

The story of Union College well illustrates the educational problems faced by the church and Prescott's contribution to their solution. The two chief difficulties Prescott saw in the establishment of new schools in each conference were the heavy expense and the lack of competent teachers. These problems gave rise to another--the fostering of a "local" or competitive "sectional" interest to keep the school going. For these reasons, when Prescott met with conference officials from Minnesota and adjoining conferences in April 1889 on the occasion of the closing exercises for the Minneapolis school, he broached the idea of the several conferences combining to establish a school. The seed needed time to germinate.

Therefore, a formal council of the four conferences involved--Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Dakota--was called later in May at Owatonna, Minnesota. Prescott presided and again the idea of a combined school was considered. This time the participants saw light in Prescott's idea and agreed to unite.

Immediately following the Owatanna council, Prescott attended the Kansas campmeeting at Ottawa where there was also a strong sentiment for establishing a local conference school in the state.

1Topeka, Daily Capital, May 26, 1889.
Fortuitously, the history-making discussions that took place were reported in considerable detail in the local newspaper. According to these reports, Prescott again urged that there be a combined effort, but he had to labor hard. Acting on his suggestion some proposed a combined school for the southwestern states. There were others who thought that there was no need for education at all and others protested the expense. For Prescott, though, "a poor school was a poor investment." "Could we not rent a few rooms?" he asked, echoing their thoughts. "Yes," he replied, "and I suppose the school would be cheap all through. . . . I feel that its [education's] value can not be estimated from a money basis."¹ Prescott wanted more than just school rooms. Battle Creek had made that mistake. A "school home" was needed and that cost money.

The problem, however, was not just money. Battle Creek College had already been depleted of faculty by supplying South Lancaster and Minneapolis. "Now where else can your help come from if you start schools?" asked Prescott. By "competent" staff he did not mean teachers that were simply qualified to teach; there was no trouble providing many such people with certificates from Battle Creek College. The real problem was that for a school to be truly Adventist and for the idea of the "school home" to be effective "religious training should be a prominent feature." Spiritually minded faculty were vital and in this regard Prescott is reported to have stated that "but few could be sent out whom he could safely recommend."²

¹Topeka, Daily Capital, May 28, 1889.
²Topeka, Daily Capital, May 26, 1889.

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Prescott did not have to carry the burden of persuasion alone in Kansas. Mrs. White was also attending the campmeeting, doing her best to support the gospel preaching of A. T. Jones and to turn back the tide of disunity and prejudice that had overflowed at the General Conference in Minneapolis five months previously. She vigorously lent her support to Prescott's idea of a combined school. Reciting the problems faced in earlier years at Battle Creek College because of a lack of consecrated teachers, she explained that the moral tone of the school should be kept up to the proper standard and that this was the great difficulty in having many schools. "It is the moral and religious influence that should predominate."^1

By the end of the meeting a consensus had emerged, and Prescott's idea of a central school for all the conferences prevailed. The conference resolved to establish one college between the Mississippi and the Rockies that would serve all nine conferences of the midwest. Giving time for the proposal of a united effort to really take hold, the General Conference committee in its October meeting appointed a locating committee and also took action to establish a board of managers. Prescott as educational secretary was appointed to both bodies. Leaving Battle Creek on December 29, 1890, Prescott traveled south with A. R. Henry to spend twelve days or so looking over the various sites before joining the locating committee for their official inspection beginning January 13. Competition was intense as seven cities from several states vied with each other for the privilege of having the school established in their location.

^1Ibid.
Most of the month of January was thus spent until on January 27 the site at Lincoln, Nebraska, was chosen—to the sore disappointment of some of the other conferences.\(^1\)

O. A. Olsen was impressed with the developments and regarded them as "quite an important affair." Immediately upon his return to Battle Creek after assisting in the choice of a site, he wrote to Prescott, who was still at Lincoln, requesting that in a "cautious and prudent way" he should make it clear "that the institution was not a Nebraska Conference college." Olsen urged Prescott to establish "from the very beginning" that this was a General Conference institution. Prescott, who was responsible for the name "Union College," did his best to establish policies that would ensure this and thus helped to placate the disappointed conferences and to maintain the spirit of unity.\(^2\)

The opening date was at first set for the fall of 1890, but as building progressed under the supervision of W. C. Sisley and A. R. Henry, it became obvious that more time would be needed. Union College was indeed no small affair, and local papers impressed by the "mammoth buildings" asserted that it would be the largest college in the west.\(^3\) Finally, one year later, on the afternoon of Thursday,

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\(^1\) SDA Yearbook 1890, p. 75. See also SDA Yearbook 1891, p. 73. GC Bulletin, October 21, 1889, p. 30; October 31, 1889, p. 125. O. A. Olsen to G. I. Butler, December 30, 1889, RG 11: Bx 47 Lb 1, GCAr. E. N. Dick, Union, p. 19. See also Nebraska State Journal, January 30, 1890, p. 4; February 7, 1890, p. 6. The Lincoln Call, February 7, 1890, p. 4.

\(^2\) O. A. Olsen to G. I. Butler, December 30, 1889. O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, January 31, 1890, RG 11: Bx 47 Lb 1, GCAr.

\(^3\) "Union College," RH, November 18, 1890. p. 720.
September 24, 1891, the college, with W. W. Prescott as its president, had its opening ceremony (see fig. 12).

Still serving as Battle Creek president, Prescott hurried back from the Harbor Springs Teachers' Convention and campmeeting appointments to start that institution on its program for the year. Then he hurried south on September 22 to Nebraska to start Union College on its way. In his opening address on Christian education he held the audience's close attention for forty-five minutes as he elaborated on the objectives of the college. To bring students to the knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ he asserted was its ultimate raison d'être.¹

"We are extremely busy," he wrote Olsen five days after the opening services, and actual classwork was about to begin. Seventy-five students had arrived and more were coming with each train. Chairs and desks had been smashed in a railroad accident and makeshift planks on boxes had to suffice,² but that was no excuse for lack of decorum. Prescott stood at the door on the opening morning greeting the new students and courteously reminding them to take off their rubbers or to clean their shoes if they had no rubbers. The rubber rack, in fact, became an institution for some time afterwards, a reminder that even in the midwest culture and refinement could be enjoyed.

Anxious that Union get off on the right foot, Prescott

¹ U. Smith, "Dedication of Union College," RH, October 6, 1891, p. 614.
² W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, September 29, 1891, RG 11: Fld 1891-P, GCAr.
remained until mid-October. Despite heavy rains, a sea of mud, and an untimely funeral for one of the faculty who had died on the first day of school, classes were organized, timetables were arranged, and the all-important dining-room pattern was established. Battle Creek College with its recent curriculum innovations served as a model.

"It seems to me that it is quite important to have this enterprise started right," wrote Prescott, adding "I shall be obliged to leave it all too soon at best." But Battle Creek still needed him and eventually he had to depart, leaving Union in the capable hands of principal, J. N. Loughhead.

For the first two years of its life, Prescott served Union as its president. Repeatedly he made the twenty-four-hour rail trip from Battle Creek to College View, Nebraska, to ensure that things were as they should be and to give a right shape to the college. While, of course, he was necessarily absent from the campus much of the time, yet the "stamp" that he gave to the school remained an enduring legacy.

Walla Walla College

Having successfully persuaded the midwest conferences in 1889 to unite their efforts for a school, Prescott tried the same suggestion the following spring when he visited the North Pacific Conference. Two schools operating on the academy level were already

\[1\] W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, October 5, 1891, RG 11: Fld 1891-P, GCAr. UC Fac Min, September 27, 1891.

\[2\] Prescott was more than just a figurehead president. He kept in close touch with the school and maintained a firm control over its affairs. UC Fac Min, September 30, 1891; February 28, March 6, 1892.
being conducted on the west coast, one at Milton with an enrollment of approximately 150 and another in East Portland, the North Pacific Academy, with an enrollment of just over 100. Neither school was apparently anywhere near meeting the ideal of a Christian school in the estimation of the educational secretary. Apart from having Seventh-day Adventist teachers and students and a daily chapel, it seems there was little else to make them distinctively religious schools.¹

Apparently considerable rivalry existed between the two conferences and the schools, and Prescott's suggestion that the two schools unite as one institution was met with opposition and stolid inaction. A letter from Mrs. White supporting the proposition followed and a few months later a visit from O. A. Olsen, armed with Prescott's advice, began to dislodge the opposition. A committee was established to prepare plans and look for possible sites. Friction and competition continued, and in January of 1891, Prescott again visited the northwest to see if he could not heal the alienation and bring to an end the schools "striking at each other"--as D. T. Jones put it.²

It had been thought that Milton, which already had a three-story dormitory, should be the site of the new school. Although Olsen thought it favorable, Prescott was opposed to the Milton


²O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, September 19, 1890, RG 11: Bx 47 Lb 3; W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, September 25, 1890, RG 11: Fld 1890-P; D. T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, January 5, 1891, RG 11: Bx 60 Lb 6, GCAr.
location because of the very small acreage available and its lack of rail and other facilities. Prescott made another hurried trip to the west coast in late February and early March. This involved extensive travel throughout Washington to select a site. The decision was made to build in Walla Walla on a forty-acre site, a gift offered by Dr. N. G. Blalock. On March 11, the General Conference session approved the merger and voted a financial plan to begin the new institution.¹

Feelings ran high over the decision and the Milton interests were most unhappy. It required all of Prescott's natural diplomacy to reconcile the groups. D. T. Jones, who at the March 1891 General Conference had been appointed to the northwest district, wrote O. A. Olsen urging that Prescott was needed "to turn the tide in favor of our school" and that he be sent to attend the upcoming May camp-meeting. "Prescott is the man and the only man that will fill the bill at the present time. ... Please do not make plans that will interfere with his attending these meetings," he wrote ² Prescott was successful in his efforts and the delegates to both the Upper Columbia and the North Pacific Conference sessions, after hearing about the plans for the new Union College in Nebraska, voted to accept the General Conference recommendations and to approve the merger.

W. S. Sisley, the architect for Union College, drew up plans...
for the buildings and A. R. Henry, expert financier of the Review and Herald, cared for the monetary plans. In March 1892 Prescott met at the site with the planning committee to coordinate the decision made on campus layout. Ground breaking and construction started soon afterwards.¹ When Prescott returned to the northwest in May for the campmeeting, he was able to check on progress and give counsel on developments. The principal of the school, E. A. Sutherland, arrived in July to make final plans for the school year scheduled to begin in December.

Sutherland came from Battle Creek where he had been both a student and a faculty member under Prescott. He had also served as "preceptor" and therefore knew the Prescott "school home" system well. Sutherland insisted that Prescott be present for the opening of the school to ensure a successful beginning. O. A. Olsen added that it was more important that Prescott "help shape the policy of the school at its opening than to come in later to try and do it."²

Although the buildings were unfinished and the heating plant had not yet been installed, the school opened on December 3, 1892 and Prescott, as its president, conducted the opening services. At least fifty-six students were ready for the first class and attendance built rapidly to 156 during the first year. For Prescott this was a repeat of the Union College experience and again the Prescott mold was placed on the institution. In E. A. Sutherland Prescott apparently had an enthusiastic disciple, for he was able to put into

¹Sixty Years of Progress, p. 94.
²O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, November 2, 1892, RG 11: Bx 50 Ld 11, GCAr.
practice plans that Prescott himself would dearly have liked put
into operation at Battle Creek College.¹ Now burdened by the
responsibility of three large institutions and his General Conference
portfolio as well, Prescott gave the twenty-six-year old Sutherland
free rein, knowing that the college was in safe hands.

Although enrollment increased, the first year for Walla Walla
was not an easy one financially. The panic of 1893 meant hardship
for many, however, it did enable Sutherland to buy another sixty
acres for farmland and orchards for his students. Practical edu­
cation benefitted. By the start of the second year, near the end of
1893, however, the college was $12,000 in debt and was running behind
$200 per month. To deal with the situation Prescott called an emer­
gency session of the General Conference executive committee and
financier A. R. Henry was sent to try to keep the college solvent.²
The danger passed and the college prospered when enrollment increased
to 256 during the second year. After two years, Prescott rein­
quished the presidency to Sutherland, who had carried the main burden
anyway. Though he had kept in close touch by correspondence, Pres­
cott had been able to visit the school only occasionally. He was more
than satisfied that Sutherland was making of the school all he would
have wished had he been there himself.³

¹W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, May 4, 1896,
RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

²W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, November 1, 1893; May 4,
1896, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 3, GCAr.

³Prescott speaks of receiving "frequent reports." He was
highly gratified with the way Sutherland was operating the program.
Prescott's approach to establishing schools was consistent. In 1889 he had urged a policy of careful expansion, building only as fast as faculty and finances were available. Thus while actively promoting the establishment of Union and Walla Walla in the early 90s, he actively discouraged a strong move by R. M. Kilgore to establish a large school in the south at either Nashville or Chattanooga. Prescott felt that there was not sufficient constituency to support a large school and that the brethren were looking to a college "as a panacea" to solve all the problems in the southern field—something which he felt it would not do. Instead, he argued that a number of small rural schools would be much better. Although having to oppose O. A. Olsen on the issue, Prescott maintained his stand and the establishment of a southern college was delayed another decade.1

Ministerial Training

In his letter to W. C. White shortly after accepting the position of General Conference educational secretary in 1887, Prescott mentioned his deep concern about the lack of adequate ministerial training and education. The three major denominational schools offered nothing in the way of serious Bible study or theological training. Battle Creek College had no "theology" subjects apart from a course in New Testament and Old Testament history at the ninth- and tenth-grade level, and a series of twice-weekly lectures during the winter and spring by Uriah Smith on the doctrines of the church. This was the only "ministerial" course available. Since 1885, a

1W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, September 28, 1891, RG 11: Fld 1891-P; February 5, 1892, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 2; O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, October 7, 1891, RG 11: Bx 48 Lb 1, GCAr.
three-week course at the end of the winter quarter had been advertised in the Review and nearby workers had been encouraged to attend with the regular students. This course was simply an extension of Smith's doctrinal lectures and was obviously quite inadequate. Only a few local ministers were able to attend and the range of studies offered was very narrow. The crisis brought on by the Minneapolis conference in 1888 stimulated a greater number to attend the course the following winter, and interest was so strong the course was extended to ten weeks.¹

As a delegate at the Minneapolis conference Prescott witnessed the theological confrontation, and was convinced that the ministry of the church desperately needed better preparation. The interest in the winter course impressed him further. As a result, at the end of March 1889, and shortly after the special winter course had ended, Prescott presented a plan to the General Conference committee. The plan called for a special five-month Bible school organized by the General Conference and "entirely separate from the College." The General Conference sub-committee, set up to study the proposal, enthusiastically expressed the opinion that the school "would prove of inestimable value to the cause." They appointed Prescott as the principal and entrusted him with the task of drawing up a curriculum. Official approval was given in July and committees were set up to organize the school.²


²GCC Min, March 25, July 12, 1889. See also O. A. Olsen, "A Bible School for Ministers," RH, September 17, 1889, p. 592.
Prescott's Announcement for the Bible school set out a two-year, twenty-week, intensive program that required the equivalent of a "four studies" course each year. Reflecting something of Prescott's own Dartmouth education minus the classics, subjects included Ancient History, Bible Doctrines, Civil Government, Greek or Hebrew, Church Government, Logic, Evidences of Christianity, and Church History, among others. Explaining the rationale for the school Prescott wrote that "it is designed especially for those who need a more thorough preparation as laborers, and yet have not time to take a thorough course of instruction in any of our institutions." Later he explained that its object was to provide "mental power" not just facts, adding that the school would be carried out on a plan similar to the famed and very popular Chautauqua summer Hebrew schools conducted by Professor Harper. Thus Prescott endeavored to get around the problem of the "long courses" that Mrs. White said were not necessary when workers were so urgently needed in the field.

During the remainder of 1889, Prescott took opportunity to actively promote the school and he enthusiastically presented it at the October General Conference session. Mrs. White and other conference leaders supported the idea. On the last day of October the first formal "Seminary" program of the church began with a total enrollment of 157. The instructors included E. J. Waggoner,

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1Announcement for 1889-90 Bible School for Ministers. p. 8, AUHR. GC Bulletin, October 21, 1889, p. 30. Prescott had first encountered the Chautauqua plan in 1882 at Montpelier, see p. 51 above.

Smith, and Prescott himself. Other teachers taught Scandinavian and German classes.

Prescott's endeavor to have the denomination commit itself to the theological education of its ministry was not without its difficulties. Almost as a presage of its future, the venture was begun in an atmosphere of highly charged theological controversy. The appointment of Smith and Waggoner on the teaching staff was an incendiary mix. Bitter controversy soon raged among denominational leadership over whether Waggoner could present in his classes his new position on the two covenants. Prescott and Olsen favored the idea, but Smith, D. T. Jones, and others were most distressed. Smith also published a disclaimer in the Review about Waggoner's position appearing in the Sabbath School lessons, and D. T. Jones, who had resigned as a Sabbath School teacher at the Tabernacle over the issue, commented that his "worrying and fretting over this thing" had hurt him "more than half a year's work." Mrs. White was horrified by the animosity and much personal labor on her part and on the part of others was required to try to heal the differences. A series of early morning committees, in which all the principals including Mrs. White participated, tried to sort through the theological question. The opposition was finally convinced that there was no conspiracy to push the new view and that wrong attitudes were a greater problem

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1D. T. Jones to G. I. Butler, February 13, 1890, RG 21: 8x 58 Lb 1/2, GCAr. RH, January 28, 1890, p. 64.
than the theology. A temporary truce was arranged enabling the school to finish on a quieter note.¹

Despite the theological furor, the denomination had made a commitment and the following year, 1890-91, Prescott again served as principal of the Bible school. This time 150 English-speaking workers attended besides Scandinavians and Germans, and again the fires of controversy continued despite Prescott's best efforts to build bridges and secure harmony. Because of anxiety on D. T. Jones' part about a repeat of the previous year, Prescott agreed to assign Waggoner his topic rather than let him choose his own and Prescott himself agreed to teach the sensitive class on the book of Galatians.² Even so, Prescott came under fire when it was rumored that he had taught Waggoner's new position about "the seed" in Galatians "in the minutest detail." "Great Scott," raged G. I. Butler from Florida, "has it come to this that such things [Waggoner's 'absurd position'] are to be indoctrinated into the minds of our young people. . . ."³

The ministers attending the school, however, profited by their study and enjoyed participation in the field work that was

¹D. T. Jones to R. M. Kilgore, March 16, 1890; D. T. Jones to J. H. Morrison, March 17, 1890; D. T. Jones to C. H. Chaffee, May 7, 1890, RG 21: Bx 59 Lb 2, GCAr.

²D. T. Jones to R. C. Porter, October 23, 1890, RG 21: 3x 60 Lb 4, GCAr. E. W. Farnsworth, "Ministerial institute in District No. 3," RH, December 22, 1891, p. 800. Prescott actually taught only the first three chapters and let Waggoner teach the rest.

³G. I. Butler to D. T. Jones, February 16, 1891, RG 21: Fld 1891-8; D. T. Jones to G. I. Butler, February 19, 1891, RG 21: 3x 60 Lb 6, GCAr.
In succeeding years the need was as great as ever, and the demand for the school by ministers who were deficient in scriptural knowledge and who had lacked school opportunities induced denominational leadership to continue the plan. Prescott followed the same plan with the "seminary" program as he had with other schools he started. After two or three years of basic establishment, he encouraged others to share responsibility for the organizational details though he continued to play a central role. He also continued to teach classes and to promote the program. In the third year of operation several schools were conducted in each of the General Conference districts but in 1896 they were discontinued. By this time Prescott, with the assistance of A. T. Jones and the school principals, had developed a full-scale biblical-studies curriculum for the colleges and theological education was taken up by these institutions.

After Prescott was relieved of the presidency of Battle Creek College in 1894 he was able to spend a great deal more time in

1 J. T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, January 5, 1891, RG 21: 3x 60 Lb 6, GCAR.


4 C. W. Howe, "Proceedings . . . .", RG 47: Educational Secretary (1887-1901). W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, May 4, 1896, RG 11: 8x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. When Prescott visited Mrs. White in Australia in 1896, she urged that the General Conference Bible schools be discontinued and that the necessary training be given in the regular schools. The separate schools were a large financial burden. Prescott would have preferred them to continue for one more year to give the regular schools added time to adjust their programs. W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, RG 11: 8x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR.
supervising the educational program. By the time he left the educational secretary's office in early 1897, the educational work of the church had grown to include schools around the world with a total enrollment of 3,000 and a total staff of 170. This necessitated much more work arranging faculty appointments and much time spent visiting the various institutions. During this period Prescott also tried to give more attention to systematizing and refining an educational philosophy for the church. In his continued promotion of the subject he succeeded in making discussions on the topic of education a prominent feature at both the 1895 and 1897 General Conference sessions. His task of systematizing and refining was assisted also by his lengthy visit to Australia during his last eighteen months in office.

It is evident from a study of Prescott's career as college president and educational secretary that the man had an enormous capacity for work. He was one who poured himself into his work and gave himself without reserve to the cause. This overload of work occasionally caught up with him and at times he suffered from chronic headaches (possibly migraines) which sometimes confined him to bed.

In 1897 when Prescott was transferred to the British field he had occupied the position of educational secretary for a decade. With his departure the position lapsed until 1901 when the General

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1 GC Bulletin 1895, p. 214. This was an increase of 100 percent over the decade. Cf. SDA Yearbook 1890, p. 76.

2 W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, June 6, 1890, RG 11: F1d 1890-P, GCAr.
Conference was reorganized and a department of education was created. Prescott left the office of educational secretary with a good deal of frustration. He was disappointed that more progress had not been made in college curriculum reform. In spite of his vigorous efforts, the classics still dominated the coursework in denominational schools. He saw that much more needed to be done to integrate religion and education in the curriculum and to develop a viable work-study program. Largely as a result of his agitation, major initiatives were eventually taken in 1897 to implement many of these reforms particularly at Battle Creek College but also at the other schools. However his agitation of the unpopular issues apparently lost him the support of many denominational teachers. Thus the task of continuing the educational reform fell to E. A. Sutherland.\(^1\)

Despite Prescott's frustrations because he had not accomplished all he would have liked, his achievements during the decade were considerable. His efforts to bring order and harmony into the developing educational system of the church were successful. In establishing a measure of uniformity in the coursework at the various schools, he achieved some standardization and a stabilization of the program that minimized rivalry and allowed for the transfer of students. His advocacy of centralized schools such as Union College and Walla Walla College, instead of many smaller schools of inferior quality, gave strength to the educational program and later allowed for a more rapid expansion of the elementary-school program.

Although church leaders hoped that many elementary schools

\(^1\)See pp. 234, 235 below.
would be established when Prescott was appointed educational secre-
tary in 1887, the time was not ripe. Aware of the difficulties
presented by limited personnel and finance, Prescott urged the
establishment of centralized quality schools rather than many small
schools where the education would not be significantly different
from that offered in the public schools. Mrs. White, though she had
earlier called for many schools, supported him in this approach. In
the development of strong stable colleges and a normal training
department at Battle Creek College, Prescott laid the groundwork for
the church-school movement fostered later by Sutherland and Magan.

Another major accomplishment of Prescott's labor as educa-
tional secretary was persuading the church to commit itself to the
theological education of its ministry. His organizing of the General
Conference Bible schools, his fostering of the development of more
adequate ministerial courses at the colleges, and his efforts to
develop syllabuses for systematic biblical study classes broke new
ground for the church. During these formative years therefore,
Prescott did much to shape the future of Adventist education. For
this it stands in debt to him. Educational interests, however, were
not his only concern during these years at Battle Creek. Prescott
was a man of many talents and he made a large contribution to the
chuch in many other "extra curricular" activities.
Before Prescott arrived in Battle Creek to take up the presidency of the college in 1885, it was already being intimated to readers of the Review that he would be doing more than acting as president of the college. George Butler wrote, "The Board feels very hopeful that with God's blessing Bro. Prescott will fill a very useful position in different branches of the work at Battle Creek." Whether or not Butler at this stage envisaged in just which branches of the work Prescott would be useful is not clear, but it is certain that it was not long before Prescott became actively involved in major leadership positions in the church. In fact, Prescott's exceedingly rapid rise to prominence in the denomination is nothing short of remarkable and bears witness to the charisma and personality of this highly talented and energetic man and to the perspicacity of church leaders.

Prescott was exceptionally busy in his latter years at Battle Creek. Some of this busyness came as a result of what he was asked to do by the church. Part of it was created by his own interest, initiative, and energy. His "extra-curricular" activities in both of these areas is now presented.

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As noted in the previous chapter, just two years after moving to Battle Creek, Prescott, at age thirty-two, was appointed to the newly created office of educational secretary. The following year, at the 1888 General Conference session and even before he was ordained, he was almost elected to the prestigious and powerful five-man General Conference committee. At the last minute his name was exchanged for that of G. I. Butler as a result of political turmoil arising from the replacement of Butler as General Conference president.¹ At that conference Prescott was also appointed to the influential book committee, a position that laid a heavy work load on his shoulders.

At thirty-five, within six years of his taking up employment with the denomination, he was a member of the General Conference committee and served it for lengthy periods as chairman during O. A. Olsen's long absences. Each ensuing General Conference session continued to add to his responsibilities until during his last year as president of Battle Creek College he was holding ten other major official responsibilities (see Table 1). Prescott had a tremendous capacity for work.

Not one to just nominally occupy offices, Prescott took his work seriously. For example, his work on the book committee involved not only a considerable number of meetings each year (at least twenty in 1892) but also a large amount of labor outside committee meetings. Prescott's judgment and his careful scholarly criticism of manuscripts

¹GC Bulletin, November 2, 1888, p. 2. The vote was 40 to 39 in G. I. Butler's favor.
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Data taken from SDA Yearbooks and GC Bulletins, 1886-1897
for publication was valued by the committee. In 1892 he was assigned the responsibility of being chairman of the sub-committee on doctrinal works and thus early in his career came to be recognized as an authority on such matters in the church. Fortuitously, in this capacity, Prescott was often able to be an advocate for the new and suspect ideas of Jones and Waggoner.

Although at times Prescott tended to be hypercritical in his evaluation of manuscripts (a tendency of which he was aware), the critiques that are preserved reveal a good deal about his thought.

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1Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Book Committee Minutes, March 4, August 10, October 3, 1892, AUHR. A number of documents detailing Prescott's criticisms of various book manuscripts have been preserved. They indicate quite an amount of labor. See RG 25: Records of the Book Committee, GCAR.

2The theological controversy that flared up at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference has been the subject of extensive discussion. Various views have been expressed as to the nature of the issues involved and the impact of the discussion on the church. To the charge that the message of righteousness by faith was rejected by the church in 1888, several replies have been made, among them Norval F. Pease, By Faith Alone (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1966); and A. V. Olson, Through Crisis to Victory (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1966), both of which tend to be optimistic and defensive. This study of Prescott's involvement in the discussion and its aftermath indicates that the central theological issues had to do with the matter of the law in Gal 3 and the understanding of the two covenants both of which were integrally linked with Jones and Waggoner's new emphasis on justification by faith and the experience of forgiveness. While suspicion and criticism concerning Mrs. White and her role in the affair (she supported Jones and Waggoner) diminished a few years after the episode, significant opposition to the basic theological issues and the implications they hold for Adventists understanding the doctrine of salvation continued. In 1902, A. G. Daniells reported that in the midwest opposition continued with some younger ministers indicating they were "not free" to preach on the subject "as fully as they desire to." In 1908 considerable opposition to the new understanding of the covenants came from R. A. Underwood. Prescott reported that Underwood received the support of many of those who had been involved in the 1888 discussion. See A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, May 12, 1902, RG 11: Bx 56 Lb 28; W. W. Prescott to R. A. Underwood, August 2, 1908; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, August 3, 7, 1908, RG 11: Fid 1908-P, GCAR.
processes. Prescott was a careful analytical thinker, thorough and systematic. His sensitivity about weak arguments that denominational writers occasionally used against others and his concern for accuracy in citing authorities were two emphases that are evident in these early years.\(^1\)

As part of his book committee responsibilities, Prescott also undertook the writing of some small tracts. One of these, "Christ and the Sabbath," which incorporated the new post-1888 understanding about the law, became so popular and relevant in the context of the intense interest in the Sunday-law movement that almost a quarter of a million were printed.\(^2\)

If his book committee responsibilities demanded much of Prescott's time his membership on the highest executive committee of the church demanded even more. First elected to the responsibility at the General Conference session in 1891, Prescott soon found himself acting as chairman of the group. Occasionally this was for extended periods; for example, when Olsen was in Europe for three months in both 1891 and 1892, and again for more than six months in late 1893. Often during these periods Prescott was the only member of the committee present in Battle Creek and this created extra burdens. "We are often weighed down by the care and perplexities connected with the work" he wrote to Mrs. White in October of 1893.

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\(^1\)Seventh-day Adventist General Conference Book Committee Minutes, May 1, 1892. W. W. Prescott to F. O. Starr, December 2, 1892. W. W. Prescott to Book Committee, October 28, 1894, RG 25: Records of the Book Committee, GAAR.

\(^2\)W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, November 1, 1893, RG 9: O. A. Olsen File 3, GAAR.
Two months later he wrote, "I miss Elder Olsen very much, and his absence makes work much heavier." 1

Olsen found Prescott a valuable and trustworthy counsellor. On occasion, he urged Prescott to meet him in California or some other designated place as he returned from his overseas trips so that they could spend the two or three days in consultation as the train traveled back to Battle Creek. Not only did Prescott have the burden of responsibility for important decisions made during Olsen's absences, he also had the added task of corresponding with Olsen to keep him informed. Olsen appreciated Prescott's assistance and was confident in his judgment and ability. "The positions you have taken in regard to various matters are very satisfactory to me," he wrote in 1894. 2

The energy, drive, and creative initiative that characterized Prescott's personality made him a valuable committee member. When responsible for chairing committees, his analytic mind proved helpful in summarizing issues in discussions and clarifying alternatives. And when just a member of a committee, more frequently than not he was the one to frame resolutions and move their adoption. 3 As a member of the General Conference committee at this period he was concerned that the group not waste its time on "matters of ordinary

1GCC Min, July-August, 1891: July 10, 1893. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, October 5, December 8, 1893, EGWRC-AU.

2O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, January 4, 1893, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902); O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, September 12, 1894, RG 11: Bx 50 Lb 10, GCar.

3See for example, GCC Min, March 16, 1895. Prescott moved six of the eight actions. This was typical of Prescott's role in committee.
... that it should focus on the major policy issues 'underlying the work.' This emphasis was greatly needed during this decade of increasing centralization in the church. Sensitive to the warnings from Mrs. White about centralization and parochialism, Prescott labored to enlarge the vision of his brethren. "I talked pretty plain [to the General Conference Association] about our relations to the foreign work. . . . I did not want them to tie up the appropriation so closely," he reported to O. A. Olsen about one incident in which the brethren were reluctant to help with the establishment of an overseas school. He deplored the "them" and "we" attitude of the General Conference Association. Apparently the incident was typical of many.

Prescott's membership on the General Conference committee involved him in much other committee work, and he frequently found himself on committees responsible for such things as planning canvassers' conventions and world fairs, appointing laborers to new fields, outfitting the mission ship Pitcairn, planning the organization of new conferences, and investigating matters of monetary misconduct on the part of some church workers. This in addition to his positions as education secretary and president of a number of colleges made life exceptionally busy but these were days when burden bearers were few and Prescott labored willingly. His

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2GCC Min, March 12, 1889; March 11, March 13, August 10, October 15, 1891. O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, May 23, 1894; W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, August 27, 1894, RG 11: 3x 50 Lb 10, SCAr.
membership on the executive committee gave him an enabling advantage to carry through his plans for the educational work of the church more effectively. It also put him in a position to more effectively bring the question of education before the church as a whole at its official gatherings—which he did at the General Conference sessions of 1895 and 1897.¹

Ordination

Not long after Prescott had taken up his duties in Battle Creek, his extraordinary abilities as a public speaker were recognized and he was invited to preach in the Tabernacle. His well-thought-out sermons and powerful delivery made a great impression on his hearers and Prescott quickly became one of the denomination's most popular preachers. Prescott's preaching may be seen as part of his general educational effort for the church as a whole and is discussed more extensively later.² Suffice it to say here, that in these early days of his connection with the church his preaching made a profound impression on congregations.

His impressive early preaching provided the occasion for the creation of a new department entitled "Tabernacle Pulpit"³ in the Review—a department designed to give the readership the benefit of the denomination's most able speakers. By 1891, the General

¹GC Bulletin 1895, 1897, passim.
²See pp. 151ff, 203ff below.
³RH, April 12, 1887, p. 228. One of Prescott's Tabernacle sermons inaugurated this irregular department. Other sermons were reported as well as his but his appear frequently. See also RH, July 3, 1888, p. 432; December 8, 1891, p. 768.
Conference secretary, C. T. Jones, reported the general opinion that Prescott "might be considered the best speaker among Seventh-day Adventists at the present time." The dynamism of his preaching drew frequent favorable comments in the Review, and thus the General Conference voted to have his most highly regarded sermons transcribed and published as tracts.¹

In recognizing Prescott's gift, his brethren voted in 1889 at the General Conference session that he should be ordained to the gospel ministry. Prescott already held from the General Conference credentials as a licenciate which enabled him to preach for the denomination, but ordination was something else and Prescott was hesitant about accepting this new responsibility. The incident again reveals Prescott's sensitive and deeply spiritual nature as well as his high concept of the role of the ministry.

When the committee on credentials and licenses introduced its report at the third meeting on October 2 of the 1889 General Conference session, Prescott's name was recommended for ordination. The General Conference Bulletin reports the intriguing information that Prescott's name was actually referred back to the committee. Only the official (but not-for-public-consumption) recording secretary's minutes record that this action was at Prescott's own request. For two weeks the reluctant Prescott pondered the recommendation, finally consulting with Mrs. White on Sunday, November 3. Apparently he was undecided because with his high view of the ministry he felt unworthy

of the responsibility. He also felt that his primary duties were not pastoral but administrative and educational and he was already very busy. Mrs. White did not offer a simple yes or no but advised that she could see nothing to hinder the move if in his judgment he considered it best and if by ordination he could serve the cause better. She stressed, however, that he must himself decide according to circumstances and the dictates of his own conscience.¹

Sometime during the next few days Prescott decided to respond to his brethren's recognition of his call to the ministry and accepted their recommendation for ordination. The following Sabbath, November 9, at a special service in the Tabernacle, the Review reported that he was "set apart to the work of the ministry by the simple but impressive New Testament ceremony of prayer and the laying on of hands." R. A. Underwood preached the sermon, O. A. Olsen offered prayer, and Uriah Smith read the charge.² Although during the next few years the fact of his ordination did not mean any change in his official capacity, it did make him increasingly aware of the spiritual dimensions of his work and he sought to involve himself in the direct work of ministry as much as his time would allow.

Bridge Builder

Whether it was Prescott's ordination to the ministry in 1889 that heightened his pastoral concern for the church in the years immediately following the 1888 theological confrontation, or whether

¹GC Recording Secretary, October 21, 1889, RG 1-SCAR. E. G. White, "Diary," November 3, 1889, MS 23, 1889, EGWRC-DC.
²"Ordination," RH, November 12, 1889, p. 720.

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it was more just his natural spiritual sensitivity, there is no doubt
that one of Prescott's major contributions to the church during this
period was his repeated and at least partially successful efforts to
reconcile the opposing warring factions. Prescott's efforts in this
regard consumed a great deal of his time and energy, and this task
was not formally required or requested of him by the church. It
seems that his efforts grew out of his own spiritual experience and
his great concern for the well being of the church.

At the Minneapolis conference (the first General Conference
session Prescott attended as an official delegate), Prescott, apart
from presenting his educational secretary's report, apparently had not
actively participated in the other meetings. It seems his natural
reaction to the theological discussions was to try to maintain a
neutral stance although he felt a strong pull to the side of Uriah
Smith and G. I. Butler, to both of whom he felt a sense of loyalty
and obligation. He was also rather disturbed by and prejudiced
against Jones' provocative and somewhat uncouth style.¹

In the days immediately following the 1888 conference, Pres­
cott, as one of the elders of the Battle Creek Tabernacle, had
yielded to the influence and prejudice of Smith. With two other
eraders he had attempted indirectly to caution Mrs. White concerning
what she should say from the Tabernacle pulpit. He had also been
(however willing or unwilling) a party to actions designed to prevent
A. T. Jones from preaching at the Tabernacle altogether and to

¹W. C. White related that Prescott had difficulty relating
to A. T. Jones' "manner of speech and action." W. C. White to C. H.
Jones and E. H. Waggoner, June 17, RG 9: W. C. Fld 1, GCAR.
restrict his teaching at the college to that which had previously been taught by the denomination. All of these measures simply helped increase the rift between church leaders and distressed Mrs. White extremely.¹

Prescott was not hardened in his attitudes, however, and seems rather to have been caught between a desire to be open to new ideas and emphases and his sense of loyalty to his senior brethren. At the end of December of that year, during the Week of Prayer, his testimony at one meeting indicates his spiritual sensitivity. Mrs. White, who conducted the meeting, related that the professor arose and attempted to speak but his heart was too full. He just stood before the college congregation for five minutes in silence, weeping, and eventually concluded by acknowledging that he was glad he was a Christian. Repeatedly during his time, Prescott visited with Mrs. White, and according to her, they had much "precious talk" together. "Professor Prescott and his wife are glad in the Lord," she commented. The visits reassured Mrs. White, who was impressed with the quality of Prescott's spiritual experience at this time. Towards the end of the next stormy year, 1889, Mrs. White was again in Battle Creek, and William and Sarah both sought frequent opportunity to visit, encouraging her, seeking her counsel, and discussing together the best

¹Mrs. White stated that her spirit was greatly stirred in the face of this bigotry. It reminded her of the way her own family had been treated in Portland in the 1840s and of how the reformers had been treated. She even contemplated the possibility of another "coming out." E. G. White, "Reflections on the Minneapolis Conference," MS 30, 1889; "The Discernment of Truth," MS 16, 1889, EGWRC-DC.
methods of education and the spiritual welfare of the students.¹

By early 1890, Prescott had become greatly concerned at the continuing rift in the church. Smith had been protesting through the Review against the new theological emphasis in the church, and trouble had arisen over E. J. Waggoner’s teaching on the covenants at the winter Bible school. Prescott, who had labored hard as a mediator and secured some concessions for Waggoner at the winter Bible school, felt that if only these brethren and the other leading preachers and teachers could get together at a retreat for dialogue and exchange of ideas, friendships might develop and harmony could be achieved. Accordingly, in the midst of all the other duties connected with his office and the college, he planned for a theological consultation. The plan called for the “leading teachers of theology” to meet together during July to enjoy the educational benefits of Dr. Harper’s summer school at Chautauqua and to stay on for a week-long institute of their own. The plan was enthusiastically supported by the leadership of the church.²

W. C. White, worried at "the terrible loss" if Prescott’s plans fell through, wrote to a hesitant E. J. Waggoner and his employer, C. H. Jones, urging Waggoner to attend. Explaining Prescott’s intentions White stated:

I presume you both know, that Prof. Prescott has been a peace maker from the start ... and is intensely anxious to see the

¹E. G. White, "Diary," December 1889, MS 25, 1889; "Diary," January 1889, MS 17, 1889; "Diary," December 1889, MS 24, 1889, EGWRC-DC.

breach between the leading teachers and writers healed. Whenever he has been with us in book committee where controverted points were up, he has been able to help much by laboring for an understanding.

White pointed out moreover that if such meetings had been held in the past "the trouble of the past two years would never have been."\(^1\)

Eventually, however, although the retreat was attended by eighteen leaders, including W. C. White and A. T. Jones, the two principals, U. Smith and E. J. Waggoner (who according to White, felt deeply offended at Smith), both found excuses not to attend, much to Prescott's disappointment.\(^2\)

At year's end the situation had not improved, which in turn called forth a powerful testimony from Mrs. White. The article which arrived at the Review office too late for the regular edition of the paper was issued as an Extra and dated December 23, 1890. On the last Sabbath of the Week of Prayer, December 27, Prescott was asked to read the article in the Tabernacle. It stressed the imminence of the Advent and rebuked those who thought they saw something "dangerous" in the Minneapolis message, bracing themselves to resist it, and casting "contempt and reproach on the message and the messenger." In positive support of the emphasis, Mrs. White asserted in the Extra that the one subject that should prevail and swallow

\(^1\) W. C. White to C. H. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, June 17, 1890, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1, GCAr.

\(^2\) W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, May 23, 1890; W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, June 11, 1890, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1; O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, June 8, 1890, RG 11: Bx 47 Lb 2; W. C. White to T. M. Brighouse, May 23, 1890; W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, March 16, 1890; W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, August 18, 1890, RG 11: Fld 1890-W; O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, July 3, 1890, RG 11: Bx 47 Lb 3; W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, June 30, 1890, RG 11: Fld 1890-P, GCAr.
up all others was "Christ our Righteousness."^1

Prescott was always deeply responsive to the instruction of Mrs. White and, in spite of his own repeated efforts at conciliation, saw himself in the testimony. Consequently, he had great difficulty reading it. Deeply affected, he paused often, weeping, and at the conclusion confessed publicly that at the Minneapolis meeting and since that time he had not had right feelings. According to Mrs. White who arrived in Battle Creek a few days later, the effect was profound. Prescott asked the forgiveness of Waggoner and Jones and then went down into the congregation, took the arm of Smith, and both went forward together. Although, according to Mrs. White, Prescott had opened the way and Smith had made a start toward a change of attitude, Smith did not fully improve the opportunity for making things right. Before Prescott had to leave for a visit to the west coast, he visited editor Smith again.\(^2\) During the following week, Mrs. White returned to Battle Creek. In agony of soul over Smith's resistance, she wrote one last pleading letter to her co-worker. Finally, Smith arranged a series of meetings with Mrs. White and church leaders and confessed his wrong attitude. Mrs. White rejoiced at the change in attitude, commenting that Smith had at last fallen on the Rock and was broken.\(^3\)

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\(^{2}\) D. T. Jones to R. A. Underwood, January 10, 1891, RG 21: Bx 60 Lb 6, GCAr. E. G. White, "In Battle Creek Again," MS 54, 1890, EGWRC-AU.

\(^{3}\) E. G. White, [Biographical] MS 3, 1891; E. G. White to J. S. Washburn, January 8, 1891, EGWRC-DC. Smith's difficulty lay
If Smith was slow to make a change (although his attitude changed, he never changed his theology), others were also slow. Prescott found that he had to continue to try to build bridges of understanding. When he planned for the Bible school in late 1890, he found himself mediating again between D. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner over what Waggoner should teach. He filled the mediator's role again in 1891 when he was organizing a teachers convention at Harbor Springs to inspire others. In early 1892, he was approached by Dr. Kellogg to study the Bible with him. Together they spent several late evenings in Bible study. Around midnight was the only time Kellogg was available, but Prescott was glad to help at any time and the studies did the Doctor "a great deal of good" O. A. Olsen reported to Mrs. White.\(^2\)

By the time of the student revival at Battle Creek College in

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2D. T. Jones to G. I. Butler, January 26, 1891, RG 21: Bx 60 Lb 6; O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, October 4, 1892, RG 11: Bx 49 Lb 8, GCAR.
December of 1892, there was still, nonetheless, a great deal of alienation among church leaders. The revival at the college, which was of dramatic proportions and resulted in thirty being baptized, was labeled as a mere excitement by U. Smith and others. This put a dampening effect on the work. Prescott, who was acting as chairman of the General Conference while Olsen was visiting the work in Australia, was distressed. In a letter reporting the situation to Olsen, Prescott related that on a Saturday night in late November or early December, he had awakened at an "unusual hour, and my mind was very deeply exercised. Some things passed before me in a very clear way and I saw some work which must be taken up at once." The work he saw was the need to visit U. Smith and W. H. Littlejohn, which he did the very next afternoon in company with A. T. Jones.

As a result of these interviews a series of special meetings of "about twenty of the brethren" were called. As Prescott related it, "[I] felt a burden to talk very plain over the situation. I referred to the estrangement which had existed between the brethren, the lack of unity in the work here, the lack of cooperation between these institutions, and the need for earnestly seeking God..." As a result a weekly meeting was established. Further duties impressed Prescott and he visited at length with the Review and Herald manager, A. R. Henry, laboring with him to change his attitude and suggesting that perhaps a public confession was needed. Lengthy visits with Harmon Lindsay and Uriah Smith followed. J. H. Kellogg was also drawn in and "we talked things over in the plainest way, 

1W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, January 4 and 5, 1893, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.
going over the whole ground beginning with the Minneapolis meeting,' reported Prescott. Meetings were held for the publishing house employees and impressive moves were begun toward reform in worker relationships and in creating a better spiritual climate in the publishing house.

The effort absorbed Prescott's labor for more than a month and he was exhausted. Concerned about his health, he fretted to Olsen that he had not had regular sleep for a long time. He was so worn out that he had gone to sleep in an evening meeting of the Foreign Missions Board and "practically nothing was done." He was glad for the progress that had been made, however, and detected that there was a new spirit in the work and "a drawing nearer together" of the brethren. "I am sure that you will observe a change in the 'Review' from this time forward," he wrote, "and I believe that Brother Smith will have a new spirit in the work."2

A month and a half later, on February 18, with better personal relationships being established (at least partially as a result of Prescott's labors in December), a meeting was initiated by a number of brethren to discuss the theological concepts involved in the term "Righteousness by Faith" and the relation of faith to works. Prescott, Kellogg, Jones, and Smith together joined in an exchange of views which finally resulted in an agreement that there really was no basis for controversy.3

1Ibid. 2Ibid. 3"Report of Righteousness by Faith Committee," February 18, 1893," RH 11: F1d 1893-K, GCAr. The resolution agreed upon at this meeting seems to have come more from a desire for unity than for theological clarity. Although the transcript of the meeting asserts
Prescott's hopes for an improvement in the Review did not materialize. By October of 1893, he was still troubled about the quality of the magazine. The circulation of the Home Missionary was threatening to overtake the Review which, according to Prescott, was losing its hold on the people. There were reports of dissatisfaction from the field and even some severe criticism over the way the paper was being conducted by Smith. Prescott called the publishing house board members to meet with the General Conference committee to discuss the matter. (Smith was out of town.) At first the board was somewhat exercised over the fact that Prescott raised the issue, but the professor pressed his point and the brethren reluctantly agreed that there was cause for concern.

Relating the series of events to O. A. Olsen, Prescott had no expectation that the conference over the matter would entirely remedy the difficulty, but he thought "... it might result in leaving out some dead matter and securing [sic] the insertion of more that pertains to living issues."¹

Shortly afterwards, the publishing house staff had to go to the railway station to retrieve an already mailed issue of the Youth's Instructor that had an offending article in it which had been that there was no basis for controversy the attempts to fuse the various views did not last. Though the brethren tried to bridge their differences, opposition continued albeit more muted and behind the scenes. In 1902, A. G. Daniells complained of opposition to the "light that came to us at Minneapolis" and in 1908 Prescott complained that R. A. Underwood was still trying to urge his pre-1888 views on the covenants. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, May 12, 1902, RG 11: Bx 56 Lb 28; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, August 7, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P, SCAr.

¹W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, November 1, 1893, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 3, SCAr.
approved by Smith. The episode shook manager A. R. Henry and convinced him of the validity of Prescott's anxiety. Prescott's efforts helped, but opposition to the Minneapolis message continued to linger on for many more years.

Evangelist

Prescott's burden for preaching continued during the 1890s and his popularity increased. Whenever it was announced that he was to occupy the Tabernacle pulpit, the church was crowded. Prescott's preaching also became one of the featured attractions at the General Conference sessions of the 90s. The lengthy series of evening talks he delivered at each of the 1891, 1893, and 1895 sessions were not light devotional talks, but solid Bible studies carefully reasoned and well documented. Even the college program was altered to enable students to attend and hear their president.

As if he were not already busy enough in December 1892, Prescott felt impressed in the midst of his pastoral labors for his colleagues in leadership to begin a series of evangelistic meetings for the Battle Creek community. This was new territory for the Battle Creek church, according to W. A. Spicer. Negotiations with the trustees of the "Independent Congregational Church" made that church, in the central part of the city, available for the series which was originally designed to continue for three months. A choir conducted by the musically able Prescott himself was an added attraction. Interest in the meetings continued as the series progressed.

1 Ibid.
and church members were encouraged by the favorable coverage given in the local papers.¹

Prescott, ever the educator, hoped that the series would serve as a model for others and he did his best to give the Adventist doctrines a fresh gospel-centered setting incorporating the new insights he had gained from his study since the Minneapolis episode. Audiences responded favorably to the new approach. W. A. Spicer reported that James Upton, a prominent citizen, remarked that "they had heard more gospel here than they have heard for many years."

Prescott did not carry the burden alone. A. T. Jones assisted in the preaching occasionally during the week and when Prescott was away. Later the meetings were transferred to the Opera House. This eventually brought a reaction from other churches. Local clergy urged their people to stay away and, according to Spicer, even called in a Temperance evangelist, Dr. Tracy, as a counter attraction to Prescott. Not interested in competing, Prescott visited Tracy, made his acquaintance, and even assisted him in his meetings with Prescott's choir of West-End singers. Disillusioned by the attitude of the local clergy and by small audiences, Tracy stayed but a short time and withdrew.² Prescott clearly enjoyed preaching and working with the public.

¹W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 28, 1892, EGWRC-AU. W. A. Spicer to W. C. White, January 4, 1893, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1, GCAr.

²GCC Min, January 20, 1893. W. A. Spicer to W. C. White, June 26, 1893, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1, GCAr. Cf. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, January 24, 1893, EGWRC-AU. Spicer does not elaborate on who this particular Tracy was except to say that he had joined in a Temperance campaign on one occasion with James and Ellen White in Minneapolis.
The Pitfalls of Zealousness

It was also clear, however, that Prescott was carrying too heavy a load of responsibility. Part of his trouble was that he was so capable. Being talented in so many ways and so spiritually sensitive, he found it difficult to turn away when he saw a need. Also there were few others willing to bear responsibility and able to take leadership roles. At times Prescott mentioned to Mrs. White that he was very weary and Mrs. White wrote him in September 1892 cautioning him not to become caught up in busy work. In October 1893 she again warned that he was doing too much, possibly taking more responsibility than he could successfully carry. Olsen also was worried at Prescott's overload and urged him to get a "good man whom you can rely on--even two," but it was not until a year later that Prescott's load was lightened by his release from Battle Creek College.1

In the meantime while Prescott's health did not give way, some incidents did occur that painfully reminded him that leaders can sometimes exercise poor judgment and make mistakes, and that these are more likely to occur when an individual is overworked. The mistakes were not fatal and really grew out of virtues that were taken to excess, but they help one to understand Prescott during this period.

In late 1893 Mrs. White wrote from Australia that there was altogether too much crowding of interests at Battle Creek and that it

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1O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, April 26, 1894; O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, September 7, 1893, RG 11: Bx 50 Lb 10, GCAr. E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, September 25, 1892; E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, October 2, 1893; "Educational Advantages Not to be Centered in Battle Creek," MS 45, 1893; W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 3, 1893, EGWRC-AU.
was time for some to move out to other places. The strongly worded testimonies were discussed by A. T. Jones in a Tabernacle sermon on October 14. Mrs. White also warned in a letter to Prescott that if people did not move from Battle Creek the Lord would send a "scourge" to drive them out. In the context of the then current Sunday Law agitation, the recent statements by Mrs. White on the "loud cry," and recurrent cholera and scarlet fever epidemics, this warning had a dramatic effect.

Taking Mrs. White literally, Prescott and Jones immediately organized a group of people who were willing to leave and met with them three evenings a week. Reporting to Olsen, Prescott stated that between one and two hundred were ready to make the move and that they were training them to be missionaries in many places. "Our purpose is to keep up this agitation. . . . We are not trying to drive anyone but are presenting before them their privilege to carry the light of truth to other places." At first other church leaders such as General Conference secretary L. T. Nicola, also supported the move. "There are a great many people here who could make as good living some other place, and who might at the same time do more good," he wrote to D. T. Jones. But the planned moves tended to rashness and threatened to produce a stampede.

When the news of what was happening reached Mrs. White, she

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1RH, October 17, 1893, p. 660. E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, October 2, 1893, EGWRC-AU.

was alarmed and hastily wrote again to caution against rashness. The financial loss resulting from a real estate collapse, if many people moved at once, and the need to be sure of good business prospects at the new locations, needed to be considered, she said. Alluding to Prescott and Jones she lamented their lack of judgment in practical matters and commented that perhaps part of their problem had been over-zealousness—"... some hear things with such a strong spirit." The counsel was timely out, unfortunately, the over-enthusiasm that necessitated the caution did tend to nullify the positive instruction to move, and by the end of the year Olsen was reporting that those who had moved out had moved back to the city.¹

Compounding Prescott's embarrassment during the same period was his mistaken judgment with regard to the "testimonies" of Anna Rice-Phillips. Miss Phillips, during the latter part of 1893, experienced what she thought were genuine visions and sent out a number of letters to individuals and the church based on these so-called visions. The letters and the claims of Miss Phillips gradually attracted increasing attention of the church and given the highly expectant and apocalyptic atmosphere of the period, they soon took Battle Creek by storm. Prescott and Jones both suggested that church members ought to be able to judge for themselves whether the visions were genuine and both expressed themselves in favor of them. In two sermons in the Tabernacle in January and February of 1894, Prescott addressed the topic of spiritual gifts and suggested at one point

¹E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, December 22, 1893; O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, November 7, 1894, EGWRC-AU. Mrs. White was aware that she also tended to state things too strongly at times.
that others might have the "Spirit of Prophecy"\(^1\) or the "Testimony of Jesus."\(^2\) Later Jones and other teachers at the college who had received personal testimonies from Miss Phillips were even more explicit in identifying the Phillips' gift as genuine. The Phillips' writings were soon being scattered abroad.

Others for some considerable time had been in touch with Mrs. White in Australia about Miss Phillips, and soon there came testimonies from Mrs. White declaring that a wrong use was being made of the Phillips' writings. She chided Prescott and Jones for their lack of discernment.\(^3\) At Walla Walla when the letters arrived, Prescott immediately began to take steps to correct matters at the same time being careful not to make matters worse.\(^4\)

Prescott was humiliated and suffered intensely over his mistake, and the fact that other prominent leaders were just as impressed

\(^1\)Mrs. White (1827-1915) is regarded by Seventh-day Adventists as having the gift of prophecy. This gift is often referred to as the "Spirit of Prophecy," a term which by extension also came to mean Mrs. White's writings themselves. It is so used elsewhere in these pages.

\(^2\)RH, January 30, 1894, p. 90; February 6, 1894, p. 96; "Sermon by Prof. Prescott, February 3, 1894," RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. See S. N. Haskell to Anna Phillips, July 28, 1893; A. T. Jones to Anna Rice-Phillips, January 3, 1894; F. M. Wilcox to D. A. Robinson, February 23, 1894, DF 363, EGWRC-AU. "Testimonies" from Anna Phillips had been sent to A. T. Jones as early as February 23, 1893. Mrs. White had been in touch with the Rice family during 1893. See DF 363, EGWRC-AU.

\(^3\)Mrs. White did not condemn Miss Phillips. Both S. N. Haskell and F. M. Wilcox were of the opinion that the visions were genuine but that they were probably intended only for Miss Phillips herself, and not the whole church. F. M. Wilcox to N. Z. Town, May 4, 1894, DF 363, EGWRC-AU.

\(^4\)F. M. Wilcox to A. E. Flowers, March 5, 1894, DF 363, EGWRC-AU. L. T. Nicola to A. J. Breed, March 4, 1894, RG 21: Bx 61 Lb 10, GCAR.
as he by Miss Phillips did not help. "Poor man, I pity him," commented O. A. Olsen to Mrs. White, noting at the same time that Prescott felt like a "whipped dog" over the affair. "... The matter is not so serious as we feared it might be," he added.

Reflecting on the issue some months later, Olsen commented that the situation had developed in the church where people were putting Prescott and Jonas on a pedestal so much that the sentiment was gaining ground that "if only one of them said the word that was the end of all disputing... What a terrible thing it is when a man gets into a place where people look to him and not to God! That was the difficulty in which Bro. Jones and, to some extent, Bro. Prescott were getting themselves."

In Olsen's view, both Jones and Prescott were very conscientious men who feared God. The difficulty which gave Olsen much concern was the battle they faced in regaining the confidence of the people "to the extent that it would be [sic] to do the work of God successfully." Mrs. White herself helped in the healing process.

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1 F. M. Wilcox stated that he was just as impressed as Prescott "and presume that had I occupied as leading a position as these brethren, I should have made just as great a mistake." F. M. Wilcox to J. A. Robinson, March 8, 1894, DF 363, EGWRC-AU.

2 O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, March 29, April 26, 1894, RG 11: 3x 50 Lb 11, GCAr. Olsen endeavored to calm Mrs. White's fears over the matter. Mrs. White had been embarrassed when she was in Melbourne in the midst of public meetings and the city newspaper published a report from a New York correspondent about a huge offering given at a meeting in the Battle Creek Tabernacle in which Mrs. White had been linked with Miss Phillips. Trying to ease Mrs. White's mind which had been "greatly exercised," Olsen stated, "I believe this thing will right itself up..." See also, E. G. White to "Dear Brethren and Sisters," March 16, 1894, EGWRC-AU.

3 O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, April 26, 1894. RG 11: 8x 50 Lb 10, GCAr.

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In June she wrote S. N. Haskell urging him not to be so hard on his brethren. In the letter, which was apparently sent to a number of prominent church officials, she rebuked those who would triumph over a mistake in their colleagues and added with a touch of irony that she was glad the trial had come to men who truly loved and feared God. Prescott and Jones had responded to the reproof, she explained, and were not like those who were reproved at the important meeting in Minneapolis but who maintained a long and stubborn resistance. While the two men may have been too ardent and carried things in too strong a manner, she said the church badly needed such ardent elements because it was in fact an aggressive work.

Mrs. White remarked that she had more confidence in the men after the experience than she had prior to it. She further stated that she had the most tender feelings for the men and asserted strongly that they were indeed the Lord's chosen messengers. The letter and the passing of time did much to put the episode in the past, and soon the attention of the church was focused on other things. Prescott continued in leadership positions and took steps to lighten his load. "I have decided for myself that during this next year I must take things somewhat easier in order to recover some of the energy which has been drawn upon so seriously during the last two or three years," he wrote to Olsen. His release from Battle

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1E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, June 1, 1894, EGWRC-AU. Seven copies were made of the letter. S. N. Haskell had run a two-part series of articles in the Review to try to correct things. The articles contain some quite weak arguments. "The Sin of Miriam the Prophetess," RH, April 3, 1894, p. 218; "The Supremacy of One Prophet above Another, . . ." RH, April 10, 1894, p. 233.

2E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, June 1, 1894, EGWRC-AU.
Creek College eased the problem only a little, however, for in late 1894 Olsen was away in Europe again for three months, and once more Prescott had many of the cares of the day-to-day routine business of the church on his shoulders. Commiserated Olsen, "I know what a desire you and I have to make reforms in the way of our working. But the difficulty in carrying it out is greater than anyone can appreciate." Only later in 1894 was Prescott able to ease up at all, but in 1895 his long sea voyage to Australia enabled him to further recuperate his spent resources.

How Sarah coped with the constant strain on her husband and his continual busyness is not known. Prescott rarely talked of his wife in his letters. But living as they did in West Hall with the students and teaching German college classes her life was also full of activity. Life for Sarah became even busier in October 1891 with the birth of her first and only son, Lewis. The arrival of Lewis brought added joy to an already happy home. "He is of course much care, but [he] has also brought much happiness to us," wrote Prescott of the one-year-old toddler to Mrs. White, at the same time promising to send a photograph that his wife had taken recently of the baby (see fig. 13). Lewis in later years developed an interest in engineering. After attending Washington Missionary College he furthered his study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. During the first World War he volunteered for the Air Corps to avoid being

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1W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, July 15, 1894, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 3; O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, May 23, 1894; O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, July 1, 1894, RG 11: Bx 50 Lb 10, GCAR.

2W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 15, 1892, EGWRC-AU.
Fig. 12. Union College Campus circa 1891
(Courtesy Andrews University Heritage Room)

Fig. 13. Sarah F. Prescott and son Lewis 1892
(Courtesy Andrews University Heritage Room)
drafted into the Army. He was killed in France in 1918 just before the end of the war. His death was a bitter heartbreak to his father, who, having already lost his wife, felt very much alone.

In 1892 though, William and Sarah proudly showed off the new baby when they visited their families in New England in June. The practice of visiting Prescott's relatives in North Berwick during the summer months continued for many years for William and Sarah, indicating that there was a close family relationship. Here in the cool summer weather of New England, Prescott found some relaxation from his crowded schedule. Rarely able to bring himself to do nothing, he used these summer vacations to catch up on much of his writing and paper work. The writing of Week of Prayer readings (one of which he was asked to write for each year from 1891 through 1895), Sabbath School lessons, and the preparation for publication of some of Mrs. White's manuscripts on education were all tasks that occupied his time during the short breaks and at other of his spare moments during these busy years.

Overwork was a problem Prescott faced again and again in life. While at times the strain and pressure skewed his judgment, as in the Anna Phillips' matter, there is no question that the contribution made by Prescott apart from his officially required duties greatly enriched the church. During the 1890s, particularly when theological stresses threatened to disrupt the community and when capable leaders were scarce, Prescott's work did much to forward the Advent cause. Neither were the strain and stress without some

\[1\] W. A. Colcord to W. W. Prescott, June 28, 1892, RG 21: 3x 61 Lb 8, GCAr.
benefit to Prescott himself, since it provided him with experience that further enriched and enhanced his contribution in later years.
CHAPTER IX

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHER AND REFORMER

While Prescott was an aggressive committeeman, a good speaker, and a very capable organizer and leader, he had another side that was never far away. Sensitive, reflective, and at times quite melancholic, he found it essential to make time in his busy program for reading and reflection, a trait that helped ensure growth and development during his years at Battle Creek.

In his commencement oration at the conclusion of his four years at Dartmouth, Prescott had expatiated on the office of the thinker.¹ Now a decade later as college president and educational leader of the church he found himself in that very office. The role was not always easy, for to think is to raise questions, to unsettle the status quo, to be out front leading the way, to encounter criticism and opposition, and, often, to be rejected. While Prescott experienced such things, particularly in his last years at Battle Creek, unnappily for himself but happily for his church, he could not stop being himself and thus one of his largest contributions to the church at this time was his contribution to the clarification of its educational philosophy.

Prescott was in fact an educational reformer whose philosophy

¹"Class of 1877 Commencement Program," Comstock Scrapbook, ADBML.

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of education, while basically unchanged at its core, went through a significant growth and development. The story of this development is important for to a large degree it is also the story of the development of the educational philosophy of the church. This chapter notices first the sources of Prescott’s ideas; second, the essential elements of his approach; and third, the development of his philosophy along with his attempts to implement it in the college with which he was associated.

Sources and Influences

Prescott was evidently aware of the basic issues in the educational reform movement during his days at Dartmouth. The discussions at Dartmouth concerning the elective system and the merits of agricultural training at least alerted him to some of the major ideas. His three years of teaching in Vermont no doubt also brought him into close contact with reform ideas on educational reform. These ideas were mainly concerned with upgrading the standard of teaching and making school administration more efficient and education more practical that it might better serve society and produce better equipped citizens.

1 Vande Vere gives the impression that Prescott was anti-reform. He sees Prescott as a thoroughgoing classicist who tried to impress on Battle Creek College a New England style of education. See Wisdom Seekers, pp. 53-67, 70. The evidence discussed in this chapter suggest that quite to the contrary, Prescott was pro-reform but was opposed by his classics-oriented faculty.

2 This chapter can offer only a survey. The topic warrants a major study of its own.

3 See p. 28 above.

4 Watchman, August 16, 1882; July 15, 1885.
In defending the manual-training program at Battle Creek College in 1888, Prescott and his trustees used the argument that such a program was in harmony with the "most advanced scientific educators of the age," a statement which would seem to indicate that they were familiar with the works of such educational reformers as Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, and Spencer. Prescott was a wide reader, and although he only occasionally cited specific educational authors, it is quite evident from his discussions on educational philosophy that he was familiar with their ideas. His occasional attendance at meetings of the National Education Association also kept him abreast of developments in the educational field.¹

Another rich source of ideas for Prescott, particularly in the area of practices, was provided by his frequent visits to other schools, particularly experimental schools where he could observe new programs and dialogue with the staff. He visited institutions with manual-education programs such as General Armstrong's Hampton Institute in Virginia, schools with student-residence programs such as Holyoke and Wellesley, and Normal schools such as the famed Cook County (Illinois) Normal School operated by Colonel Francis Parker. He also profited from his visit of a few days to Yale University in 1891 and his visit to Buffalo Teachers College around 1894 where he

was very impressed by some lengthy discussions with Dr. Frank McMurry, a noted Herbartian educator. 1 In an attempt to develop a solid base for the denominational elementary school system in the mid-1890s, he sent groups of his Battle Creek College elementary teaching staff to study under both Parker and McMurry. 2

The most influential source of Prescott's developing educational philosophy was without question, however, the writings of Ellen White. Prescott was familiar with the various articles on education penned by Mrs. White since 1872, so that when he arrived at Battle Creek in 1885 he had already formed the basic framework of his philosophy. (In 1886 he had prepared a pamphlet containing selections of Mrs. White's writings on education.) He believed that all education should have a strong spiritual or religious dimension.

In the late eighties when Mrs. White stayed for various periods in Battle Creek, Prescott spent many profitable hours with her discussing educational issues. These discussions resulted in mutual benefit to both. In these "many precious seasons of communion together" the basic idea of combining the study of religion with the study of secular subjects and how to implement this was a recurring

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2 Jessie Barber Osborne, "Teacher Education in the Early Days," Journal of True Education, June 1953, p. 11. Frederick Griggs, who was principal of the elementary school at Battle Creek (under Prescott) and who later contributed much to the denominational education system, was sent by Prescott to McMurry's school. He was also commissioned by Prescott to visit other nearby normal schools in the state of Michigan. See May Cole Kuhn, "The Lamp That Has Never Gone Out," Journal of True Education, June 1953, pp. 15-17. Kuhn reports that McMurry was so impressed by Prescott that he offered him a number of scholarships for his Battle Creek staff.
theme. "The question is constantly arising," commented Mrs. White, "... are we ... doing what we should in combining religious education—which is science—with the education of science in our schools? ... We cannot go back upon this important subject of keeping the education of every faculty equal."¹

Prescott collected and studied carefully the occasional articles on education written by Mrs. White in the late 1880s. He later related that in the months prior to December 1892, he had given "considerable attention" to Mrs. White's articles on education as he grappled with the task of how to actually implement the principles in his school program. This led him to advocate a book on education that would help the church members to understand the principles and thus provide a climate of opinion that would facilitate the difficult task of implementing them. Consequently, during 1893 Prescott worked on compiling and editing Mrs. White's articles on education. These were published in October as a 251-page book Christian Education. Since Mrs. White was in Australia at the time, Prescott did the editing without her direct supervision. Uncertain as to how much liberty he should exercise in altering the text, he made only "such changes as seemed to be necessary for clearness."² After his visit to Australia in 1895-96, when he helped edit Ellen White's book on the life of Christ and saw how her editorial staff actually did their...

¹E. G. White, Selections from the Testimonies Concerning the Subject of Education (Battle Creek, Mi.: College Printing Department, 1886). E. G. White, "Diary," February 1889, MS 18, 1889; "Diary," November 1889, MS 23, 1889, EGWRC-DC.

²W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 27, 1892; March 23, September 7, 1893; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, June 26, 1893, EGWRC-AU. RH, October 24, 1893, p. 676.

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work, he apparently realized he had been too cautious. In suggesting to Mrs. White the need for a new book on education, he pointed out that the one he had prepared could be revised "by a more careful editing of the matter contained in it." Further counsels from Mrs. White arrived in late 1893 and during 1895-96 and these Prescott again compiled and edited for publication as Special Testimonies on Education in 1897.

During his lengthy stay with the Whites in Australia, Prescott talked at length with Mrs. White on educational philosophy, benefiting from the discussions and attempting to find ways of systematizing and applying the counsel. Mrs. White enjoyed the discussions stating that Prescott drew her out as her husband used to do, enabling her to say more than she might otherwise have done and helping her to clarify her own thinking. "We could see some matters in a clearer light," she remarked. Prescott then told her that she must write out her counsels. Prescott could evidently inform Mrs. White on many things regarding educational matters and in turn be shaped and molded by her in his thinking on education.

1W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, July 30, 1896; November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU.

2E. G. White to J. E. and E. L. White, February 16, 1896; "Diary," February 1896, MS 52, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

3For example, Prescott explained to the seventy-year-old Mrs. White the significance of college degrees. He reported to E. A. Sutherland that she said she knew very little about them. After Prescott explained them, Mrs. White then gave counsel relative to their place in the school program. W. W. Prescott to E. A. Sutherland, April 29, 1896, DF 520; E. G. White, "Diary," April 1896, MS 64, 1896, EGWRC-DC.
learned that success in his educational plans had come as "we have
endeavored to follow the light." 1

Essential Elements of His Educational Philosophy

Prescott's approach to Seventh-day Adventist education had as
a basic premise that it was designed primarily to prepare "workers"
who would serve in the advent cause. He constantly reiterated this
premise. 2 "Now I should lay down as the first principle in planning
the work to be done in our schools," noted Prescott, "that the first
place should be given to those studies that will bear most directly
upon the work of the Third Angel's Message." If some suggested that
this was too narrow, Prescott responded that actually a "preparation
to labor in this message is the best preparation for life." He felt
that the religious side of a school's activities were at least as
important as the formal class recitations themselves if not more so.
This is shown in his early concern to provide a strong religious
atmosphere at Battle Creek and his focus on character development. 3

Prescott saw Christianity as having two major thrusts, the

1 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 27, 1892, EGWRC-AU.

2 GC Min., March 25, 1889; see p. 65 above. For example, F.
W. Howe reports that the question of how the church's educational
institutions could be made of the most value to the work of the
denomination "occupied more or less of the attention" of the 1894
Teachers' Institute in "all its sessions." "Proceedings . . . .
" p. 17, RG 47: Educational Secretary (1887-1901), GCAr.

3 W. W. Prescott, "Education," GC Bulletin, February 15, 1895,
p. 257. Explaining the changes after 1891, Prescott commented that
prior to that time the "general purpose" had been to have "a religi­
ous element in our schools." After the 1891 Harbor Springs conven­
tion the work was arranged to be practically upon that basis "showing
itself in courses of study." ibid., p. 350.
proclamation of salvation to the unconverted and the readying of the already converted for participation in the coming Kingdom of Christ. Both thrusts constituted the particular task of the Advent message. Adventist education was, therefore, to be oriented to these same fundamental goals. Aware of the limits of education, however, he knew what it could not do. It could not give a man gifts for service, but it could help him to make the most of what gifts he had. Because this was the ultimate purpose of education, religion of necessity played a paramount role. To achieve this purpose, Bible study would have to be central.

While this basic rationale seems to have been already formulated when Prescott began his presidency at Battle Creek, it was still rather loosely knit. But beginning about 1889 his views began to undergo considerable development--particularly as he saw the way the principles of Christian education were to be put into practice. To ensure a good religious atmosphere on campus, Prescott had quite early given a great deal of attention to the "religious interests" in the school and utilized the "school home" concept as a means of providing character education. But this did not seem to be enough. Shortly after the 1888 Minneapolis conference, Prescott realized that to meet the objectives that had been set for the college, the study of scripture must be made more central in the curriculum. It seems this realization grew out of his new theological insights and his

successful implementation of the two winter Bible schools for ministers in 1889 and 1890.¹

Over the next two years Prescott's conviction that a Bible-centered curriculum was the only way to achieve a truly Christian education increased. The motto "They shall be all taught of God" seemed to him to capture the essence of his conviction. Not only was the Bible to be more central and taught more systematically on an equal footing with other subjects but it was to be "the foundation of every other study." The natural corollary of this was that there should not be any real distinction between religious subjects and secular subjects. "... It is all religious education," he asserted.² Thus, during the nineties, Prescott came to see that in true education Bible study and secular study needed to be integrated and viewed as one activity that led to the knowledge of God.

Concomitant to this central theme was the idea that man himself is a whole and that all his faculties needed development. Thus Christian education should include training of the hand and the physical side of man's nature as well as his mind. Protesting against the popular idea that it was the duty of one class of people to do the thinking and the duty of another class to do the drudgery, Prescott held that "it is just as honorable ... to dig in the dirt as to dig into books." Man is not made in three pieces so that one part can be developed without the other. "The three are one, and ...
the mind can do its best work only when the body has been developed equally well."

The influence of Mrs. White's themes is evident in Prescott's teaching on education. But one who attended an educational institute conducted by Prescott in Cooranbong in 1896 reported that while Prescott's teaching was in harmony with what Mrs. White had said, he seemed to give her counsel "serious attention" and attempted to resolve it into a practical system. In other words, Prescott was grappling with the problem of adapting principles to practical reality.

While Prescott's basic philosophy of education did not undergo any further major developments after the early 1890s, he did nevertheless continue to grapple with the issues. For example, in the late nineties, he participated with enthusiasm in the sometimes warm debates over the Bible as a textbook. These discussions were more concerned with how to implement the basic philosophy rather than with the philosophy itself.

Educational Reformer

It was in the implementation of his developing philosophy of education that Prescott had the most difficulty. In addressing a General Conference congregation on the subject of education in 1895, he acknowledged that it was much easier to present principles


in theory "than it is to carry them out in actual practice." Four years later in a discussion at another General Conference session he admitted that "it is very much easier to run a school from the floor of the conference than in the school itself . . . it is a very different thing to meet a school day after day, year after year, and apply these principles so that the students shall study and be benefitted."¹

Prescott knew this from hard experience because in trying to implement reforms at Battle Creek College he had met stiff resistance from students, community, and an uncooperative faculty. By 1896, he was well aware that in some quarters he was regarded as a dreamy idealist and that many felt that his plans were "all theories and will not work in practice." This frustrated him. It does appear at times, though, that he did find it easy to theorize about how education should be conducted and difficult to deal with practical specifics. A classic example of this is an exchange that took place at the 1899 General Conference between Prescott and C. C. Lewis. Prescott was expounding that he thought all education needed to be based on the Bible. Lewis pressed him as to how he would teach the multiplication table and became exasperated when Prescott gave only vague answers while using up time allocated to Lewis. Prescott sometimes had difficulty communicating his concepts.²

While Prescott may not have known how all his reforms would


work in practice, he was willing to experiment. He earnestly wanted to apply Mrs. White's counsel "in a practical way in our work" but was frustrated by an American educational system that was already strongly traditional and by an uncooperative faculty that was so tied to the traditional ways that they believed that anything else would lead to a cheapening of education, making it "sissy stuff."

'It is much easier,' he complained to Olsen about his staff, "to follow the old ruts with textbooks all prepared for the work rather than to enter upon a line of work that requires original thinking and planning and for which there are few textbooks at hand adapted for use." He eventually became convinced that the problem of implementing reforms would be resolved only by removing the uncooperative faculty, and even that step he found difficult.¹

The Harbor Springs Convention

Prescott first began to agitate for radical curriculum changes in 1890. Enthused by the success of the Bible schools and the results of "systematic" Bible study for the minister, he became convinced that such Bible study needed to be incorporated into the regular college program and that this would make for a more "integrated" religious education. At the beginning of the 1890 school year, therefore, he invited his principal, Eli Miller, to present a paper to the Battle Creek faculty on "The Bible in the College Curriculum." Prescott was to make the response.² The discussion

²BCC Fac Min, November 9, 1890.
rapidly led to action and Prescott quickly planned similar programs for the other major schools of the church as well. Reported D. T. Jones:

Prof. Prescott is planning to bring more Bible and missionary work into the schools under his charge as Educational secretary. Lincoln College will open next September, and will contain a more thorough Bible Department than any school which has yet been established among our people. Battle Creek College will also have a more thorough Bible course next year than it has ever had.

At the General Conference in March 1891, Prescott continued to lay the groundwork for his new moves. According to D. T. Jones, he delivered some "very good lectures on the importance of Bible study." He also succeeded in initiating plans for a Bible Teachers' convention in the summer to help develop courses and improve methods.

Prescott continued the dialogue with his faculty during the next few faculty meetings. He informed them that for some time he had had "questions arising in his own mind concerning the adaptability of the present courses of study in the College to the purpose for which the college is established," and he had mulled over "the practicability of making changes so as better to meet that purpose." He argued that not only should biblical teaching be brought into more intimate connection with instruction in other branches, but some of the textbooks needed to be dispensed with; those at least that inculcated error. (It seems Prescott was

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1 D. T. Jones to S. N. Haskell. December 18, 1890, RG 21: Bx 60 Lb 5, GCAR.

2 D. T. Jones to E. W. Farnsworth, March 4, 1891, RG 21: Bx 60 Lb 5, GCAR. Prescott had adjusted his college timetable to enable his students to attend these lectures in the Tabernacle.

The difficulty the faculty confronted, however, as Miller pointed out, was that students and teachers already found that too much was being expected of them. Adding regular Bible classes would only compound the problem. Miller wanted to know what adjustments could be made to allow for the extra subjects. Prescott, however, was convinced that something needed to be done. He later told the General Conference committee, with whom he had raised the same issues, that he thought the "time had come for quite a radical change to be made" in the curriculum.\(^1\)

The General Conference promptly invested Prescott with the responsibility of organizing the educational convention that he had suggested and assigned him a committee of helpers to assist with the teaching load. Announced to begin July 15, it was planned that the institute should continue for six weeks.\(^2\) Prescott originally planned for only a small select group of fifteen to twenty. He wanted just the Bible teachers and "especially those others who have rather a moulding influence." Prescott was afraid that the purpose of the meeting might be defeated if too many attended; though still somewhat selective, the convention was actually attended by close to

\(^1\)GCC Fac Min, March 23, 28, 1891. GCC Min, March 28, 1891. That the changes Prescott was looking for were indeed quite radical for their time may be understood in the light of the report of the State Board of Visitors. After their inspection in May of 1891 (before any changes in the curriculum) they commented that "Some may suspect that the College was trying to bring the Theological School down into the College and Preparatory grades" but they preferred to see the program as an attempt to do "moral education" and they applauded the "experiment." Fifty-sixth Annual Report of the Superintendent, p. 335.

\(^2\)GCC Min, March 29, 1891. As it turned out the program lasted only five weeks.
one hundred ministers, principals, church leaders, Bible teachers, and others.¹

In the months before the convention, Prescott’s faculty commenced work on adjusting the curriculum to allow for more Bible study. In May a committee suggested changes in all courses to allow for three terms of church history. In June the same task force also suggested that advanced Bible subjects be made optional in the upper levels of the academic and classical courses.² Thus, even before the convention, Battle Creek College was being prepared for some changes.

It was a tinder dry July at Petoskey in 1891 and delegates who arrived early found themselves fighting brush fires, but rain fell and the danger quickly diminished. Prescott had urged a somewhat reluctant Mrs. White to attend. Along with Prescott and assisted by A. T. Jones and J. H. Kellogg, she took a leading part in the meetings. Sermons, Bible studies, discussions, and workshop sessions filled the days and delegates were inspired by the new Christ-centered emphasis that permeated the whole program. The topic of Bible teaching was the central feature, but other topics included a redemptive approach to discipline, the elimination of pagan authors, and the teaching of physiology and health. All of these were discussed within the context of the new emphasis.³ According to

³W. W. Prescott to W. A. Colcord, July 14, 1891, RG 21:F1d 1891-P; W. A. Colcord to U. Smith, July 30, 1891, RG 21; Bx 50 Lb 5, GCAr. A. T. Jones and Prescott strongly emphasized this theme as
Prescott the convention was eminently successful with many of the delegates experiencing a spiritual renewal. More importantly, delegates were led to appreciate "the real purpose of our school work . . . as never before."¹

In practical terms, the convention produced three new major initiatives. A four-year "Biblical Course" was proposed, a four-year sequence of history courses taught from a biblical perspective was developed, and a series of college-level Bible subjects were introduced. Prescott was happy with all three recommendations but was particularly pleased at the last because it represented a major shift toward incorporating the new theological developments in the church into the curriculum. Prescott explained that in this new approach to Bible study, "the Bible as whole" was to be studied "as the gospel of Christ from first to last" and the church's doctrines were to be presented as "simply the gospel of Christ rightly understood." It was not intended to put in the background the distinguishing doctrines, but rather, to show 'that the third angel's message is simply the gospel' and that all of the doctrines of the church "grow out of a belief in Jesus Christ as a living, personal saviour."² It was clear that Prescott had grasped the essence of the 1888 emphasis. It was indeed a new approach.

²Ibid.

In retrospect ten years later P. T. Magan saw the 1891 convention as marking the commencement of a new era of reform. "The meeting was a remarkable one," he wrote, "and the definite beginnings of the work of an educational reformatory movement owe their birth to this gathering." Commenting further he asserted, "At that time, the words 'Christian education' were unknown," but "the germ" or "the seed" was there and it grew, although not without a struggle.  

The immediate impact of Prescott's Harbor Springs Convention was evident at the first meeting of the Battle Creek College faculty for the 1891 school year. Prescott reported to his faculty the trustees' decision to adopt the Biblical Studies course recommended by the teachers at Harbor Springs. At the same time, he reported, they had voted to drop the English and the Academic courses at the end of two years, a harbinger of ominous things. Prescott and Miller presented plans for the new Bible study classes, and a committee was set up to plan for the new Bible study subjects. The committee was also asked to ensure that there was "uniformity" between the new biblical course and the other courses.  

However, it seems these new Bible subjects were not "required" of the college-level students. At this stage they were "optional" and could be substituted for other components in their

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2 BCC Fac Min, August 26, 1891. The precaution seems to have reflected anxiety on the part of some faculty about lowering standards.
courses if they desired. Clearly the faculty had not by any means resolved the problem of how to integrate Bible into the curriculum and they even moved to ensure that Latin and Greek in the classical course would not be among those for which substitution could be made. Another encouraging early development, however, was the move to adopt a new approach to teaching history. New history courses were developed which integrated faith and learning. No steps were taken to dispense with pagan authors in the language subjects. The faculty just could not envisage teaching Latin and Greek from medical literature and Christian works; they could not see beyond the classical authors.

What Prescott had accomplished at Battle Creek College he was anxious to accomplish at Union College. (He had presided at the opening of Union College immediately after starting off the new year at Battle Creek in September 1891. He reminded the faculty that their work was "emphatically a religious work" and carefully explained the new courses before getting the faculty and the trustees

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1 The college catalogues seem to indicate that the Bible subjects did not become "required" until 1894. That the Bible subjects during the period 1891-94 were optional is also indicated by the move Prescott made in December 1892 to rearrange the school program to at least "permit" students to take Bible study as one of their three or four studies. BCC Fac Min, December 18, 1892. Naturally, students doing the "Biblical Course" were "required" to take the Bible subjects. For examples of students petitioning to substitute Latin or math classes for Bible subjects, see BCC Fac Min, September 7, 9, 1891.

2 BCC Fac Min, September 13, 1891. See George R. Knight, "Battle Creek College: Academic Development and Curriculum Struggles, 1874-1901" (unpublished paper, 1979), AUHR, for a more extensive discussion of these developments.
to adopt them. Other colleges and schools slowly followed Prescott's lead at Battle Creek, and in 1893, he was able to report that Adventist schools generally had benefited greatly from the changes initiated at Harbor Springs. Prescott was also anxious to secure the approval of the church membership and educate it in the reforms. In early 1892, therefore, he wrote a series of articles in the Review on the real purpose of Adventist schools. In pointing out the importance of a Bible-centered curriculum, he again emphasized the theme that in a truly Christian school "all the teaching is in a sense religious teaching, and all the instructors are engaged in religious work, both in and out of the classroom."

Other reforms followed in the wake of the 1891 convention. Sutherland aroused an interest in vegetarianism in early 1892. Then at the end of 1892, in an attempt to eliminate competition and rivalry, the Battle Creek faculty voted to dispense with issuing grades to students--although they continued to keep records for themselves. Students were simply notified whether they had passed, failed, or had to fulfill certain other conditions to pass. The revival of 1892 also renewed interest in Bible study, and the faculty

1UC Fac Min, September 25, 27, 1891.

made further moves to make it easier for students to take the Bible subjects.\(^1\)

**Reaction--A Mini Rebellion**

For Prescott, though, the progress of reform seemed too slow, and the pace of reform was not helped by his frequent absences from the Battle Creek campus. In fact, these simply made it more difficult for him to maintain cordial relations with his staff who had to implement the reforms in the classroom. Thus when he began to press more earnestly for change near the end of 1893, a minor rebellion occurred. An interesting train of events led to the showdown.

For the first two or three months of 1893, Prescott was exceptionally busy in work outside the college. During the spring term he was away from the campus for seven weeks visiting the other denominational schools. Actually, he was almost losing touch with Battle Creek College and this created problems. He reported in July that there had been a negative reaction following the 1892 revival. A lack of unity and loyalty among some of the faculty had spread to the students. It was, in Prescott's opinion, one of the most unpleasant experiences in the school since he had been connected with the work. It seemed, he lamented, "... more like the old spirit which came in years ago and resulted in the closing of the college, than like anything I have known of since I have been here."\(^2\)


\(^2\) W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, March 23, July 4, 1893; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, June 26, 1893, EGWRC-AU. At the time, Prescott just talked the matter over with O. A. Olsen, but a few
Shortly afterwards, in May 1893, Mrs. White sent an article on education to Prescott which he subsequently read in faculty meeting. He noted that it had made a marked impression on some of the staff. Prescott’s own reaction was a determination that he would labor to achieve "a different order of things" the next year. In addition to this turmoil, Mrs. White’s strong letter of protest over the extensions to the main building of the college arrived. Prescott was most discouraged. He resolved that if the next year did not go any better than the last, and the college “more nearly meet the purpose of God in its establishment,” he would leave school work and go into pastoral work.

While Prescott was focusing on religious interests and academic reforms, he was not able to give much attention to the manual-training program, allowing sports and gymnasium activities to suffice. Football games had increasingly become a major attraction. Dietary problems crept in during 1893 with a succession of poor cooks. Ironically, during this same period, Prescott had been carefully studying and editing manuscripts for Mrs. White’s book Christian Education. He had not long finished when a further batch of articles arrived. In September’s mail Prescott received a sharp reprimand from Mrs. White about the sports. He read it to both the


2 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, June 26, 1893; W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, September 7, 1893, EGWRC-AU.
faculty and the students and steps were taken to redress the situation. Then in October, two more very strong letters arrived that stunned Prescott. "... On my first reading of them, there seemed to be nothing but the severest rebuke" he wrote. But the more he read them and prayed over them the more encouragement he found in them. Again, he read them to the students and faculty, and even though they found some things that puzzled them a good deal, particularly on the diet question, he explained that they were doing as she suggested, that was "to study up on these subjects."2

The allusions Mrs. White made to the Old Testament schools of the prophets stimulated Prescott to make a study of those schools himself and in doing so he became convinced of the need for further reforms. Six faculty meetings over a two-week period were held to discuss their plans of work. "As a result of this study," he stated, "I have become fully convinced that there ought to be radical changes in our plans of work and that some of the subjects which have been occupying a prominent place and taken much time, ought to be either entirely omitted or relegated to a secondary place."3 Prescott had in mind the cherished classics. "You know," he reminded Olsen who was in Wellington, New Zealand with Mrs. White, "it has seemed to me for some time that we ought to give more attention to our own work and that there was [sic] some studies, notably the classics and higher mathematics, as well as some lines in philosophy, which either

1See p. 86 above.
2W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 3, 1893, EGWRC-AU.
3Ibid.
ought to be omitted entirely or be put upon a different basis." It had become clear to him that Battle Creek College was to be made "more after the order of the Schools of the Prophets."¹

When Prescott read the testimonies to his faculty at first there was a favorable response, but as the fortnight progressed, opposition mounted and "quite a little feeling" developed. Professors Kirby, Hartwell, and Sanderson reacted strongly, protesting that Prescott's suggestions would kill "Liberal Education" and cheapen the college.² In reporting the development to Olsen, Prescott reiterated the point that he had waited "ever since the Harbor Springs Institute, hoping for the time to come when we should all see alike and we could make these moves together." Now, however, he felt that the opposition was stronger than ever; he was worried that with the resistance spreading quietly among the students he was "losing ground."³ Longing to be able to counsel with Olsen on the problem but feeling that there was not time enough to let the matter rest until a reply could come, Prescott resolved to take up the matter with his trustees.

The board was called together with several other prominent


² Ibid. It was possibly his intention to mention these faculty members' names and their actions that led Prescott to type the letter himself rather than giving it to his stenographer to type. He had already dealt with more routine matters in a letter to Olsen that he had dictated to his secretary earlier in the day. This would seem to indicate how concerned Prescott felt about the volatile situation. See also W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 8, 1893, EGWRC-AU.

leaders to provide wider counsel and Prescott read the recently received testimonies, some extracts from Christian Education, and then presented "exactly the same plan" that he had presented to his faculty. The board, after considerable discussion, adopted the plan which, it seems, was essentially to reorganize the main course work so that the "English Bible," History, and the English language should be the "required" leading features with Mathematics, Science, and other classes being fitted in on an optional basis as time permitted. The emphasis was to be removed from the study of the classics. The board also recommended that Prescott should take a series of chapel meetings during the remainder of the fall term explaining the rationale behind the change in the light of the counsels from Mrs. White and inviting the students' cooperation. Not wanting to be too rigid and make the change too quickly, the trustees suggested that students who wanted to continue on the old course for the rest of the year could do so.

The plan, as the board adopted it and as Prescott explained it to Olsen, was only a general outline and was subject to modification. It seems clear, however, what Prescott was after: he wanted to put into practical effect the recommendations of Harbor Springs.

\[1\] Ibid. The invitees were G. C. Tenney, J. H. Durland, and I. H. Van Horn. Unfortunately, Battle Creek College board minutes for the years 1891-95 are not extant. Neither are faculty minutes extant for the period 1893-96.

\[2\] The term "English Bible" refers to the new biblical studies classes Prescott had developed which he wanted all students to take. The classes were called "English Bible" to differentiate them from biblical Hebrew and Greek.
The faculty who opposed the plan clearly understood where Prescott was heading. 1

At a joint meeting of the board and the faculty at which the board's decision was presented, tension was high. Professor Hartwell created quite a scene by his solemn but short speech consisting of three statements which he said he feared were true—"The College is dead," "Liberal Education is dead," "Religious Liberty is dead." The board members themselves, however, and particularly A. R. Henry and J. H. Kellogg, spoke very persuasively in favor of the plans so, according to Prescott, "it was perfectly evident . . . that the Board had not been forced into these views." 2 Some of the faculty were chagrined that they had been outmaneuvered, others felt embarrassed that the board had had to take the initiative instead of themselves, but the opposition for the moment at least had been squelched.

Although nothing was to be forced on the students and those who wished to continue their studies as before would be able to do so, the effect on the student body was nonetheless traumatic. Part of the reaction came because the change was clearly perceived as being not just a change at Battle Creek. It was evident that this was a major shift in the whole focus of education in the church. 3 Wilmotte Poole, a student at the time, explained the change from the students' perspective when he wrote his parents:

1W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, November 8, 1893, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 3, GCAR.

2Ibid.

3Prescott commented to Mrs. White that "the plans adopted here will have a marked influence upon the work in our other schools." W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 3, 1893, EGWRC-AU.
Many of the Classical scholars are all broken up about the decision the faculty have come to in regard to the languages. Many have spent years of diligent study in this line supposing that they would be called to teach in our other schools. But now this study is set at nought. In the meeting [a social meeting in chapel held in the evening of December 15] several told of their struggle but declared their resignation to the will of God.¹

Prescott was succeeding in slowly bringing about change, but it alarmed a good many and he was misunderstood by both sides.

Even the usually supportive O. A. Olsen, struggling to understand the moves on the basis of correspondence, was somewhat disturbed. He raised the problem of the classics and higher mathematics with Mrs. White. Neither of them was able to understand the full intent of Prescott’s moves and both, in fact, expressed the same fears as his critics on the faculty. They wondered if Prescott really was cheapening the educational work. “We cannot think for a moment to lower the grade of our work in the least,” wrote Olsen. “We have none too high a standard as it is.”² According to Olsen, in their discussion Mrs. White had stressed the fact that students should be able to climb as high as they pleased in educational lines as long as they were balanced by religious principle. The “regular lines of study” were not to be undercut, she argued, but at the same time the Bible was to be “set high” and made “paramount.”³

How to resolve this tension was the very difficulty Prescott

¹Wilmotte Poole to his parents, December 16, 1893, AUHR.
²O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, January 11, 1894, RG 11: 3x 50 Lb 10, GCAR.
³O. A. Olsen reports Mrs. White’s remarks on the basis of notes he took on their conversation. O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, December 20, 1893, RG 11: 8x 50 Lb 10, GCAR.
was trying to overcome. But, on the limited information that Prescott had conveyed about his moves, Mrs. White was fearful that he had overreacted to her perhaps too strongly worded letters. She was anxious lest "error should be committed through misunderstanding of my words addressed to you." Olsen also hinted to Prescott that perhaps he had missed the point Mrs. White was making. He felt that she was as much concerned about the manual-labor program as anything. Later, however, when Prescott had explained his moves more clearly, her fears were allayed and she affirmed, "I cannot discern that your ideas [on education] are incorrect." With the negative reaction from the faculty and the misunderstanding of what Prescott was trying to do, it seems that the moves to reconstruct the curriculum did not progress very far—certainly not as far as Prescott would have liked. But upon Olsen's return from Australia, the two consulted together and Olsen apparently better understood what Prescott was attempting. Then, with Olsen's support, Prescott tried very hard to get E. J. Waggoner to come to the college. Prescott felt that Waggoner would be a valuable ally who could take charge of the Bible department and begin to implement the new approach. Unfortunately these plans too fell

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1 E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, January 18, 1894, EGWRC-AU. Mrs. White regretted that she could not make herself more clear and hoped Prescott would not misinterpret her.

2 O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, December 20, 1893, RC 17: 3x 50 Lb 10, GCAR. E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, April 10, 1894, EGWRC-AU.
through. Prescott was sorely disappointed. Prejudice was still too strong.

The eventual outcome of the upheaval of the winter of 1893-94 was that a much watered-down version of Prescott's plan was adopted. Rather than Bible subjects displacing other subjects, they were simply added to the already existing program. Prescott was less than half-satisfied, but at least many more students were taking Bible classes, even though in order to do so, the scientific course had been lengthened by an extra preparatory year, the academic load of all students was increased from three studies to four, and the college program was extended to a six-day rather than a five-day week.²

Prescott later reported that the changes were tried on a temporary basis during the winter and spring of 1894 and were then refined and made more permanent at the commencement of the 1894-95 year. According to Prescott's 1895 report to his school principals, both faculty and students at Battle Creek were reasonably happy with the modifications and felt they had been beneficial to the school. Prescott himself, however, was far from satisfied and he ventured to express his unhappiness. He still did not think that "sufficient importance" was attached "... to the special lines of work

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¹ O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, May 23, 1894; O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, July 1, 1894, RG 11: 3x 50 Lb 10, GCAr. Olsen acknowledged to White that calling Waggoner may have sounded like a desperate move, but he was ready now to concede along with Prescott that something desperate must be done.

² "Report," GC Bulletin, February 19, 1895, p. 224. Cf. Battle Creek College Catalogues 1893-94, and 1894-95, AUHR. The lengthening of the courses called forth a further protest from Mrs. White emphasizing the need of short courses. See W. W. Prescott to [College Principals], August 1, 1895, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

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connected with our denominational work." He was still of the opinion that quite a number of lines of work could be displaced to allow more important ones to occupy the time. "My own idea," he explained, "would be to construct a course in which the needs of those preparing for our own work should receive first consideration." Those studies that would be most helpful in this direction "... should occupy the first place." Prescott stated also that he continued to hold the opinion that the languages should be taught "either from the Scripture or from Christian writers." Then he added strongly, "I can only continue to enter my protest against teaching the languages from pagan authors." 

The 1894 Teachers' Institute

Although bruised and discouraged, Prescott harbored no grudges. Nor was he of a mind to blame or criticize his faculty. He knew that they were "... simply following the plans according to which they were educated and which are standard among the educators of the day..." Neither did he give up, however, trying to bring about reforms. With Olsen's support, Prescott planned another teachers' institute for the end of July 1894. This time only the principals and Bible teachers were invited. Once more the major emphasis was on the place of the Bible in the schools. "I have felt

1W. W. Prescott to "Dear Brother," [Circular to School Principals], April 10, 1895, RG 11: 8x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. Vande Vere comments that "one searches Prescott's last catalogue in vain to discover any marked changes in the classical curriculum," implying that Prescott did not have the heart to reform. Wisdom Seekers, p. 52. The evidence, in fact, shows that the lack of change in the catalogue was not for the want of his trying.
"for some time," wrote Olsen, "that our Bible work in our schools was not carried forward and made as efficient as it ought to be." He said he was "deeply stirred and exceeding anxious over the situation."1

Although the plans for the institute almost fell through because Prescott was too overworked and exhausted, it was eventually held under Prescott's direction and it did help further the cause of curriculum reform he was advocating. A more thorough and extensive four-year series of Bible classes was developed and the real purpose of Adventist schools was again discussed at length. A committee was established to plan further general instruction on this latter theme. Kellogg gave a series of talks on health, and Prescott urged the matter of introducing subjects in which health principles could be taught.2

Probably the most significant accomplishment of the institute was the development of the four-year sequence of Bible subjects for college-level students. Other measures included a proposal for an educational journal and a proposal for a school of graduate studies. Neither of these recommendations became immediately successful. The institute also grappled with the matter of professional upgrading.

1W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, RG 11: 8x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902); O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, May 23, 1894, RG 11: 8x 50 Lb 10, GCAR.

2O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, July 1, 1894, RG 11: 8x 50 Lb 10; W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, July 15, 1894, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 3, GCAR. F. W. Howe, "The Teachers Institute," RH, August 14, 1894, p. 525. Prescott stated in 1895 that for the past two years he had been interested in introducing more "health" subjects into the curriculum. This would seem to indicate that this was part of his planned restructuring of the coursework in the winter of 1893/94 although he does not mention it at the time. See "Report," GC Bulletin, February 19, 1895, p. 227.
of denominational teachers and recommended a reading course on
teachers for them. Many other issues such as discipline, student
government, and teaching methods for several disciplines were dis­
cussed, but no formal resolutions were made.

The institute was not all easy sailing for Prescott for there
was still a very strong undercurrent of resistance. The somewhat
skeptical General Conference correspondence secretary, L. T. Nicola,
reported to Olsen, "Of course, you know what line Prof. Prescott has
been pulling on for some time. He has not changed much of late."¹
He added that Prescott labored very hard to impress upon the teachers
that the changes he had tried to introduce at Battle Creek during the
previous winter "were not calculated to lower the standing of the
school." According to Nicola, however, Prescott seemed to be reach­
ing after "something in the dim distance" and "some of the teachers
evidently liked some things suggested, but others did not take much
stock in it."²

Prescott did at times have trouble articulating clearly his

¹L. T. Nicola to O. A. Olsen, August 23, 1894, RG 9: O. A.
Olsen Fld 3, GCAR. Nicola had a negative opinion of Prescott. He
criticized his operation of the Bible school and his too close
association with A. T. Jones. Commenting on Jones' talks at the
Institute, Nicola remarked, "Of course, Prof. Prescott acted pre­
cisely as on all former occasions when Elder Jones was prescribing--
he took the dose just as directed."

²Some of the principals had brought up to Prescott Mrs.
White's statements about not lowering the standard of the school,
see p.188 above. They were obviously not aware of Mrs. White's
statement to him, "I cannot discern that your ideas are incorrect." See E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, April 10, 1894, EGWRC-AU. If
the principals thought Mrs. White really thought Prescott was lower­
ing the standard they should have been absolutely astounded at the
program she supported at Cooranbong and at Emmanuel Missionary Col­
lege under Sutherland.
educational ideas and was aware of the problem.¹ He was therefore not as successful as he might have been in persuading his faculty to move with him. On the other hand, he himself did not know how to fully implement the ideals in the actual classroom and wanted his teachers to cooperate with him in developing new materials and approaches. Of necessity, therefore, much of what Prescott said had to do with creating a vision and had to concern itself with generalities.

Post-1894 Developments

Preparing effective ministers and teachers for church work was the main point of Prescott's reforms and this he continued to agitate after the institute. Progress came slowly. Three months after the institute, he succeeded in having the General Conference appoint a committee to perfect plans "for the improvement of the ministry." Then, in January 1895, he urged the General Conference committee to put the matter of educational reform high on the agenda at the upcoming General Conference session. Prescott stressed to the committee that it was not his aim "to take anything of value from our educational work, but rather to add much of importance to it." Taking a defensive approach he argued that he was wanting to broaden the base of education, not narrow it or cheapen it. Neither was he encouraging "surface work." He simply wanted Adventist educational institutions to give "first place to those lines of study which are

¹W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. Prescott explained that after further study during his visit in Australia, he felt more prepared to set his ideas "... before others in a better light than I have previously done." See p. 224 below.
most directly helpful in developing workers of the highest type, for carrying forward the gospel work committed to this people. . . . .

The committee adopted the resolutions that Prescott and his sub-committee recommended and the General Conference session devoted considerable time to the educational question.¹

Although Prescott was no longer officially connected with Battle Creek College he retained the position of educational secretary and therefore was given opportunity to present his concerns at the session. Muster ing all the eloquence at his command he managed to speak with some clarity and force. His program, he explained, would make the Bible the foundation of every other study. He would have every one in the school study it and recite it every day.

Elaborating on the objections often presented by students he commented that students commonly complained that they felt they did not receive adequate mental cultivation in Bible study. They therefore felt they needed to take mathematics and other studies and then, if there was any time left, "crowd in the Bible." "This order ought to be reversed," thundered the persistent Prescott.² Ministers above all needed to make the study of Scripture foremost in their college studies.

The resolutions recommended by Prescott and his sub-committee were approved by the session, but in the colleges the inertia of the classical approach still proved difficult to overcome. At Battle Creek


Creek College, where Prescott understandably maintained a particular interest, the issue continued to fester. Tension between the faculty and the board continued to build during the next two years until there was open conflict at the 1897 stockholders' meeting.¹

During the large part of this two-year period, however, Prescott was away in Australia and South Africa enjoying a stay in the "regions beyond." There he was able to counsel at length with Mrs. White and was also able to participate in the founding of the Avondale School for Christian Workers. While his basic ideas on education did not go through any further significant development, the period was nonetheless one of clarification for him. At Cooranbong, he was able to better visualize how to put some principles into practice.

For Prescott, the release from the college presidency provided a welcome respite from criticism and opposition. However, if Olsen had hoped that with Prescott out of the country the tensions would subside, he guessed wrongly. The board members continued to apply pressure and became increasingly dissatisfied with the deteriorating situation. While Prescott may have wearied of the struggle, he had not lost confidence in it. He maintained a keen interest in the developing crisis and was kept well informed by his friends. On his return, with stiffened resolve, Prescott as an educational reformer made yet another attempt to "improve" Adventist education.

¹See p. 234 below.
CHAPTER X

REFORMERS IN REFUGE, DOWN UNDER

When Prescott visited Australia in 1895, Mrs. White had been there for three and a half years struggling to build up the church and establish a school. Decidedly unhappy about being asked to go to the land down under, she had at first resisted the moves in 1891 to send her. Eventually she dutifully complied with the request of the General Conference. Although she experienced culture shock, considerable ill health, and serious pecuniary want, and had to endure rough pioneering conditions in the new country, she nevertheless came to regard Australia as a place of refuge. In particular, Mrs. White came to enjoy the absence of the suspicion, hostility, and prejudice that she felt both she and her son had experienced at the headquarters of the church in Battle Creek. For this reason she resisted invitations and outright pleas from the church leadership that she return to the United States during the late 1890s.

Writing to Edson White after one such request she recounted

1E. G. White, "Diary," August 5, 1891, MS 44, 1891. Mrs. White seemed to be fearful that the brethren were wanting her out of the way. "I dare not mention the state of things in the office presented to me for I am then sure they would firmly conclude I must go." "Diary," August 20, 1891, MS 29, 1891, EGWRC-AU. She later affirmed her conviction that it was a mistake for her to have gone to Australia. She felt it was not God's design although he overruled the situation for good. See W. P. Bradley, "When God Overrules," RH, April 1, 1982, pp. 7-9.

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how the jealousy and surmizing by the "hard hearted" men in Battle Creek had almost killed W. C. White. She ventured the judgment that she could accomplish ten-fold more by her pen in Australia than by her actual presence in America. Replying to Olsen's urgings to return she stated, "The memory of the terrible siege I had there for two years with so few to help me remains as a warning. I prefer to remain in this far off country."  

Although Prescott's visit of ten months was much shorter than Mrs. White's sojourn of nine years, he also seemed to have felt much the same way about his stay in the far off country as she did about hers. He had reason to. His last year at Battle Creek College had been difficult. His faux pas in the Phillips' affair had caused him embarrassment and pain, and his struggles to implement reforms in the school had resulted in severe criticism and ill feeling from the faculty and others. The following year, 1894-95, had consisted of a continual round of committee meetings at headquarters (where attitudes remained negative and parochial), punctuated by visits to college campuses around the United States where his educational ideas continued to be regarded as too theoretical. He knew that some of the teachers in America "would feel just as well satisfied . . . if I should make quite a prolonged stay 'in the region beyond.'"  

Although he still had a busy program in Australia, he found himself among

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1 E. G. White to J. E. White, May 6, 1896; E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, May 25, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

2 W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, November 20, 1895, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. Lest the picture should appear to be overdrawn it needs to be said that there were bright spots. Prescott's preaching was still appreciated by many, and his judgment and counsel were valued by his close colleagues.
friends who responded eagerly to his preaching and who desired to wholeheartedly implement educational reforms. The absence of attitudes of suspicion and jealousy was as a breath of fresh air. Because Prescott found Australia a welcome refuge, he returned to America with reluctance.¹

It was just four months after Prescott had vacated the president's office at Battle Creek College in June 1894, that W. C. White had written from Sydney, Australia, formally inviting him to visit that country early the following year. Receiving the invitation while visiting Walla Walla near the end of a seven-week absence from his family, Prescott expressed some diffidence about the plan. He stated that if it were for the best interest of the work he would of course be happy to go, but if it were a matter of choice he would prefer to arrange work which would not take him so far from his wife and family. White pressed the invitation, however, and in March 1895 the Foreign Mission Board approved his request, suggesting that Prescott should also visit South Africa and Europe for three months each on his way home from Australia.² Prescott left Battle Creek on May 26. En route he attended campmeeting in California in early June and then sailed for Australia via Hawaii and New Zealand on June 15.

¹W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, May 12, 1896. "I have greatly enjoyed this [his work in Australia] as compared with my previous work at Battle Creek." W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, September 1, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

²W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, December 6, 1894; May 20, 1895, EGWRC-AU. O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, April 18, 1895, RG 11: Bx 51 Lb 14a, GCAr.
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he solved the problem of the long absence from his family by taking his wife, three-year old son, and a niece with him.1

The Church leaders had several objectives in urging Prescott to make the tour. The Review explained that while Prescott's journey was being made "principally in the interests of the educational work," he would also give consideration to other church concerns as well. Olsen added in a letter to W. C. White that he felt the trip would not only help the work of the church but would be "a most excellent thing for the enlargement of his [Prescott's] experience in connection with the work." It would allow him to become acquainted with other phases of the work that he had "not seen nor understood as yet." He also felt that Prescott would benefit from being able to discuss educational matters with Mrs. White and hoped that he would be able to get "more definite ideas" of the educational work.2

Furthermore, W. C. White who was struggling in Australia with meager resources and feeling quite inadequate in educational matters, looked forward to the benefit of Prescott's counsel. He hoped Prescott would do for them what he had done for Union College and Walla Walla--persuade the church membership of the necessity and value of education and press the advantages of uniting for a first-class training school. He also expected that Prescott's anticipated three-month stay would be a great help in laying the foundation "for

1 "Items of Interest," RH, May 21, 1895, p. 346.

2 Ibid. O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, April 18, 1895, RG 11: 3x 51 Lb 14a, GCAr. O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, May 25, 1895, EGWRC-AU.
the operation of the new permanent school." His counsel on campus layout and the curriculum would be especially valued.¹

Extending the Itinerary

Prescott enjoyed his first trip beyond the shores of America immensely (en route he read up on the countries he was to visit) and regaled the readers of the Review with interesting details of the journey. The month-long passage to Sydney was lengthened to two months by his ten-day visit with the Adventist missionaries in Hawaii and a three-week itinerary around the North Island of New Zealand where he conducted meetings and counseled with the church leadership. He arrived in Australia on August 15. Immediately upon his arrival he conducted a number of meetings in Sydney and then visited Coorabong, the site of the new school where W. C. White was anxious to show him the "industrial department" with its twenty-five students.²

As Prescott surveyed the grounds and reflected on the undeveloped state of the school he rapidly concluded that three months would be too short a stay.

Even before Prescott arrived in Sydney, W. C. White had become aware of the limited amount of work that could be done in three months and had written Olsen requesting an extension for his stay. He had written also to the South Africans telling them to

¹W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, June 7, 1895, W. C. White Lb 7, EGWRC-DC. W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, July 5, 1895, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1, GCAr.

²W. W. Prescott, "In the Regions Beyond," RH, September 17, 1895, p. 599; September 24, 1895, p. 617; October 1, 1895, p. 634; October 8, 1895, p. 648; November 5, 1895, p. 713. W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, July 5, 1895, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1, GCAr.
postpone their plans for Prescott until early in the new year. In September, White requested another extension: "I feel an intense anxiety that he shall stay here." This time the Foreign Mission Board approved an action allowing Prescott to remain in Australia as long as he felt necessary. Thus in October at a consultation with the Australian leaders in Melbourne, Prescott decided to remain until the middle of the following year. Only his wife, it seems, was unhappy with the decision. According to W. C. White, she was anxious not to delay the tour because "she felt a great burden for the educational work in the United States." The Australian workers, however, wanted Prescott to stay long enough to organize their school work and to write manuscripts for tracts and pamphlets for their evangelistic work.

The South African brethren were extremely frustrated at the six-month delay because they had already advertised Prescott's coming in a special edition of their mission paper. There was nothing they could do except to protest angrily to the General Conference. The lengthened stay in Australia enabled Prescott to give the work of the church an effective "shot in the arm," as W. C. White put it. Prescott conducted meetings in all the Eastern Australian Colonies and not only encouraged and inspired the workers but set new patterns for them to follow in their evangelism. He also provided counsel on

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major administrative decisions and did much to shape the curriculum of the new Avondale school.

Evangelist to the Antipodes

While the Australian church was primarily interested in Prescott's educational expertise, the church soon learned that his talents in other areas were just as valuable. The professor arrived in Sydney in the midst of an evangelistic series and was quickly asked to speak at some of the meetings. His schedule also included preaching appointments among the five churches established in or near the city. His dynamic delivery and his Christ-centered sermons made an immediate impact.

It will be remembered that following the 1888 Minneapolis meeting Prescott's theology and his preaching had gone through a radical change. As a result of his personal Bible study after that meeting, his participation in the Winter Bible schools, and his involvement in the troubled, tension-filled doctrinal discussions of the early 1890s, Prescott had endeavored to make the Gospel of Christ the integrating theme of all of the church doctrines. These doctrines, he argued, should be presented as "simply the gospel of Christ rightly understood." They should "grow out of a belief in Jesus Christ as a living personal Saviour."^2

For Prescott this change had not come as a necessary external


imposition simply to make Adventism sound right. Rather it came as an internal restructuring arising out of his own spiritual renewal and his own study of Scripture. The new approach set the pattern for the rest of his ministry. The proclamation of the Gospel of Christ as not only the center, but the very essence of the Adventist message became his life-long burden. It was the recurring theme of his writing, his preaching, and his teaching. Students of later years remembered his Christ-centered emphasis in the classroom and recalled that his favorite text was "that ye might know him whom to know is life eternal." Preachers of a later generation such as H. M. S. Richards also remarked that Prescott's legacy to them was this very same thrust: "Christ must be the center of every sermon." In the 1890s, Prescott was one who led the way in bringing about this change of focus in the Adventist evangelistic endeavors. In 1893, two years before his visit to Australia, he had conducted a series of public meetings in Battle Creek in which he attempted to present the doctrines of the church in this new Christocentric framework. The meetings had had remarkable appeal. During his

1 At the 1919 Bible Conference, Prescott reflected on the turnabout in his experience and explained: "When I started out to preach, I was without any special training in a Bible Institute or anything of that kind. As I had observed and heard, I thought the thing to do was to prove the doctrines . . . simply to demonstrate the truthfulness of the doctrines. I found that I did not seem to accomplish anything. . . . Then I got a new vision, almost like a personal revelation, like a person speaking to me. I cast the whole thing aside and started in the simplest way presenting Christ. . . . Ever since that time my study has been to present Christ first." "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," 7-13-1919, AUHR.


3 See p. 151 above.
The Armadale Campmeeting

In early October, Prescott traveled by train to Melbourne. Later in the month the attention of the young Australian church was centered on the suburb of Armadale where a three-week-long combined campmeeting, church business session, and evangelistic series had been planned. Mrs. White, her son, and their party had rented cottages near the camp ground. A. G. Daniells and other church leaders were present, and approximately two hundred church members were camped on the grounds. The story of the epoch-making meeting is interesting because it helps one to understand Prescott as a preacher and illustrates the kind of impact his preaching made.

At the meetings Prescott carried the main burden of the preaching, although he was assisted by J. O. Corliss and Mrs. White. After the Bible study each day, campers made a point of visiting the people of the community around the camp ground to invite them to attend the evening meeting. The sixty-five tents pitched in the middle of the suburb and adjacent to a major city railway line were a definite novelty, and the invitations were received favorably. Thus the evening and weekend meetings were well attended by the public.

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1 A. G. Daniells to O. A. Olsen, November 27, 1895, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 2, SCAr.

2 W. C. White to S. McCullogh, November 5, 1895, W. C. White Lb 8, EGWRC-DC. White noted that in many ways the campmeeting had "been different from any other campmeeting we have held in Australia or America."
According to W. C. White, Prescott's preaching was especially powerful, and the tent, seating 400, became increasingly crowded as the meetings progressed. On some occasions more than 200 could not find seats and had to stand around the back of the tent. Prescott's full resonant voice was a decided asset in an era when public address systems did not exist, and no doubt his American accent also provided some attraction for the colonial ear. According to those present at the meeting, however, it was the Christ-centered content of Prescott's preaching that drew the crowds in ever-increasing numbers.1

W. C. White reported to Olsen that at first there had been considerable prejudice among the populace against the Adventists, and it had been charged that Adventists denied the pre-existence of Christ and therefore his divinity.2 Prescott in his preaching responded to the criticism and preached sound Christian doctrine. According to Daniells, his sermons were "well thought out and delivered in good language; yet simple and full of power." "His theme from first to last and always is Christ," W. C. White attested.3 The result was dramatic. "Preaching Jesus as Professor Prescott has

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1W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, October 24, 1895, RG 11: Fld 1895-W, GCAr.

2Ibid. U. Smith's, Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation, had been widely circulated. The charges were not without some substance. See E. R. Gane, "The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer" (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1963), pp. 55, 104-108.

done" commented Daniells, "seems to have completely disarmed the people of prejudice. . . . The minds of the people have been completely revolutionized with regards to us as a people."¹

On November 4, Prescott had taken up the controversial subject of the Seventh-day Sabbath. Entitling his sermon "Christ and the Sabbath" Prescott did as he had done with the other doctrines and presented the Sabbath as an outgrowth of the gospel. This was a radically different presentation from the sharp traditional Sabbath-Sunday polemic that was the usual fare among Adventist evangelists. The presentation was convincing and both the campers and the public were almost ecstatic. The truth had been presented "with a freshness and a brightness which we never saw in it before. . . . Never in my life did I see an audience listen as his [Prescott's] audience listened last night," stated the seasoned but awed W. C. White the next day. Weeks later he stated that Prescott had preached "with a clearness and power that exceeds anything I have ever heard in my life." Mrs. White also was excited by the quality of the preaching and by the quality of the people whom Prescott drew to the meetings by his exaltation of Jesus.² "Unbelievers turn pale and say, that man is inspired," she reported to her son Edson. "The inspiration of the spirit of God has been upon him," she remarked further and

¹A. G. Daniells to O. A. Olsen, November 22, 1895, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 2, GCAR.

²W. C. White to S. McCullogh, November 5, 1895, W. C. White Lb 8, EGWRC-DC. W. C. White to A. J. Breed, November 22, 1895, RG 11: Fld 1895-W, GCAR. E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, November 6, 1895; she stated that the people were of the very best class of society. MS 19, 1895, EGWRC-AU.
added that his preaching was like that which she had heard from some in 1844—the highest of compliments.\(^1\)

Prescott's Christ-centered evangelism set a new precedent for the Whites, for the Australian field, and, seemingly, for the church. Mrs. White wrote to others after the series encouraging them to follow Prescott's pattern. She felt that in entering new fields, prejudice would be readily overcome and much greater success would attend the effort if Christ was made the center of attention. W. C. White was of the same opinion. He could not remember having heard one discourse during the whole meeting on "the old doctrinal lines," and did not think that there had been any sermon that could even be labelled what "we are accustomed to call a doctrinal sermon." Furthermore, he had come to the conviction that "the old lines of work must be abandoned. The whole thing must receive a new setting." Then added, "I long to see every one of our ministers ... preaching Christ and him crucified."\(^2\) Prescott's preaching was causing a revolution indeed.

The plan of taking a stenographic report of the sermon for distribution was also apparently a new development. People in the audience had seen the secretaries at work and asked for copies of

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\(^1\) E. G. White to J. E. White, November 18, 1895; E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, November 6, 1895, EGWRC-AU.

\(^2\) E. G. White to A. T. Jones, November 21, 1895, EGWRC-AU. W. C. White to A. J. Breed, November 22, 1895, RG 11: Fld 1895-W, SCAr. W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, October 24, 1895, W. C. White Lb 8. In Tasmania he tried to persuade the local evangelist, R. E. Hare, not to conduct a prolonged campaign, working up an interest by presenting the prophecies. "We tried to show that another line of work was called for in these times," W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, December 13, 1896, W. C. White Lb 9, EGWRC-DC.
the sermons. These were printed and delivered to the homes of the people by the ministers. The plan worked very well and helped to cultivate the interest of the people. It was employed with success in follow-up campaigns in Australia. Prescott’s preaching and writing thus provided the Australian field with the tracts and booklets for their evangelistic work that they felt they so desperately needed.  

A Friendship Formed

The campmeeting and the preaching had been a revolutionary experience for Daniells. He had been impressed with the fact that during the meetings Prescott had taken “much time for the study of the Word and for prayer.” He acknowledged that he himself had in the past been remiss in this respect. “I prize very highly some of the lessons I have learned during this campmeeting,” he confided to Olsen. The experience had done something for Prescott’s soul as well. Giving the doctrines a careful study from the new standpoint so that they could be preached as “the gospel” was something he had desired to do for some time. He found the experience very valuable.  

Apparently Prescott and Daniells developed a great respect

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1 A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, March 3, 1896, RG 9: O. A. Olsen Fld 2. W. C. White had earlier urged this as one of the reasons for Prescott staying in Australia. "Since hearing Eld. Prescott speak on the living issues of the message here, we have felt that there was no way he could serve the cause to better advantage than by writing out these things for tracts and for booklets." White felt that Australia was years behind in this regard. W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, September 29, 1895, RG 11: Fld 1895-W, SCAr.


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for each other and found a lot in common. During the meetings, they spent considerable time together, and Prescott was able to help Daniells toward a renewal in his Christian experience which Prescott believed would be of much benefit to the work in the time to come. The friendship the men established at this time had an important impact on the history of the church. When Daniells was later elected to the leadership of the General Conference he had the brethren appoint Prescott as his associate and relied heavily upon his judgement and counsel.\(^1\)

If Daniells had had his way Prescott would have stayed in Australia and foregone his trip to South Africa, so impressed was Daniells with Prescott's preaching and general abilities. He urged Prescott to stay and continue the campmeeting work and even requested permission of Olsen for him to do so. Prescott would have liked to have complied, for he had expressed earlier that he wanted to do a work that would put a "permanent mould" on the public teaching in Australia,\(^2\) but while Prescott appreciated Daniells' confidence, he felt he must honor his commitment to the South African brethren.

\(^1\)W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, June 5, September 5, 1896, EGWRC-AU. W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, December 19, 1896, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. Prescott remarked that he had been greatly encouraged by the change in Elder Daniells' experience. "I had a plain talk with him. . . . He took it in an excellent spirit and has turned a new leaf since that time. He hardly seems to me like the same man now." A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, July 1, 1901, EGWRC-DC.

Shadows of Battle Creek

While Prescott's writing of the new series of tracts and pamphlets was regarded as a great help by the Australian workers, there were some back in Battle Creek who were not so impressed. An incident concerning one of these tracts bears relating because it illustrates the continuing tensions in the church over the issues raised in 1888 and the kind of attitudes in Battle Creek that made Mrs. White want to stay in Australia. It also helps to illustrate something of Prescott's contribution as a religious educator to the theological development of the church.

The pamphlet entitled "The Law in Christ" had been developed out of a sermon that Prescott himself thought was one of his best. He had apparently preached the sermon with great effect at camp-meetings in the Colonies he had visited. The tract which had been approved by the Australian book committee and published by the Adventist printing house had been used with success throughout the field. The pamphlet, in fact, was a Christocentric presentation of the law and justification by faith. Its thesis, in part, was based on Prescott's new understanding of the Law in Galatians.¹

Shortl y after his early meetings in Australia, Prescott had sent the manuscript to the General Conference book committee with the intention, apparently, that the Battle Creek publishing house should publish the pamphlet as well. The manuscript met with a negative reaction. While Prescott stated that he was not overly

surprised by the reply, he reported that the Australian workers were greatly surprised. The book committee in Battle Creek informed him that they could not publish the tract because it contained "some fundamental errors." In response, Prescott explained the background to the tract and with considered understatement, said that the situation was a "trifle peculiar," asking the committee to elaborate on the points they considered to be in error.

Mrs. White was not as gentle over the matter as Prescott. She was indignant and stated bluntly that she had no confidence in the book committee. She stressed that they should adhere to the principle of the Bible only as the rule of doctrine and rebuked them for restricting the gospel from being circulated everywhere. Some time later, still bristling at the memory of the episode, she related that when she had learned that Professor Prescott's manuscript had been condemned she knew that the committee did not know what it was doing. She declared that they had been following in the paths of

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1 Book Committee Minutes, November 13, 1895, RG 25; W. W. Prescott to F. C. Starr, January 16, 1896, RG 25: Letters and Manuscripts 1891-93-98, 3x 3, SCAr. If there was a reply to this enquiry it does not appear to be extant. The problem in the manuscript that the committee had difficulty with seems to be Prescott's interpretation of the law in Galatians. The typescript manuscript in the book committee's files has this section (p. 7) marked with a question mark and three other scripture references in handwriting that does not appear to be Prescott's. The markings would seem to be those of a committee member.

2 E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, May 22, 1896, EGWRC-AU. This particular copy of the letter was apparently sent to J. E. White, June 11, 1896. Members of the committee in 1896 were C. C. Tenney, U. Smith, M. E. Kellogg, G. W. Caviness, J. Kolvord, F. M. Wilcox, and F. D. Starr.

3 E. G. White, "The Book Committee," October 26, 1898, MS 148, 1898, EGWRC-AU. The date on the manuscript appears to be in error. Internal evidence indicates that the document may have been written
Rome. It was not for these men "to condemn or control the productions of those whom God is using as his light-bearers to the world."

She advised them to read an article in the Bible Echo on the infallibility of the Pope and suggested that they had been acting like the papacy. Their ideas were not to control the ideas of another, she said.

The events were still very much in Mrs. White's mind when Prescott left Australia in May, just a few months after the episode.

Mrs. White was fearful, apparently, that S. N. Haskell in South Africa, whom Prescott was going to visit, might act in a way similar to the book committee. She wrote him a long letter urging him to receive Prescott with confidence because "he has the truth in his heart, as well as on the lips." Reminding him that the church needed every ray of light from heaven she admonished Haskell not to be like the unbelieving people of Nazareth for whom Jesus could not do many mighty works.

Waxing even stronger in Prescott's defense and alluding to earlier, perhaps much nearer the episode with Prescott: (1) Mrs. White mentions in the document that she has just been reading an article in the Bible Echo, dated July 27, 1896; (2) The General Conference Book Committee to whom the document is addressed was discontinued at the General Conference session in March 1897, and was not in existence in October 1898. See GC Bulletin, March 27, 1897, p. 230. It would seem that the document should be dated somewhere between late July 1896 and March 1897. Perhaps the date should be October 26, 1896.


1 E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, May 30, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

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the recent episode, she commented that "men in authority" in the church were "not always to be obeyed" and that "God sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to established doctrines... Not even a priest or ruler has a right to say, You shall not give publicity to your opinions, because I do not believe them," she asserted. "Even Seventh-day Adventists are in danger of closing their eyes to truth as it is in Jesus because it contradicts something which they have taken for granted as truth." She concluded that it was "an offense to God" that men "should keep alive the spirit which ran riot at Minneapolis."

Reorganizing a School of the Prophets

While Prescott had enjoyed his public work at the campmeetings and while these labors absorbed the greater part of his time during the first five months of his stay, he had not forgotten that he had been sent to Australia primarily to help with the educational work. In planning the trip for Prescott, W. C. White was anxious that the visit be made before the "principal buildings" were located and before concrete plans were formulated so that they could benefit from Prescott's counsel. At the conclusion of the campmeetings in the southern Colonies in mid-January, therefore, Prescott made his way back to Cooranbong to the fledgling school. Here he spent the remainder of his visit.¹

¹The letter minus its first four pages and its last page is published as "Danger of Rejecting Truth," in Testimonies to Ministers (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1923), pp. 53-77.

For some time Prescott had had mixed feelings about the proposed Cooranbong school. In August 1894, when the decision was made on the purchase of the Brettville estate at Cooranbong, he had not been in favor of the move.¹ His mental picture of the property was not enhanced by what he saw a few days after his arrival in Australia when he walked with W. C. White the three miles from Morisset railway station to the property. The drab brown of the landscape after several months of drought and the dry unproductive-looking soil did not seem at all promising. A later week-long visit in the midst of forest fires in September did not make things appear any better.²

On his return to the site in January, however, the scene had changed considerably. The drought had broken just after his previous visit. The vegetation had a fresh green appearance and the orchard and gardens were producing their fruit. Prescott enjoyed the privilege of picking the first apple from the orchard. After six months of almost constant wearing public labor, he found Cooranbong's quiet isolation therapeutic and its suitability as a school site slowly impressed itself upon him. In mid-March, after a two-month

¹His reason was the poor agricultural report. O. A. Olsen to F. M. Wilcox, August 12, 1894, RG 11: Bx 50 Lb 10, GCAr. Olsen had urged his colleagues to allow the men in Australia to make their own decision.

²"I could not help but feel some misgivings about the wisdom of selecting this place for the location of the school." W. W. Prescott, "In the Regions Beyond," RH, May 19, 1896, p. 315. The only building on the property at the time was the sawmill. W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, September 29, 1895, RG 11: Fld 1895-W, GCAr.
stay, he reported to Review readers that "the longer I stay, the better I like the place."  

It would appear that Prescott was more than mildly surprised when he first observed the "school" program conducted on the property. W. C. White had called it an "Industrial Department," but Prescott and the school's principal, L. J. Rousseau, obviously felt that the term was a euphemism. Apparently, there was little else besides the manual-labor program. At the first opportunity Prescott sought to help straighten things out.

At the Union Conference session held during the Armadale campmeeting, Prescott was appointed to the session's education committee. The committee made three recommendations. First, the "Industrial Department" should be discontinued—a recommendation seemingly designed to get the program correctly focused. Second, the name of the school was changed from "Avondale College" to "Avondale School for Christian Workers," and third, "The highest priority" of the new institution was established as the preparation of gospel workers for the denomination. The wording of the last resolution clearly indicates Prescott's influence in this clarification of the school's objectives.


3AUCSM, November 11, 1895 (photostatic copy), AUHR. The resolution is almost exactly the same as the one Prescott presented to the 1894 Convention and the 1895 General Conference session. See p. 191 above.
That Prescott's input was of major importance in this process is indicated by a comment of W. C. White. He wrote to Olsen that "Prescott is shaping our school work and plans. Just now we are in a chaotic state. As soon as plans are reformed and our work takes shape I will write you about them." To enable Prescott to make this contribution, White had actually arranged to have him elected as chairman of the Avondale school board, a position he held until he departed the country six months later. He was also elected as a member of the Union Conference executive committee during this time.1

When Prescott explained the reason for staying longer in Australia to Olsen, he said he needed to stay "in order to be able to direct in getting things organized." Anticipating that the new school term would start in March 1896, he explained, "I hope by being there for three months or more to give it a mould which will be helpful for its future work." The Review in reporting the adjustments that had been made in Prescott's schedule said he had settled at Avondale for a time "to assist in organizing the school work, and setting it upon a proper basis."2

The first steps taken in establishing the school at Cooranbong had not gone well. There really was no school. Prescott personally felt that W. C. White had made a mistake in not erecting a

1W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, November 15, 1895, EGWRC-DC. AUCSM, October 31, 1895. The session minutes mention simply that he was elected a member of the board. W. C. White mentions that he was to be the chairman so that "he can give us the full strength of his influence." W. C. White to O. A. Olsen, October 24, 1895, RG 11: F1d 1895-W, GCAr.

school building when the interest of the constituency was at its peak and that this failure had dissipated enthusiasm for the school.\(^1\) As it turned out, the lack of a building, the legal wrangling over the title deed, and the return to America of Principal Rousseau in mid-1896 due to ill health delayed the commencement of the school for another twelve months, a delay that was much to Prescott's disappointment.\(^2\)

Near the end of 1895, as the likelihood of the school program commencing in March 1896 rapidly receded, it was decided to convene a Ministers and Teachers Bible Institute so that Prescott's influence would not be lost. The institute began March 26 and continued through April 28, 1896. Approximately forty regularly attended the daily classes and folk from the country community increased the evening audience. The morning program consisted of three classes—two Bible studies and a lecture on the principles of Christian education, while the afternoon was given over to manual labor.\(^3\)

Prescott had prepared well for his educational meetings. He

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\(^{1}\)W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, November 20, 1895, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. "I have expressed to them my fear that they would use up their donations in getting ready to start and have nothing left to erect buildings," W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, October 13, 1895, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

\(^{2}\)Hook, "The Avondale School," pp. 139-143. W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. Prescott had been anxious to "work out some problems" at Cooranbong which he could not solve "in the schools in America for lack of proper cooperation among the teachers." W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, November 20, 1895, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

had counselled at length with Mrs. White over the kind of program that should be operated at Avondale, and as they discussed plans for the curriculum and the general management of the school in the context of the very practical problems posed by the Avondale campus, they both saw things in a clearer light. Mrs. White attended many of Prescott's meetings and was impressed with the material he presented. Anna Ingels summarized Prescott's presentations for the Review:

He believes that everything should be studied from the standpoints of the word of God first, the works of God second, and the providences of God third, and that human authority should be subordinate to these. Nature is the great art gallery, and his providences the theatre, and these all are the illustration of what God tells us in the word. This is right in harmony with what Sister White has always taught; and now it is being given serious attention, and being resolved into a system. Prescott intended to have the talks stenographically reproduced so that schools in other places might benefit. According to Daniells this was done, and he reported that the content of the talks was very helpful to the school planners. ... He [Prescott] studied our situation and needs, and gave most excellent instruction on the courses of study, and the best methods of teaching. Daniells explained that the instruction had been written down, was approved, and would "be adopted by those who will conduct the school." Thus although Prescott was not able to "set a mould" on the new school by

1E. G. White, "Diary," February 1896, MS 62, 1896; "Diary," April 1896, MS 64, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
3W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.
4G. Daniells, "Our School," Sleaner, January 1897, p. 1. Unfortunately, the manuscript containing these written guidelines is not extant.
his actual presence when it opened, it seems that he was able to establish a pattern for the institution. Prescott did his best to do for Avondale what he had done for Union and Walla Walla. To that extent, Avondale stands in his debt.

Prescott's contribution as a religious educator at the Cooranbong institute was not limited to education; it also extended to theology. During these meetings in particular, and through his preaching in Australia generally, Prescott contributed significantly to a major shift in Adventist theology.

During his sea voyage to the antipodes in the quiet of his cabin, Prescott had enjoyed long periods of uninterrupted Bible study—especially the Gospel of John. Out of this study he had begun to develop a full year's series of Sabbath School lessons for the church. He had completed the manuscript for at least the first quarter and perhaps more by the time of the campmeeting in Tasmania in December. W. C. White had read the manuscript and was impressed. "The questions are good," he commented, and "the notes open up a wide field of thought." He strongly urged the Sabbath School association to accept the manuscripts, stating that they were "more appropriate than former lessons."

According to H. Camden Lacey, who was at Cooranbong at the time, Prescott saw great significance in the series of "I Am"

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statements in John's Gospel and made this one of the themes which he presented at the campmeetings and at the institute.\(^1\) The professor's study of John, it seems, had led him to have more decided views about the pre-existence of Christ, His eternal deity, and the doctrine of the Trinity. (Shortly after he landed in Sydney, he had purchased a second-hand copy of Augustus Neander's *Lectures on the History of Christian Dogmas* and studied the Christological controversies. The chapters on the Trinity were his particular interest.)\(^2\) His emphasis was highly lauded by Mrs. White and apparently awakened her mind on the subject. At the time she was working on what was intended to be the final draft of *Desire of Ages*. Mrs. White had asked Prescott to read the entire manuscript critically, and Marion Davis, her book editor, apparently sought Prescott's help--particularly on the first chapters.\(^3\) According to Lacey, Prescott's emphasis brought about a clearer and more decided presentation of Christ's deity in *Desire of Ages*. The book included some striking statements on Christ and the Trinity which to a number in the church became one of the noted

\(^1\)H. Camden Lacey to L. E. Froom, August 30, 1945, AUHR. Lacey was a brother-in-law to W. C. White. He had studied at Battle Creek College under Prescott and had returned to Australia to teach at the Avondale School at the end of 1895.

\(^2\)Prescott's copy of Neander was purchased sometime in August 1895. He apparently began reading at chapter six in volume one, which deals with the Trinity. This and succeeding chapters are heavily underlined in blue pencil--Prescott's typical way of marking a book. The book was later part of a collection Prescott donated to the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary Library.

\(^3\)The manuscript was actually reworked and was not published for another two years. W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, AG 11: 8x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. H. Camden Lacey to L. E. Froom, August 30, 1945, AUHR. Cf. E. G. White, "Diary," February 1896, MS 62, 1896; "Diary," April 1896, MS 64, 1896, ESWRC-AU.

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features of the work. Thus a beginning was made in moving the church
toward a more positive attitude to and belief in the doctrine of the
Trinity.¹

The Cooranbong Institute and other assignments kept Prescott
busy right up to the day he left Australia. After conducting some
last meetings in Sydney, he sailed down to Melbourne where for a few
days he again conducted public meetings and met with some of the new
converts from the Armadale campmeeting.² The grateful Australian

¹M. L. Andreason stated in 1948, "I remember how astonished
we were when Desire of Ages was first published, for it contained
things that we considered unbelievable; among others the doctrine of
the Trinity. . . . " Other comments in Desire of Ages such as the
statement on Christ's life being "original, unborrowed, underived,"
p. 530, were also considered to be "revolutionary." "The Spirit of
Prophecy," an unpublished chapel address given at Loma Linda, Cali­
ifornia, November 30, 1948, cited by Russell Holt, "The Doctrine of
the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection
and Acceptance" (unpublished paper, Andrews University, 1969), AUHR.
Lacey stated: "Professor Prescott's interest in the 'Eternity of the
Son' and the great 'I AMs' coupled with the constant help he gave Sr.
Davis in her preparation of the 'Desire of Ages' may serve to explain
the inclusions of the above-named teachings in that wonderful book."
H. Camden Lacey to L. E. Froom, August 30, 1945, AUHR. George
Hutches, a student of Prescott's at Union College in the 1920s,
reports that in a class on one occasion, Prescott stated that he had
participated in a significant way in the writing of Desire of Ages.
Interview with George S. Hutches, February 11, 1981. See also H.
Camden Lacey to A. W. Spaulding, June 5, 1947, AUHR. Lacey reports
that the matter of the personality of the Holy Spirit was agitated in
Australia during the same period with himself taking a leading part.
He asserts that this also found its way into Desire of Ages and con­
tributed to the positive stance on the Trinity. Confirming evidence
of this is provided by Daniells. He reported to Prescott that the
workers at East Pahran in Melbourne (Armadale) in early 1896 had
of Christ. This was before the institute. A. G. Daniells to W. W.
Prescott, March 3, 1896, RG 9: 0. A. Olsen Fld 2, GCA. E. R. Gane,
"Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views," pp. 55, 104-108, shows that a
marked change took place in the church at this time, but his explana­
tion of how the change came is too simplified. He is apparently
unaware of the evidence discussed above.

²W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, May 12, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
church bade him farewell from Melbourne on May 3 when he sailed on the S. S. Ninevan for Capetown, South Africa. His stay in the Australasian field had lasted almost ten months.

In South Africa

Prescott's passage to South Africa was scheduled to take three and a half weeks. Fog on the last day of the voyage, however, just two hours out from Table Bay, delayed their arrival in Capetown by another twenty-four hours. The workers at the Cape who had already coped with a six-month delay were more than happy to see them and different groups from different parts of the port, unbeknown to each other, hired water taxis to go out to the ship to greet the Prescotts on board.¹

Prescott's activities in South Africa followed a pattern similar to what they did in Australia. After spending two weeks at the main center of the work in Capetown getting acquainted with the workers and meeting with them in their administrative counsels, Prescott left on a five-week tour of the Colonies in the company of S. N. Haskell and A. T. Robinson to gain more of an acquaintance with conditions in the field. He was not impressed by the general condition of the church, perceiving that there was a lack of enthusiasm for evangelism and a general lethargy and discouragement among the workers. He felt the church in South Africa had had too much money, that they had focused on building institutions instead of

¹Ibid. Between Melbourne and Perth the ship ran into a gale which caused passengers to be thrown about in the cabins. Young five-year-old Lewis sustained a deep cut on the head when a chair fell on top of him. S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, June 4, 1896, EGWRC-DC.
evangelism, and that they were very legalistic. These problems he tried to address on his return to the Cape.

Back in Capetown in mid-August, Prescott launched into a twelve-week Bible school for the ministers and teachers. Following a daily program similar to the one he had followed at Cooranbong, Prescott lectured twice a week in the mornings on education. He felt that in these talks he had been able "to shape up these principles in a clearer light" than he had even at Cooranbong. His other lectures were Bible studies, and in these he was assisted by Haskell.

The Claremont School at Capetown, where the institute was held, was far from adopting the sort of educational ideas Prescott advised. Sensitive to past difficulties, Prescott reported to W. C. White: "The principles which I am presenting are squarely contrary to the plans followed in this colony and if they are adopted it means a radical change in the school work." He was still reforming. At first he found the school principal, Professor Elffers, interested in following correct principles but difficulties soon arose. Elffers was transferred to other work at the end of the year. Reporting the rearrangement to Haskell, Prescott explained: "I have been asked to send them a principal to conduct the school as far as possible on the lines which I set forth in my talks before you left. . . .  He

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2 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 30, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

3 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 5, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
[Elffers] accepted the suggestion in good spirit.”

Anxious to set a pattern of aggressive public work for the South African workers, Prescott planned an evangelistic field school for the last part of the institute. "I cannot rest satisfied with the idea of laboring for our own people only. . . .” In the latter part of September, therefore, he hired the largest hall in Capetown, the Good Hope Hall. He had the ministers involved in visitation and in drawing up advertising posters and calico signs.

Attendance fluctuated around 200 during weekday meetings, but built up to 600 or 700 during weekend programs. An outbreak of rinderpest in the interior of the continent focused attention on vegetarianism which Prescott used to good advantage in his meetings. He took up the issue in the "Letters to the Editor" column of the city newspaper and gained considerable publicity. A cooking school that had been planned to capitalize on the interest, however, was not a success, according to L. Francois Swanepoel. Prescott's other meetings included the Eastern question but focused on the same Christ-centered themes he had emphasized in Australia.

While the meetings did not meet with the same public success as did the Armadale meetings, Prescott felt they had been somewhat helpful. "Many of our own people seemed to be helped by the meetings

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1 W. W. Prescott to S. N. Haskell, November 4, 1896; W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 9, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
2 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 5, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
in town, in some ways more than by the work at Claremont," he
reported to Haskell. He was hopeful that the new experience many had
received from their Bible study would help breathe new life into the
worker force.1

Although the professor wanted to stay longer in South Africa
(even suggesting a six-to-eight-month overland trip through the
interior), Olsen urged him to return to Battle Creek by the end of
the year at the latest so they could have at least six weeks in coun­
sel together before the next General Conference session. Accordingly,
Prescott left Capetown in early November en route for New York via
Great Britain. After spending a few days with his relatives in New
Jersey, he arrived in Battle Creek in time to preach the Christmas
sermon at the Tabernacle.2

Back into the Battle Creek Maelstrom

Among the more urgent reasons why Olsen kept pressing
Prescott to come back to Battle Creek before the next session of the
General Conference in February 1897 was the worrisome state of
affairs in the educational work.3 During Prescott's absence tension
between the progressives and the conservatives had not diminished.

1W. W. Prescott to S. N. Haskell, November 4, 1896; see
also O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, November 10, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

2O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, June 9, August 31, 1896;
W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 10, 1896, RG 11: 3x 52 Lb 16,
GCar.

3O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, August 31, 1896, RG 11: 8x
52 Lb 16; O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, February 10, 1896; W. W.
Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, May 4, 1896, RG 11: 8x 46,
Misc Let (1893-1902), GCar.
It was particularly high in Battle Creek and Prescott had been following the struggles with interest.

When Olsen informed him in January 1896 of the success of Sutherland's experimental work at Walla Walla, Prescott replied in a straightforward way that he was highly gratified at Sutherland's success. He added, with a touch of pique, that he himself "had laid the same plans before the faculty at Battle Creek and they had not been prepared to give them a fair trial." Mentioning that Sutherland had talked with him personally about the plans, he stated that they were "nothing different" from what he had presented to the other teachers repeatedly using "the same outline" and "almost the same language which Prof. Sutherland employed in describing them to me." He was genuinely glad, however, that Sutherland was succeeding at Walla Walla and urged that he be left there to continue his experimental work. Prescott was encouraged that Olsen was of a mind to resist the moves to transfer Sutherland prematurely to Battle Creek.

Prescott became alarmed, though, over developments at Battle Creek College. While in Australia he had heard informally from friends in the city that certain of the faculty were moving to persuade the stockholders to elect four of their number to the board. In Prescott's view this would have given the faculty a clear majority of the resident members of the board "and put the running of things wholly into their hands." He informed Olsen of the move. In reply, Olsen reported that at the stockholder's meeting the faculty had overreached themselves and thus not even one had been elected. The
move indicated, however, just how anti-reform some of the faculty still were.¹

As the new school year of 1896-97 approached, Prescott learned that the board, dissatisfied with Caviness' leadership of Battle Creek College, were again contemplating changes. He was worried that the pressure would mount to bring in Sutherland. This move, he felt, would be disastrous if a general change of the college faculty were not arranged at the same time. Remembering his own difficulties, he had written to Olsen, "I am utterly opposed to sacrificing any promising young man by putting him into that combination. When Battle Creek College is helped it will be by a general change. . . ."²

Prescott considered Sutherland's work an important breakthrough for the whole church. He commented to Olsen, "I am sure that Prof. Sutherland and his faculty are making a good contribution to the educational problems and I hope they will be left undisturbed to work out their plans." Then he added, "I trust that you will take pains to guard their interests [Walla Walla College's] and the interests of the school work by keeping them [Walla Walla faculty]

¹W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, February 10, 1896, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902); O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, March 27, 1896, RG 11: Bx 51 Lb 15, GCAr.

²W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, May 4, 1896, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. Olsen was actually of the same opinion. He related that he had told the board that conditions at Battle Creek College would not permit Sutherland a free hand. Olsen stated that if he came Sutherland "would be hampered and bound up, discouraged and criticized to such an extent that he could not do justice to himself nor the school." The comment illustrates the sort of conditions Prescott himself had been confronted with earlier. O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, March 27, 1896, RG 11: Bx 51 Lb 15, GCAr.
together where they are for another year at least." Olsen's problem, however, was that J. H. Kellogg was most unhappy about Caviness continuing for even one more year. He was demanding an immediate change.²

From the information he had received while in Australia, Prescott too was distressed over Caviness' leadership. Apparently, Caviness was resisting the implementation of a manual-labor program, and this had led Kellogg to contemplate starting up an industrial school of his own. It seemed to Prescott that the work at the college was falling to pieces and that his own "hard work of years" was being rapidly thrown away. "I regret this more than I can well express. . . . The present administration has been a sore disappointment to me and I look for no general improvement until another man is found to take charge of the institution."³

Prescott at first seemed prepared to wait for the change. He shared with Olsen the opinion that things should remain as they were for the next year. As he mulled over the situation after his departure from Australia, however, he became more and more convinced that

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¹W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, May 4, 1896, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. The plans Sutherland was working out are discussed in E. A. Sutherland to O. A. Olsen, July 5, 1895; May 22, June 17, 1896, RG 3: O. A. Olsen Fld 2, GCAr. See also W. W. Prescott to E. A. Sutherland, April 29, 1896, DF 520, EGWRC-DC. Prescott urged Sutherland not to bother seeking a charter to grant degrees because that would restrict their curriculum development.

²O. A. Olsen to W. W. Prescott, May 11, 1896, RG 11: Bx 51 Lb 15, GCAr.

³W. W. Prescott to O. A. Olsen, May 4, 1896, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. Prescott complained to Olsen, "It would take pages for me to do justice to my feelings and I might as well let it alone."
a general housecleaning at Battle Creek College was going to be necessary. Writing to Mrs. White about his growing conviction that to put the school work on a right basis was going to require firm action he stated,

I am now prepared to take strong ground on this matter and to insist that our school work shall be conducted strictly in harmony with the light which God has given and I am fully ready to dispense with the services of any or all teachers who are not willing to follow this light. We have been held back all too long by those who preferred the plans of the world. . . . I want to see a change without further waste of time.1

When Prescott arrived back in Battle Creek at the end of December 1896, he was ready for action.

He wasted no time and moved quickly to acquaint himself with the state of affairs. Within two weeks of his return, he had met with both the faculty and the board.2 He had a strategy ready, apparently formulated in counsel with the appropriate officials. By request, at the board meeting, he presented a list of four suggestions for the reformation of Battle Creek College. His suggestions were: (1) reorganize the educational work at the college and at the same time devise a plan whereby there would be cooperation with the Sanitarium—duplication of programs would be thus avoided; (2) establish a training school for Christian workers, ministers, and missionary teachers; (3) appoint a committee for maintaining worthy students; and (4) select teachers who would be willing and able to cooperate with the board. Upon receiving these suggestions the board

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1Ibid. O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, April 23, 1896, RG 11: 3x 51 Lb 15, GCAr. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, July 3, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

2BCC Fac Min, January 4, 1897; BCC Bd Min, January 5, 1897.
immediately appointed a sub-committee consisting of Prescott, Kellogg, and Tenney to develop plans whereby the suggestions could be implemented. These were to be presented a week later.¹

In the interim Prescott met again with the faculty and planned with them for a teachers' institute to be held at the college. Meetings were to be held three times a week between mid-January and mid-February, with the schedule being arranged particularly to enable Prescott to attend the meetings. Prescott declined an invitation to present a paper, preferring rather to simply participate in the discussion. As it turned out, Prescott attended only the first half of the institute and then left for the General Conference session at Union College, Nebraska.²

At the January 13 board meeting, Prescott read the plans of his sub-committee. The leading proposal was for a two-year "Evangelistic course" in which the English Bible, Missions, Hygiene, Practical Evangelism, Methods, and Science would be taught.³ The other main proposals included a plan for a one-year teachers' course and a recommendation that appropriate faculty be appointed. Clearly, Prescott was now pushing hard to bring the college to the place where it would serve the denomination more effectively.

Obviously enthusiastic over Prescott's scheme, the board

¹3CC 3d Min, January 5, 1897. Caviness was not an elected member of the board. He attended only by invitation but was not invited to this meeting.

²BCC Fac Min, January 10, 1897. Prescott did not attend any meeting of the Institute after January 21. Cf. BCC Fac Min, January 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28, February 2, 1897.

³3CC 3d Min, January 13, 1897.
determined that Prescott should be their president and they authorized their sub-committee on teachers to "make arrangements whereby the services of W. W. Prescott, as president of the college for the ensuing year, could be secured." The committee was also instructed to select "cooperative" teachers and assistants. By the following week, however, there were second thoughts. Was it not premature to elect a new president and faculty on the eve of the stockholders' meeting? The board decided to delay formal action, although Prescott was requested to proceed with the planning for reorganization "in harmony with the principles" already adopted by the board.¹

Prescott, it seems, must have felt decidedly uncomfortable at the plan to have him take the presidency of the college again. Both Mrs. White and W. C. White had indicated to him just after he left Australia that he would be the probably successor to O. A. Olsen as president of the General Conference. Apart from this consideration he was also, it seems, not happy about the proposal of being tied up in Battle Creek again, preferring rather to continue some kind of "public" work.² In addition, it would seem that along with Olsen he had Sutherland in mind for the job. Of course, it would not have been politic for him to have divulged some of these matters to

¹Ibid. Vandere Vere sees J. H. Kellogg as the prime mover in these reforms with Prescott being a closet classicist reluctantly forced to change his stance. The evidence suggests that while Kellogg was largely involved, Prescott seems to have been the prime mover. Wisdom Seekers, pp. 74, 76, 80.

²W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, July 16, 1896; November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU. He asked Mrs. White if he might arrange to be relieved of some of his official responsibilities. Ibid. Cf. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, May 12, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
the board at the time. It may well have been with some relief to Prescott, therefore, that the decision was made to leave the matter until after the General Conference session and the annual stockholders' meeting.

The General Conference session that year was stormy and unsettling for Prescott. At first, he had not wanted to attend because he feared there would be a crisis, but Mrs. White urged him to be there and sent him a great many manuscripts pointing out the need for organizational reform. At the session he was misunderstood in his attempts to have the meeting implement some of the reforms for which Mrs. White had been calling. Educational matters had also occupied much of the attention of the session and the wide spectrum of opinion on the subject made for some delicate moments.

In his own report, Prescott said his work was very freely discussed in the nominating committee. The suggestion by some that he act as president of Battle Creek College was concluded to be inadvisable "on account of the feeling against me by several of the teachers." It was also suggested that he serve as president of Union College. According to Prescott, however, the brethren felt that "he did not have a strong enough hold upon the people to arouse their interest." Eventually, at the very end of the conference, in a

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1 Prescott reported that S. N. Haskell also anticipated a crisis at the General Conference and preferred to be elsewhere. He stayed in Australia with Mrs. White. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 5, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

2 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU. GC Bulletin, 1897, p. 143.
rather remarkable meeting, a resolution came from the floor of the conference to send him to Great Britain.¹

The reform measures that had been initiated at Battle Creek College before the session, however, did not fall to the ground. They were presented and discussed at the session and the discussions spilled over into the stockholders' meeting held in Battle Creek on March 10, immediately after the session at Nebraska was concluded. As a consequence a new reform-minded Board of Trustees was elected. Informing R. S. Donnell of the development, G. A. Irwin, the new General Conference president, explained diplomatically that as a result of the election of the new board and in order that they "might be free to carry out their convictions, Professor Caviness kindly resigned the presidency of the college."² The thirty-two year old

¹W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 15, 1897, ESWGRC-AU. Prescott was not reappointed to any denominational board or committee in the nominating committees' first report. The reason given for this by the committee, according to a report in the Nebraska State Journal, was that "it was the intention for him to ... take charge of Union College and make it the central school of the denomination instead of the one at Battle Creek, as formerly." According to the report there was a movement on foot to "transpose" their central college at Battle Creek into a Medical Missionary College. The move was unsuccessful. "Change in the Conference," March 1, 1897, p. 3, c. 1. GC Recording Secretary, March 4, 1897, RG 1: GCAr.

²GC Bulletin 1897, p. 287. G. A. Irwin to R. S. Donnell, March 26, 1897, RG 11: Lb 18. GCAr. Irwin's explanation that Caviness "kindly resigned" was euphemistic. Although Caviness went graciously he apparently did not feel happy about going. Others also felt that he had been treated unfairly. E. R. Palmer expressed to Daniells six years later his "heartfelt Sympathy" for Caviness in the experience through which he had passed. "I have not been reconciled to his banishment, and am not now. I believe it was a cruel thing which ought not to form a part of our efforts to improve a condition in any department of our work." E. R. Palmer to A. G. Daniells, January 16, 1903, RG 11: Fd 1903-P, GCAr. Caviness was sent to Mexico to help with the Spanish translation of Scripture. "Change in the Conference," Nebraska Journal, March 1, 1897, p. 8, c.1. He gave many faithful years of leadership in the church in Mexico.
E. A. Sutherland was called from Walla Walla to take the presidency.

Doing his best to explain to Donnell the irregularity of the change being made in the middle of the school year (an irregularity that brought chaos to the Battle Creek campus and disrupted Walla Walla's program), Irwin commented:

... from your knowledge of the situation as it was brought out at College View and at Battle Creek, that [sic] unless the victory gained especially here at Battle Creek, was followed up and crystalized into something permanent, that [sic] the battle would have to be fought over again later on, and that [sic] it would be much harder then to bring things to a focus, than now.

Even as it was, Sutherland found it extremely hard going, but progress was made. A manual-labor program was instituted and other curricular reforms were carried out.  

Other struggles followed. According to Irwin, who kept Prescott informed on the issues, the annual stockholders' meeting in April 1893 was even more of a problem. Classicist and troublemaker, Professor Aul, in a reaction against the reforms, attempted to accumulate proxy votes from stockholders in order to have faculty members placed on the board. He was partially successful, but a reorganization of the Educational Society shortly afterwards eliminated the cumulative voting rule and Aul's successes were reversed.

In England, Prescott was happy that he had escaped from the maelstrom that was Battle Creek even though his work in Great Britain presented problems of its own. From across the Atlantic, however, he

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1 G. A. Irwin to R. S. Donnell, March 26, 1897, RG 11: Bx 53 Lb 18, GCAR.

2 GC Bulletin, February 20, 1899, p. 34.

3 G. A. Irwin to W. W. Prescott, April 3, 1898, RG 11: Bx 53 Lb 19, GCAR.

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maintained a keen interest in education and in Battle Creek College particularly. His influence in education was still considerable. Especially was it felt at the following two General Conference sessions and he was to have a role to play in the re-establishment of Battle Creek College at Berrien Springs in 1901-02.¹

Although the task of continuing the educational reforms at Battle Creek was entrusted to others, Prescott nonetheless had helped provide a momentum and had helped focus the direction of the work. This was a significant achievement. While formal education remained one of Prescott's continuing interests, it became a secondary concern for the next two decades as his energies became absorbed in more informal educational work. Now with his experience in public evangelism in Australia and his natural talent for administration, new challenges awaited him in Great Britain. The three years he spent there provided further preparation for the large contribution he was to make in the wider arena of the church in the crucial first decade of the twentieth century.

¹Ibid. See for example, Central Educational Association Minutes, January 29, 1902, RG 85: GCAr.
PART THREE

1897-1909
Mrs. White was surprised at Prescott's appointment to Great Britain in 1897. She had quite expected that he would be elected as the new General Conference president in place of O. A. Olsen. Prescott too was surprised at the outcome of the deliberations at the session. But he accepted the manner of his appointment as the working of providence and with courage took up his new work as superintendent of the British field.

The manner of Prescott’s appointment to Great Britain was indeed unusual. But then the General Conference session of 1897 itself was quite unusual too. It was a session at which, in the opinion of the General Conference Bulletin editor, less business had been transacted "than at any previous meeting for years." Nonetheless, the stormy meeting accomplished some major organizational changes. The foremost difficulty was to reach an agreement on the slate of new officers, an issue that was resolved after several

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1 Her letter of September 12, 1897, expressing this surprise is not extant. Prescott’s cites it in his reply however. W.W. Prescott to E.G. White, November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU.

2 Ibid.; W.W. Prescott to E.G. White, August 4, 1897, EGWRC-AU.

3 GC Bulletin, March 8, 1897, p. 320. Union Conferences for Europe and Australia were approved.
neated exchanges just two days before the end of the two-week-long assembly. Prescott's role in the conference was central and the episode therefore is worth noting in some detail.

When Olsen informed Mrs. White in April 1896 that he would retire from the General Conference presidency at the session in 1897, he had suggested that W. C. White replace him. Mrs. White reacted strongly against the suggestion. At the same time, W. C. White intimated pointedly to Prescott that Prescott himself could well expect to be asked to take the responsibility— a prospect that filled the professor with anxiety for he considered himself entirely inad­equate. Besides, Prescott did not want to be caught up again with "the work of Boards and Committees," preferring rather to be involved in evangelistic work somewhere away from America. 'I feel that I cannot go back to the old regime and bind myself up with the same management any longer . . . ,' he added three weeks later. Mrs. White, in reply, encouraged him. She assured him that he would know his duty when the time came and reminded him that times of necessity are God's opportunity.  

What filled the seemingly able Prescott with such dread about the proposition of becoming General Conference president were the stinging testimonies that Mrs. White had recently been writing about the administration of the church. Shortly after his arrival in

1 O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, April 24, 1896, RG 11: Bx 51 Lb 15, GCAr. E. G. White to J. E. White, April 24, 1896, EGWRC-AU. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, June 2, 1896, W. C. White Lb 9, EGWRC-DC.

2 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, July 16, August 9, 1896; E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, September 2, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
Australia, Mrs. White had unburdened herself to him about the matter.\(^1\) Then during the months after Prescott left Australia, she reiterated her refusal to attend the upcoming General Conference and continued to send him manuscripts urging upon him personally the responsibility of trying to effect a change. Prescott was awed. "What can I do?" he asked helplessly.\(^2\) "It is a terrible thing to me when the Lord tells us that his voice is no longer heard through the committees and boards appointed by the General Conference" he wrote to W. C. White. "We have certainly entered upon the shaking time." He assured Mrs. White that he had benefitted from her instruction on proper management. "I shall put whatever influence I may have on the side of these plans when the time comes for action."\(^3\) Prescott apparently felt that the time for action came quite early in the proceedings of the 1897 conference. Reflecting later on events, he reported to Mrs. White that at the opening of the conference he 'could not feel in harmony with the way that things were going and protested earnestly against it.'\(^4\) The protest was either

\(^1\)She stated that she spoke to him of things that she had not even mentioned to W. C. White because he couldn't do anything to change them. E. G. White to O. A. Olsen, September 1, 1895; E. G. White to J. H. Kellogg, August 29, 1895, EGWRC-AU.

\(^2\)W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 10, 1896; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, July 30, 1896, EGWRC-AU. Prescott, however, did have some constructive suggestions about reorganization. He wrote of them to Mrs. White who seemed to look on them with favor and elaborated on them in reply. Cf. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, July 30, 1896; W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 9, 1896; E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, September 1, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

\(^3\)W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 5, 1896; W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, October 6, 1896, EGWRC-AU.

\(^4\)W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU. Just when Prescott made his protest and over what issue is not
ill-timed or ill-expressed. It backfired. The feeling developed at
the conference that he was seeking Elder Olsen's place and was trying
to crush him, while, according to Prescott, he was actually dreading
more and more the possibility of being selected for such a position. 1

Apparently the nominating committee especially had a hard
time during the session. Its first partial report was not presented
until 5 p.m. on March 2. The state newspaper at Lincoln remarked
that its presentation relieved "the suspense that had been in the
minds of many for several days," but voting on the report was
deferred until the next day. 2 Prescott's name and the names of other

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1. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU.
The feeling at the conference is illustrated by an exchange reported
in the city paper. "Someone questioned the almost unlimited
authority a certain office conferred upon its holder. The reply was
that it was expected that Olney [sic] converted people would occupy
the office, and that they would not misuse the power. The answer
came quickly: 'We all hope and believe and pray that converted men
will occupy this position, but it is a dangerous precedent to
establish for any such person....' " "Change in the Conference,"
Nebraska State Journal, March 1, 1897, p. 8.

2. W. C. White to E. G. White, February 25, 1897, W. C. White
Lb 11a, EGWRC-DC. Nebraska State Journal, March 3, 1897, p. 3. The
General Conference Bulletin's reports on the business sessions were
not full transcripts. Some readers felt that not everything was
being reported. GC Bulletin, March 3, 1897, p. 320.
older ministers were missing from the list, and when the report came up for consideration the next day, it was referred back to committee after a two-hour discussion. The Nebraska State Journal reported a crossfire of "testy speeches" and "tart replies" that "betokened considerable feeling." The delay also blocked "the wheels of all other business." When the report was brought back on March 4, just two days before the end of the session, Prescott was included as president of the New European Union Conference. A vigorous discussion that lasted most of the day took place.

An attempt was made to by-pass the nominating committee's report by calling for the conference to vote by ballot for its officers. The 'viva voce' vote was so close a count was called for, but the motion was lost 46 to 57. J. E. Graham of Melbourne, captain of the Pitcairn, moved that Prescott's name be substituted for G. A. Irwin's as president of the General Conference, but the motion apparently lapsed for want of a second. Subsequently, Olsen's name was substituted for Prescott's as president of the European Union.

1 GC Bulletin, March 4, 1897, pp. 255, 256. "Sent Back for Revision," Nebraska State Journal, March 4, 1897, p. 3. The explanation for overlooking Prescott's name was that it was intended that he should go to Union College as president. See p. 234 above.

2 "Sent Back for Revision," p. 8. See also "From Prayer to Scrapping," Nebraska State Journal, March 5, 1897, p. 5.

3 The newspaper remarked, "Then the war began... There was a freedom of speech and an expression of opinions quite out of harmony with the decorum usually witnessed in business sessions of this denomination." "From Prayer to Scrapping," p. 8. This report of the crossfire of opinions seems to be corroborated by the GC Bulletin, March 8, 1897, p. 320.

4 GC Recording Secretary, March 4, 1897, RG 1: GCAR. These minutes are very brief but they corroborate the newspaper's report.
and a motion from the floor by E. J. Waggoner that Prescott be sent to England was carried by the assembly. According to the Journal reporter the entire audience was so jubilant over the decision "that one man said he felt like shouting 'hallelujah' and at that the audience broke out singing 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'" Although only four of the names in the nominating committee's report had been voted, the deadlock was broken and the rest of the report was subsequently approved without objection.

Superintendent

The 1897 General Conference had been every bit as critical as Mrs. White had expected. While a start had been made on decentralizing denominational administration, it was evident that with so many vested interests, major reconstruction would have to wait for a later occasion. For Prescott, after what Mrs. White had said about boards and committees, there was comfort in the fact that he had been sent to England "without any recommendation from any committee but under what seemed to be the special guidance of the Spirit of the Lord by the direct action of the full conference." He felt as though the Holy Spirit had said in a unique way, "Separate this man unto the work to which I have called him." He went to England with that conviction. "I have . . . never felt of better faith and courage in

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1"From Prayer to Scrapping," p. 3. The doxology was started by Dr. Ottosen according to GC Recording Secretary, March 4, 1897, RG 1: GC Ar.

2Remaining nominations were voted the next day (Friday) and on Sunday, March 6, the last day of the conference. GC Bulletin, March 3, 1897, p. 319.
the Lord's work,' he reported as he settled into his English sojourn.  

His work in England was going to call on all that faith and courage and more besides. In the weeks after the General Conference there was little time for contemplation. Directly after the session he completed the work of editing Mrs. White's manuscript for *Special Testimonies on Education* and then sailed for England on April 7, 1897. In his newly defined role as "Superintendent" of the English field, Prescott spent two months visiting all of the approximately twenty churches and companies he was to superintend. He then spent a month in Europe attending annual meetings and campmeetings in Germany and Switzerland. Returning to Battle Creek in early August to tie up his affairs and collect his family, Prescott took time to attend the Michigan campmeeting before sailing again for London in September.  

After settling into a house (half of which he shared with E. J. Waggoner) at 53 Mercers Road, London, not far from the office, Prescott began his work. The outlook was rather bleak. Reporting to Mrs. White at the end of his preliminary visit, Prescott related that expatriate workers had been leaving the field steadily for the previous two years. Consequently, he was left with a very small

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1 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 4, November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU.

2 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 4, 1897, EGWRC-AU. RH, March 30, 1897, p. 208. GCC Min, March 21, 29, 1897. There was no organized conference. Prescott could not take his family to England immediately because arrangements had to be made for his parents, who were living with him in Battle Creek. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 4, 1897, EGWRC-AU. RH, August 31, 1897, p. 560. G. A. Irwin to W. W. Prescott, August 6, 1897, RG 11: Bx 53 Lb 18, GCAr.

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labor force—waggoner, who was editing the church magazine, Present
Truth, himself, and only three other ordained ministers, six
licentiates, plus a few Bible workers and canvassers in the entire
field. Membership stood at approximately 590.¹ Making matters even
worse was the budget cut handed down by the Foreign Mission Board.
The $10,000-plus budget of the previous year had been reduced to
$3,000. Prescott felt the work was "crippled on every side."
Emphasizing the meagre resources of his field, he stated that he felt
like appealing to struggling Australia for help.²

Prescott found his first winter in Britain a trying time "on
account of fog and dampness." His six-week bout with the flu did not
help. He had time to plan his strategy, though, and moved quickly to
implement it. One of the first major steps he initiated was the
move to establish a formal organization. Less than twelve months
after settling in the field, he called the first general meeting of
workers and members at Bath. Three hundred attended the meetings
from July 29 to August 27, 1898, and voted to form the British
Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Prescott was elected its first
president.³

¹W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 4, November 15, 1897,
EGWRC-AU. W. W. Prescott, "Notes from Great Britain," RH, September
13, 1898, p. 10. Nigel Barham, "The Progress of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church in Great Britain, 1898-1974" (Ph.D. dissertation,
University of Michigan, 1976, 2 vols. in 1), pp. 86-89 has a brief
description of Prescott’s administration.

²W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, November 15, 1897, EGWRC-AU.

³W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, February 21, 1898, EGWRC-AU.
W. W. Prescott, "Notes from Great Britain," p. 10.
Evangelist

As president, Prescott’s main burden was evangelism. In early 1898 he had, with Waggoner, conducted a public effort in one of London’s suburbs. Some young women had responded and Prescott was much encouraged with these firstfruits. He had also attempted to introduce evangelism at the Bath meetings. A number of people from the community had attended. Prescott, however, had somehow formed the opinion that the damp variable English weather made campmeetings in tents a very unfavorable proposition. During the summer months immediately following the Bath meeting, he therefore tried a different method. A large group went with him to the seaside resort of Deal where they rented a private school house and attempted to conduct a street mission with open-air preaching. The ruse was to attract a crowd with music and then conduct a short preaching service. A portable organ and an impromptu quartet, with Prescott accompanying and playing solos on his cornet attracted crowds of several hundred and developed some excellent interests.

Prescott felt that the approach was different from the Salvation Army—although it is not clear just how. He planned to continue that style of meeting in Swansea and in the suburbs of London later in the year. The initial success of the venture does not appear to have lasted, however, for Prescott soon returned to the usual tent-meeting approach in spite of the weather.

After the 1899 General Conference at which he made a vigorous appeal for help, further workers and funds were provided. He

1 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, February 21, September 12, 1898, EGWRC-AU.
procured a large tent and with the help of J. N. Loughborough and E. E. Andross, arranged two major tent efforts in the field thus raising up two more churches. By the 1899 General Conference, membership in his field had increased to 300. Further progress in 1900 with two additional tents allowed four simultaneous evangelistic series. The ministerial team by this time had increased to nine ordained ministers and eight licentiates.¹

Prescott was often discouraged at the slow pace of progress. The evangelistic thrust produced what Prescott considered just minimal results, although by the end of his four years of administration, church membership stood at 362 with Sabbath School membership near 1,000. The growth in membership was the result of more than just tent work, however. E. J. Waggoner’s Present Truth had reached a circulation of 16,000 per week by 1900 and the health and medical work by the Drs. Kress contributed substantially.²

Overenthusiastic Theologians

It was not all work for Prescott in England. He continued to make time for study. He had worked closely with E. J. Waggoner at


²GC Bulletin, March 7, 1899, p. 161. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, March 30, 1899; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 16, 1900, EGWRC-AU. The Drs. Kress had joined Prescott in Britain after the 1899 General Conference. Unfortunately, they had to return to America because of ill health after only eighteen months in England. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, March 30, 1899; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, August 24, 1900, EGWRC-AU. Prescott published an in-house paper reporting to this work in England entitled, The Missionary Worker. Unfortunately, there are no extant copies.
some of the Bible schools in the early 1890s and had appreciated Waggoner's Christocentric emphasis. Their work in England gave them opportunity to study together again, and Prescott enjoyed the opportunity for dialogue. Prescott, whose lifelong hobby was visiting second-hand bookstores to search for theological classics to build up his library, also enjoyed the opportunities London provided for this. However, the two men's interest in theology, facilitated by their living next door to each other, had both its advantages and its disadvantages. It was an advantage for Prescott to be able to work in harness with someone who shared his concern for righteousness by faith. It was a disadvantage that they both tended to push their emphasis to an extreme although at the time they obviously did not think so. Writing to W. C. White in early 1900, Prescott stated that he felt that his understanding of the gospel message had "greatly enlarged" and that he would like to visit Australia again to do "better work."2 Others were not so sure of his 'enlarged' views. E. E. Andross, a minister at Birmingham, complained to S. N. Haskell in America that Prescott and Waggoner were becoming extreme in their emphasis on sanctification. Andross, who apparently felt he had been slighted by Prescott and apparently had rather negative feelings toward him, reported that they were very caught up with "what, when

1 Many of Prescott's library books now in the James White Library, Andrews University, are second-hand books marked with the name of the city where he bought them and the date. He visited second-hand bookshops in London, New York, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, and Washington, D.C., among other places.

2 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 16, 1900, EGWRC-AU.
and now to eat" and saw this as an extension of the gospel. According to Andross they were placing great stress on the idea that believers were "eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ" in every meal and with every drink of water. Waggoner, in fact, pushed his emphasis to the point where he believed that by living according to this new gospel of health he expected never to be sick again.

Prescott apparently supported this same general thrust. Andross reported that they modified the emphasis after he and Loughborough had talked with them but then they got excited over a new understanding of the expression "the daily" in Dan 8:13.¹

In Australia, in late 1898, Mrs. White was anxious to have Waggoner come to Cooranbong to teach Bible at the Avondale School. Although quite prepared to go at first, Waggoner changed his mind, feeling that the work in England needed him more. In retrospect, the neglect of this opportunity to work where he could have benefited from Mrs. White's steadying counsel, may have been costly for Waggoner.

Concerning Prescott, Daniells expressed the opinion that he was glad he had gotten him out of England in 1901 when he was called

¹GC Bulletin, February 23, 1899, pp. 58, 59. E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, November 12, 1900, RG 9: S. N. Haskell Fldr, GCAR. The report from Andross seems to be characterized by an antipathy towards Prescott. It provided Haskell with ammunition that he was to use against Prescott a decade later. See p. 399 below. In the years immediately after the turn of the century Prescott was often accused of having shared the so-called pantheistic sentiments of J. H. Kellogg. A careful study of the evidence, however, reveals that while Prescott tended to over-emphasize the indwelling Christ and spoke of sanctification in exaggerated terms, there was a basic difference between his views and those expressed in J. H. Kellogg's Living Temple (Battle Creek, Mich.: Good Health Publishing Company, 1903). See discussion in chapter 13.
to be field secretary for the Foreign Mission Board. "He works intensely," reported Daniells, "and if allowed to let his mind run on a single topic or on a narrow range, he is in danger of taking an extreme position, or at least it looks extreme. He needs a greater variety and a broader range for balance." Prescott himself was glad to be out of England. His experience there had not been altogether nappy.

Troublesome Institutions

When Prescott had arrived in England the only institution owned by the church was the small London Publishing House. When he left England in 1901 there was still only the small London Publishing House in spite of his having labored hard to establish other concerns. In this aspect of the work, he experienced his most severe frustrations.

Health Work

Shortly after the Kresses arrived in England they set about establishing a sanitarium and health-food factory. Prescott acquired a property which included a large house and a five-story flour mill with steam and water power for a total investment of £2,500. A visit from J. H. Kellogg in June 1899 gave impetus to

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1 W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, October 6, 1899, W. C. White Lb 14, EGWRC-DC. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, March 30, 1899, EGWRC-AU. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, July 1, 1901, RG 11: Lb 23, GCAr.

2 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 30, 1900, EGWRC-AU. GC Bulletin, April 22, 1901, p. 395. The house accommodated eight patients euphemistically called "friends" because the Kresses were not able to legally practice in Britain.
the project. As a result, a health magazine was also started. Although the endeavor involved a substantial amount of Prescott's time and energy, it showed promise of success and drew the attention of a number of health and vegetarian societies in England. Unfortunately, about six months after the factory was established, fire completely destroyed it. Insurance on the property was inadequate and the loss was a severe financial blow. Prescott himself had generously invested a large amount of his personal funds and felt the loss keenly. About the same time the health-reforming Kresses were forced to return to America because of ill health. Thus, both the health magazine and the sanitarium were closed. 1

Watching the health work "going to pieces" disturbed Prescott, but even so he felt that there were blessings to be gained from the adversity. "I am fully satisfied that...I have been led into devoting altogether too much of my time to the business side of the work, and my mind has been too much occupied with financial burdens and perplexities." In what may sound like a case of "sour grapes," but was probably a sincere observation from hindsight, Prescott stated that he felt "the health work was going the wrong way anyway." In his opinion, the health work had tended to obscure the gospel, "the distinct truth for this time." Although Prescott promoted the idea of another sanitarium, it was not until Kellogg's return visit

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to England in 1902 that another attempt was made to establish a medical missionary program.¹

Education

If Prescott had frustrations with the health work, he had even more with the educational work. In early 1897 when he made his first visit to England and before he settled permanently with his family, he gave serious thought to the need for a training school. American workers somehow did not stay long in the field, so he thought that by starting a school in a small way at least he would be able "to develop workers right here and then they will not be so likely to leave." He put his ideas into practice in early 1898 by starting an evening school in London. The school followed an evangelistic series and met three times a week.²

The classes gave Prescott an opportunity to try out his curricular theory. "I am seeing more clearly than ever before how it is possible to conduct a school with the Bible as the principal textbook," he wrote to Mrs. White. His use of the Bible as the primary text did not rule out the use of other books, but other texts were those that simply presented "facts obtained by actual observations, not the theories of men who may be called scientists." It is evident that Prescott was not just theorizing in his lengthy speeches on the subject of the "Bible only" at the 1899 General Conference session. He had experimented with the idea. He was glad for the

² W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, August 4, 1897; February 21, 1898, EGWRC-AU.
cance to do this. With a touch of bitterness he commented to Mrs. White: 'I am sure that I should not have been able to work these things out in any of the large schools in America and so far as I can understand the situation from what I see in print, they are not working them out either.'

The evening school was only an interim measure, though, and Prescott was planning for something more permanent. His plans reflected both his own childhood experience and his visit to Avondale. He was contemplating a place in the country, sixty miles from London, where the soil could be cultivated but where the school would be near enough to a market for a shoemaking industry. Interest among the constituency was keen and an Adventist cobbler was available to help set up the place.

Repeated enquiries to Mrs. White for advice on the proposal, however, were met with silence. Funds were extremely limited and he labored on in frustration.

\textsuperscript{1}W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, February 21, 1898, EGWRC-AU. \textit{GC Bulletin}, February 20, 1899, p. 35. Prescott still found it difficult to express clearly in practical terms how the principle should work.

\textsuperscript{2}W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, February 21, 1898, EGWRC-AU.

\textsuperscript{3}Eighteen months later W. C. White explained that he thought Mrs. White had not written because, "While Australia is very small compared with the dimensions which our work in Great Britain will soon attain--it is our duty to develop the work here rapidly just now." W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, August 22, 1899, W. C. White LB 13, EGWRC-DC.

\textsuperscript{4}Something of Prescott's frustration shows in his report to the 1901 General Conference. "We went as far as we could without the possibility of getting help from any source. I will not take the time to tell you the efforts that I have made personally to get money, money from any source, money from Conferences, money from individuals by private appeal, money of my own tied up where I could"
conducted another school at a rented home in Redhill, Surrey. The school ran for three months, but this time his students went canvassing during the day and attended classes at night. Only twelve attended the institute but it kept alive the hope of a permanent school. Another school was similarly operated for several months in the winter of 1900.¹

At the annual conference in Birmingham in August, 1900, the school question was agitated again. This time the constituency voted that the conference should "take steps" to start a "missionary training school" as soon as possible. The meeting raised £250 towards the necessary £1,000 and set a tentative opening date in autumn 1901. But by the time school actually opened in North London in January 1902, Prescott was no longer in Britain.² Although he had been frustrated in not being able to complete his plans, he took satisfaction in helping in a small way to pave the way for what is today Newbold College.

Publishing

Of all the institutions Prescott faced on the organizational side of his work in England, the perplexities related to the London publishing office caused him the most grief. A printing office had


first been set up in 1884 in England in the town of Grimsby under the name of "The International Tract Society Limited." It was later moved to London. The office was neither large nor well-equipped and had a bare minimum of machinery. Prescott felt it was more a distribution depot for the American publishing houses than a publishing house in its own right. When Prescott took up his work in England in 1897 he had been appointed as chairman of the board.¹

Apparently the difficulty presented by the London publishing house was that it could not be independently managed. It was directed from Battle Creek. According to Prescott, it had no operating capital of its own, it lacked management talent, its sales agents—American canvassers—had left the field, and the exceedingly complex arrangement for payment for its work through the Foreign Mission Board was pushing it near bankruptcy. Prescott became more and more frustrated at the increasingly tangled affairs of the plant. He called it "an expensive bubble" and saw no future in it as it was then organized.² Relationships among the leaders of the publishing work during this period became decidedly tense. The Echo Publishing House in Australia owed £7,683 to the London house and made little attempt to reduce the debt. Instead it embarked on a new building program. Prescott was annoyed that the Echo Company would go into debt on its own expansion program using the money of the London house

¹Neufeld, ed., Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, s.v. "Stanbrough Press Ltd." W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, October 26, 1899; March 16, 1900, EGWRC-AU.

²W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, October 26, December 28, 1899.

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for capital. He protested the building of one house at the expense of another.\(^1\)

Hoping to improve the situation, I. H. Evans, the chairman of the Foreign Mission Board, visited England in March 1900, but accomplished little besides tying Prescott up in a lot of unwanted business work. Conditions continued to deteriorate. Prescott complained, "When I have had my mind on these perplexities for a week, I find that I am not so well prepared for the quiet study of the word . . . and yet all this comes from dealing with brethren who are engaged in the same work."\(^2\)

In December 1899, Prescott threatened to resign his position on the so-called "Board of Directors" because he did not like to "remain in a false position any longer." After Evans' visit in March it appears that he did make another time-consuming attempt to straighten things out in the office and to get the Echo Company to pay its bill. But in August 1900, convinced that "it is impossible to straighten out matters between this office and Echo Publishing Company," Prescott announced that he would not continue as president of the institution any longer. "In this way," he stated, "I hope to be left free to attend to the legitimate work of the Conference . . .

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\(^1\) W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 16, 1900, EGWR-CAU.

\(^2\) Evans' visit seems to have been stimulated by a letter W. C. White wrote to G. A. Irwin in which he stated, "The life of the London Book Business depends upon the General Conference providing for it . . . ." Cited in W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, February 11, 1900, W. C. White Lb 15, EGWR-DC. The meeting voted that the English management should "assume management without regards to America," and that Prescott give his personal attention to the office work of the institution. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 16, 1900, EGWR-CAU.
and hope that I shall see more direct results in reaching the people with the truth." The organizational difficulties of the publishing house were eventually rectified in mid-1902 when it came under the direct supervision of the British Conference.¹

What made the publishing house difficulties especially perplexing for Prescott was what he perceived as sharp business dealings by his colleagues in the denominational publishing enterprises. For example, in Australia, W. C. White as chairman of the publishing house board was aggressively promoting the interests of his company. A brusque and quite cold, officious letter that he wrote to Prescott about some business matters in the midst of the latter's publishing house troubles caught Prescott off balance. The letter led to a rather frank exchange of correspondence between the two men that well illustrates Prescott's discouragement arising from his struggles to push the work ahead with extremely limited resources and little help from the administration in America.

Prescott was highly disturbed by what he felt was W. C. White's sharp, mercenary approach. After reading White's letter "several times to make sure I understood it correctly," Prescott waited several weeks before writing a biting thirteen-page reply. "As this seems to be the beginning of a new order of things it may be proper to be a little more frank about the real situation," he wrote.²

¹ W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, December 28, 1899; August 24, 1900, EGWRC-AU. A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, June 8, 1902, RG 11: Bx 56 Lb 28, GCAR.

² W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, October 26, 1899, EGWRC-AU. Prescott typed the letter himself "so that it should not be put through any stenographer's mind."
Prescott objected particularly to White's almost unilateral usurpation of the Indian and South African sales territory of the London Publishing House. White's proposals concerning the publishing of several books, the price he was asking for plates, and the royalties he expected also irritated Prescott. "You state with all frankness what is so evident all the time, that it is your purpose to bring the London house to terms quickly. And you may have the satisfaction of knowing that you have succeeded fully." White's repeated statement to the effect that "we control and are now willing to receive offers from you" did not seem to Prescott to have the right spirit.

I have long since become weary of these business strifes among brethren to see who shall own and control the Lord's vineyard... and I am thoroughly tired of all this controversy as to how much the brethren shall pay each other for his part in this work in writing a book or doing some other work as though this was one of the chief ends in the Lord's work. He recounted how he had left his business years ago "from an earnest

\[1\] In a later letter Prescott protested that the price White was asking for a set of plates "seemed beyond all reason to us." He also objected to White's unethical infringement of copyright laws in publishing illustrations in some of his mother's books in Australia and England. "Of course you have no more legal right to use them in Australia than we have in England but we must leave that with you to consider." W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 16, 1900, EGWRC-AU.

\[2\] W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, October 26, 1899, EGWRC-AU.

\[3\] Ibid. W. C. White, after re-reading his copybook, acknowledged that he had dwelt "with much emphasis upon the financial features of the publishing enterprises and make no reference to the deeper broader and more important interests... I shall try to learn a lesson from all this." He went on to explain, "I must tell you with all candor and frankness that I do not cherish such feelings toward your work as you seem to have thought from the reading of my letter of October 22." W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, January 15, 1900, W. C. White Lb 15, EGWRC-DC.
desire to do something that would be helpful to others" and that he was not now interested in running a business as just a commercial undertaking.¹

It seems that Prescott felt that in England he was facing the same kind of difficulties the Whites had faced in Australia earlier in the decade, and that they were not showing much sympathy. "I know that you have had a hard time in the work in Australia but the tide has turned in your favor. . . . You now have a hold upon the denomination with the leading men to plead for you among the people of America." Then with almost a sense of bewilderment he added:

Now is your time to launch out and get the money with which to do what you want to do. . . . But why should all this be put on the hard lines of business, and rights of territory? Must we compensate each other for the privilege of spreading the message in the different parts of the world?²

Prescott was aware that he had spoken bluntly and he apologized for whatever he may have written that had been "calculated to wound" W. C. White's feelings. He said that he found it "a sore trial" having to write about such matters and having to "haggle and badger and protest . . . pointing out what seems . . . to be hard dealing and overcharging," but he hoped for a better understanding between them.³ A better understanding appears to have been achieved, though their relationship seems characterized more by a respect for each other's responsibilities and abilities than by a genuinely warm friendship.

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 15, 1900, EGWRC-AU.
²Ibid.
³W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 16, 1900, EGWRC-AU. This letter was also typed by Prescott himself.
Prescott’s reaction to W. C. White seems to reflect his deep frustration with the church organization in general. He was discouraged that the work in Britain progressed so slowly and that there was so little financial assistance from outside.¹ “It is not encouraging to contemplate the condition into which the work has been brought by the plans of management which have been followed,” he wrote earlier to White. “The same officialism which has stood between the people and the work is still asserting itself. People are losing their confidence.”² Looking back on his time in England from the perspective of 1902, he reminded E. J. Waggoner, “You know how we were hampered in every effort to do anything, and it seemed as though we needed a change here [at Battle Creek headquarters] before the work could be carried on advantageously in England.”³ Such a change he had unsuccessfully attempted to bring about at the 1899 General Conference session, although the agitation at that time seems to have set the stage for the major changes in 1901.

Along with E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones, Prescott played a prominent part at the 1899 General Conference session at South Lancaster. In fact, he tended to dominate, if not monopolize, some of the crucial floor discussions during the early business sessions. Audience reaction, as reported in the Bulletin, indicates that he

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 30, 1900, EGWRC-AU.

²Prescott explained that he was not “tired of the truth but I often get very tired of the way the work is conducted.” W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, October 26, 1899, EGWRC-AU.

³W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, June 15, 1902, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1993-1902), SCAr.
had strong support from the workers, in general, but was seen as a threat by some conference officials and local conference presidents. Prescott's confrontational speeches and his role of the socratic gadfly at the session probably gave them cause to be unsettled.

Shortly before the 1899 General Conference session, Mrs. White had written, "It has been some years since I have considered the General Conference as the voice of God." With this very much in mind, as well as his own experience in a foreign field, Prescott made some bold challenges at the conference in an attempt to have it confront the issues Mrs. White raised. For example, in the midst of the treasurer's report he raised the ire of the official brethren by asking about misappropriation of money allocated to specific mission fields. Contrasting the two extremes in organization as anarchy and papacy he boldly suggested from the floor of the conference that the church was nearer the latter than the former. He objected to the continuing executive function of the General Conference committee while the General Conference was in session and should have been acting for itself. He protested the power of the chairman to appoint the session's committees and claimed that the conference was thereby staged, managed or rigged like a political convention. The conference

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1 GC Bulletin, February 26, 1899, p. 38; February 27, 1899, pp. 90-94.

2 The testimony was dated August 28, 1898. Cited in GC Bulletin, February 24, 1899, p. 74.

3 Private donations sent directly to Mrs. White personally in Australia had been quietly credited to the church books by the General Conference treasury and then subtracted from the general funds for the Australian field. Other monies solicited for a particular field had been disbursed to another. GC Bulletin, February 23, 1899, p. 61.
should be autonomous and should appoint its own committees and
chairman, he asserted. He frankly talked of the dishonest practice
of "smiling up the sleeve"—whereby church officials, including
himself, would don a "holy mask" and report to the church that all
was well when they knew things were quite different.¹

Using the council of Acts 15 as a paradigm, Prescott argued
strongly for more flexibility in procedures. He felt that the con­
ference was bound up by its strict adherence to parliamentary usage
and that there needed to be more openness to the leading of the
Holy Spirit.² Prescott's ideas which also included more autonomy
for the local church and less direction from the conferences sounded
to many like an anti-organization attitude. He had to defend him­
self publicly on that point. "I know the brethren think I am in
favor of disorganizing the work; but so far as I am personally
concerned, this does not worry me; for if the brethren understood
me, they would not think so."³

Prescott's rather bold confrontational tactics and his daring
to introduce "unmentionable" topics for discussion created tensions
at the conference and considerable ill-will toward himself. Appar­
tently he felt it was his duty to help rectify the conditions that

¹Ibid. GC Bulletin, February 27, 1899, p. 90.
²"What is the need of parliamentary rule?—simply to help a
few control the many. . . . The secret of running a political conven­
tion successfully, is to get together and decide the things to be
done and then plan how they can bring these before the convention in
such a way as to make the convention think that it did it. . . . This
is not a political convention; this is the church." GC Bulletin,
February 27, 1899, p. 90.
"Mrs. White had so vigorously denounced." 3. A. Irwin, who before the conference felt that Prescott was tending to extremes on the matter of organization, confessed toward the end of the session, "I have felt . . . almost since the conference began, that Brother Prescott and Waggoner were making my work hard for me, that they had a spirit to criticize everything: and I allowed the devil to make me believe that they were doing that purposely to make it hard." He asked the forgiveness of Prescott and Waggoner for thinking that they had formed a conspiracy. The session closed with a generally harmonious spirit. 2

Prescott's part at the 1899 session seems best described as a catalyst for reform. Although no major changes were made in 1899, the airing of specific problems and wrongs at that time probably helped to prepare the way for the major reorganization two years later in 1901. 3 As a result of the elections at this latter session, Prescott's sojourn in England came to an end. He found himself back in Battle Creek as field secretary of the Foreign

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1 Prescott's protests seem to have been vindicated by the new procedure adopted at the beginning of the 1901 session. The measures he attempted to introduce in 1897 and 1899 were adopted, but it took the additional weight of Mrs. White's influence and A. G. Daniells to accomplish it. GC Bulletin, April 3, 1901, pp. 27, 28.


3 See for example, A. J. Breed's speech, GC Bulletin, February 27, 1899, p. 94. According to Prescott an attempt was made prior to the 1901 session to prevent a recurrence of the 1899 struggles. The General Conference committee voted that Prescott and Waggoner should not have the same time at the conference as heretofore. Plans for the session, however, were overturned by the arrival of Mrs. White at the session. W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, June 15, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.
Mission Board working alongside A. G. Daniells. Their task was to implement the organizational reforms Prescott had promoted so vigorously. His experience in Australia and England had prepared him well for the job.
CHAPTER XII

GENERAL CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATOR

The Tide Turns

Prescott had long been an advocate of organizational reform. In the mid-1890s, near the conclusion of his presidency of Battle Creek College when laboring under too many extra burdens, he had recognized his own need to delegate responsibility. He had also suggested that more management responsibility be delegated by the General Conference officers to those "on the ground" in foreign fields. When visiting Australia in 1895-96, he had dialogued with Mrs. White on the subject. Later, in England his awareness of the need for such reforms in church structure that would allow the sharing of both responsibilities and resources was reinforced. The difficulties that had attended his attempts to introduce reforms at the 1897 and 1899 General Conference sessions, however, were a warning to him that changes would not come easily.¹

It was with some anxiety, therefore, that Prescott made plans to attend the 1901 General Conference session, believing, as he did, that it would "mark a crisis" in the church. Conscious of his frustration at the two previous sessions he pondered whether he ought

to attend at all, for he was not sure that he "could do any good" by going. He stated to Mrs. White that he was aware that he and his work in England were "regarded with . . . much suspicion by those in America who are attempting to direct the work." He held little hope that anyone would even listen to him. "Things are so hardened . . . there must be a change, and a deliverance must arise from some quarter, or this denomination will break up and there will be a new coming out," he wrote. Prescott eventually did attend the session and was surprised indeed at the "deliverance" that came.¹

Originally scheduled to be held at Oakland, California, February 10 to March 3, 1901, the conference was postponed two months at the request of Mrs. White and was held at Battle Creek instead from April 2-23. Mrs. White planned to attend. Several months prior to the conference, Daniells visited England and Europe en route to America from Australia. His friendship with Prescott was renewed as together they attended campmeetings. They also had opportunity to snare their burdens and anxieties about the management of the work. "It will be a great calamity," wrote Daniells shortly after his visit with Prescott, "to have this conference go through as the last one did." When Prescott sailed for America on the S. S. Majestic in early March he was glad that this time there would be other strong voices advocating reform.²

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, August 24, 1900, EGWRC-AU. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 14, 1900, EGWRC-DC.

It seems that many of the delegates arriving in Battle Creek for the first General Conference session of the new century shared the sentiments of Prescott and Daniells. The evening before the conference officially opened, Mrs. White met informally with a large number of church leaders in the library at Battle Creek College. For an hour and a half, the seventy-three-year-old, white-haired lady labored with the brethren, calling for immediate and far-reaching changes in church management. Picking up on themes that Prescott had urged in 1897 and 1899 she stressed that work must begin at once. "Do not wait until the conference is over, and then gather up the forces to see what can be done."\(^1\)

The next day at the opening of the conference, Mrs. White again made her prophetic call for a thorough reorganization.\(^2\) At the conclusion of her talk, Daniells, who had chaired the meeting the previous evening, asked for the floor and explained the sentiments of the meeting the previous night, and promptly moved "that the usual rules and precedents for arranging and transacting the business of the conference be suspended."\(^3\) He suggested that a large

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\(^1\)Mrs. White also urged the need for greater representation ("every institution shall have a voice"), that there should be no kings and that there should be a blending of the gospel work and the medical work. E. G. White, "Verbatim Report of Remarks by Mrs. E. G. White in Battle Creek College Library During the General Conference of 1901," MS 43, 1901, EGWRC-AU. Three versions of the speech are extant taken by three different stenographers. Cf. MS 43, 1901a and MS 43, 1901b. Daniells regarded the address as "epoch-making," "revolutionary," and "evolutionary" (A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, July 1, 1901, RG 11: Lb 23, GCAr).

\(^2\)She did not know how the reorganization was to be done but she knew it simply must be. E. G. White, "Opening Address," GC Bulletin, April 3, 1901, p. 23.

\(^3\)GC Bulletin, April 3, 1901, pp. 24-27.
representative 'committee on counsel' be formed to take up the work of reorganization and prepare the business to bring before the delegates. The break Prescott had been looking for had at last been made.

For the first few days of the session the committee, which eventually numbered seventy-five, worked vigorously while the rest of the delegates listened to sermons and reports. The major changes subsequently introduced as a result of the committee's work were:

1. the creation of Union Conferences in America so that administrative work could be localized geographically;
2. a revision of the General Conference committee which involved its enlargement to include twenty-five members elected on a representative basis; and
3. the subsuming of the work of the independent agencies of the church directly under the General Conference committee.

While the decision to allow the General Conference committee to elect its own chairman and secretaries, and the business of forming departments created some difficulties that had to be resolved at the following General Conference sessions in 1903 and 1905, the basic restructuring of the church's organization in 1901 enabled it to function more satisfactorily.

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1 *GC Bulletin*, April 3, 1901, p. 27; April 4, 1901, pp. 34, 35.

Prescott's role in the 1901 General Conference was not as public as in the previous two conferences, although he was evidently extensively involved in the work of the committees. Several times in the floor discussions Prescott spoke on behalf of the "committee on counsel" to clarify issues and to urge the adoption of specific reform measures. Although he was less publicly confrontive than in the previous two meetings, his intensity of conviction and plain speaking still managed to nettle the delegates. Kellogg later complained that Prescott believed that the former leaders, "the old-ring," should not be re-elected at all to official positions. He seems to have thought that G. A. Irwin and I. H. Evans, in particular, ought to be dropped. Kellogg and W. C. White apparently had to labor hard to modify his rigid stance.

His evening sermon delivered on April 15, two-thirds of the way through the conference, probably also disturbed some of his brethren. The sermon illustrates well his intensity of feeling and his conscientiousness as a reformer. Acknowledging that although some might feel he was "speaking too plain" he stated that his soul was "burdened" and "I must deliver my message." Alluding to Israel's fateful rejection of opportunities to reform during the days of Jeremiah and at the first advent of Christ, Prescott stated that Adventist history was becoming a frightening parallel. He reminded

1 J. H. Kellogg to E. G. White, [January], 1903, W. C. White Lb 41, pp. 211, 232 (copy), EGWRC-DC. Jorgenson, p. 50. Cf. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, July 1, 1901, EGWRC-DC. Prescott's rebuke of the conference presidents for failing to attend the formal meetings of the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association was not appreciated by the presidents. GC Recording Secretary, April 11, 1901, RG 1: GCAR.
them of "the message" that had come at Minneapolis and asked "How far
has that truth been received . . .? not far, I can tell you." He
asserted emphatically. "For the past thirteen years this light has
been rejected and turned against by many, and they are rejecting it
and turning from it today." Arguing that "the message" had been
"held off and held off as if it were not the message," he feared that
those who had been "shutting their eyes to it" would never see it,
for they had "lost the power of discernment." While organizational
reform was good and necessary, what was needed was "a complete change
of heart."

Prescott apparently realized that such blunt words would not
win him friends. Attempting to soften his cut and thrust he remarked,
"Do not think I am finding fault with anybody." Then he added, "I
appeal to you that I am telling you the words of truth and soberness.
. . . I am not speaking these words simply to fill the hour. My soul
is distressed over this thing." Expressing his convictions so force­
fully did not endear him to all hearers. Some were offended. But
Prescott could not be silenced for such considerations as that.¹

The professor's other major burden was his concern over the
rift developing between the medical fraternity and the ministry. He
sought for a unity of the two branches and particularly defended the
right of Kellogg's separate sanitarium organization to appoint six
members to the General Conference committee.² He repeatedly reminded
delegates of the disproportion that had developed in the

¹GC Bulletin, April 17, 1901, p. 302; April 18, 1901, p. 320.
²Prescott made it clear, however, that he considered this
only a temporary measure. GC Bulletin, April 11, 1901, p. 187.
denominational workforce with the General Conference employing 1,500 workers while Kellogg's Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association employed 2,000. Prescott urged that unity of action in the sending out of missionaries was imperative. His voice both in committee and on the floor of the conference appears to have had considerable influence.

Mrs. White was surprised and delighted by the accomplishments of this landmark conference. "I was never more astonished in my life than at the turn things have taken at this meeting." Prescott too was surprised. Much work remained, however, to make sure that the reforms filtered down through the various levels of the church. The task of implementing the reforms, of refining and improving them, and stopping up the loopholes would require courage and perseverance.

Field Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, 1901-1903

As a result of the deliberations of the 1901 General Conference, Prescott was appointed to key positions in the church administration. Elected as a member of the twenty-five man General Conference committee, he was assigned several responsibilities.

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2 Another great concern of Prescott's was the more equitable distribution of money and interest in the world field. "General Conference Notes," *RH*, April 9, 1901, p. 24.

Prescott was at first nominated to the General Conference committee twice. He was nominated by both the sessions nominating committee and the Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association. *GC Bulletin*, April 18, 1901, p. 291.
He served as chairman of the Pastoral committee and as a member of the Finance committee, the Education Department, and the Sabbath School Department. His primary responsibility, however, was field secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. This position actually meant that Prescott ranked second in authority to A. G. Daniells, the 'chairman' of the General Conference. This was because the 1901 session intended that the Foreign Mission Board should delegate its work to the General Conference committee. The task of the Mission Board had been redefined to include the activity of the church in both foreign lands and home fields. Thus, Prescott’s responsibilities were directed to the entire world field.1

The first task entrusted to Prescott in his new capacity was a visit to Europe to guide in the organization of the European General Conference. After completing an itinerary around the camp-meetings of the central states during May and early June, he sailed for Europe on June 26. Serving as "pro-tem" chairman he assisted in organizing the European General Conference on the same basis that the General Conference had just been organized in America. Daniells

1RH, May 14, 1901, p. 310. GC Bulletin, April 12, 1901, p. 201. Although the Foreign Mission Board continued as a formal legal entity the Board practically was the General Conference committee. It was not formally subsumed under the General Conference committee, however, until 1903. GC Bulletin, April 15, 1903, p. 195. See Jorgenson, pp. 34, 57.

The 1901 General Conference also voted to return the legal body of the Foreign Mission Board from Philadelphia to Battle Creek. "It is a business necessity that the office shall be where it may work as a department of the General Conference," Missionary Magazine, June 1901, p. 244. Prescott had vigorously opposed the action in 1897 to move the office to Philadelphia and had clashed with W. C. White in repeated attempts to block the move. GC Bulletin, March 2, 1897, pp. 213, 215; March 3, 1897, p. 230. The arrangement had never been successful. See Schwarz, Lightbearers to the Remnant, p. 273.
assured him that the Mission Board in America would stand behind whatever arrangements he should make as the representative of the General Conference. This visit also allowed him the opportunity to bid his former constituents in England a farewell and to arrange for the transfer of his personal effects back to Battle Creek where his wife had remained (see fig. 14).¹

He returned to a very busy program. Part of his responsibility as field secretary involved editing the Missionary Magazine, a popular periodical published for the Foreign Mission Board.² Prescott had announced before he left for Europe that he planned to enlarge the magazine. His first issue in June added several new features and introduced a new format.³ In July, the magazine absorbed the smaller Medical Missionary and Gospel of Health and its circulation soon rivaled that of the Review. An immediate byproduct of the promotion was the large number of workers who offered themselves for overseas service. One hundred and eighty-three missionaries were sent to foreign fields in the two years of Prescott’s field secretaryship.⁴


²GC Bulletin, Second Quarter, 1901, p. 507. The action to appoint him as editor was voted by the General Conference committee sometime between April 18 and May 1.

³W. W. Prescott, "The Missionary Magazine," RH, May 14, 1901, p. 318. Although the size of the forty-five page magazine did not increase, its scope was enlarged to include new health and medical missionary features. See Missionary Magazine, June 1901.

One rather novel innovation introduced by Prescott to provide support for this new missionary thrust was an idea he had explored with Mrs. White back in 1896. Local conferences could send missionaries overseas and assume financial responsibility for the support of the worker. The Foreign Mission Board under this arrangement simply served as a clearing house for assignments and the agency through whom the state conferences made their payments.¹

Prescott's work as field secretary was particularly appreciated by Daniells, for it had been Daniells himself who had specifically asked that Prescott be appointed as his lieutenant. He had apparently argued that he could not carry the responsibility of leading the church in carrying out reforms without Prescott's assistance. Both men carried a burden of implementing the reforms in the church, and they seemed to work together well. Daniells obviously enjoyed the partnership and valued Prescott's friendship. In correspondence he exuded a warm, confident collegiality, commonly addressing Prescott as "My dear brother." During Prescott's absence he enthusiastically kept him informed of the progress of the reforms and took a special interest in Prescott's family as they attempted to settle in Battle Creek again while Prescott was absent in Europe.²


²See p. 210 above. A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, June 24, 1901, RG 11: Bx 55 Lb 19, GCAr. In the enthusiasm of the early days of the reform Daniells was actually advocating the idea of doing away with the plan of church delegations at Conference sessions. He was suggesting that all who attended be regarded as delegates. "I do not know how these radical measures will affect our administration. It may be that I am riding for a fall but I cannot help it. I believe it is right...."
Commenting to W. C. White about their partnership, Daniells stated that Prescott had taken a "lively interest" in all features of the work. "He has been very helpful in giving counsel regarding intricate, complicated matters. It has been such a help to me to have him for a counselor as we have travelled around and have been obliged to give counsel to our brethren." Daniells was glad for Prescott's acquaintance with the men in the field and the fact that he had "been over the ground in the United States, and knows more about the situation." He added appreciatively that "he forms a quick, accurate judgement, and has a lot of courage." In the years that followed, the respect and the friendship continued to flourish. The two men enjoyed working more or less closely until Daniells' retirement from the presidency in 1922.

General Conference Vice President, 1902-1905

As a result of the discussions on the constitution of the twenty-five man General Conference committee in 1901, it was decided not to name any individual as president of the General Conference. This was in deference to fears expressed by both Prescott and A. T. Jones that such a move would fly in the face of what they understood to be the clear intent of Mrs. White's counsel. Daniells soon found, however, that as the chief executive of the church, his signature as

1A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, July 1, 1901, EGWRC-DC.

2Mrs. White had stated in 1896 that one man should not be elected to the presidency of the General Conference. According to A. T. Jones, at the 1897 General Conference there was considerable discussion of this point in the sub-committee and thus three union conference presidents had been appointed to administer the territory of the General Conference. It was understood by many that the three presidents were equal in authority. GC Bulletin, April 10, 1903, pp. 159, 160.
'chairman' of a General Conference that was not technically a 'conference' when it was not in session was not acceptable on certain business documents. Prescott worked closely with Daniells on the matter to explore ways of resolving the issue, but they were unsuccessful. Confronted with pragmatics, Prescott consequently gave up his objections and took the position that it would be better for Daniells to retain the title of president.1

Because Prescott had previously opposed the idea, Daniells asked him to explain to the committee the reasons for the change. It seemed logical to the committee that if a president was necessary, a vice president would also be helpful. At a meeting of the committee on February 15, 1902, therefore, as a result of a reassigning of responsibilities, Prescott was named by the committee as vice president of the denomination. He was the first person to officially serve the church in that capacity.2

It was not an easy time in the denomination's history to serve in such leadership capacity, and there were times when Prescott would have preferred to be elsewhere. Not infrequently during the ensuing years he wished for 'a ticket to some foreign land' in order to escape the seemingly unrelenting pressure. 'I often feel that it

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1A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, July 1, 1901, EGWRC-DC. The kinds of documents that presented difficulties are specified as statements required by railroad companies and statisticians.

2GC Bulletin, First Quarter, 1902, pp. 590, 591. The meeting was apparently not a full meeting of the twenty-five member committee but there were 'several of the members who resided at a distance' present in Battle Creek for the occasion.
would be a great relief to be off in the field again. While expecting that there would be some difficulties in the work of reforming the organization, he had not expected the reaction to be so severe nor to come from the quarters that it did. The stresses eventually took their toll on his health. His work during this turbulent period was appreciated nonetheless. Daniells commented years later that during 'the most serious and perilous crisis this cause has ever had" Prescott's "good judgement and strength at the helm" was especially valued.

A few months after Prescott's appointment as vice president in 1902, the first signs of the open split with J. H. Kellogg began to appear. These developed over Daniells' stand on his new "no-debt" financial policy in the establishment of institutions and Prescott's detection of "pantheistic sentiments" in Kellogg's book, The Living Temple. As tensions between the medical branch and the General Conference mounted during 1902, Prescott, who was directing the work in Battle Creek in Daniells' absence, felt very uncomfortable. He stated to Daniells that he felt his only safety was in saying "nuffin to nobody." He was convinced, however, that "something must happen soon to settle the atmosphere or we shall have one tremendous crash." He was right. An open, head-on confrontation occurred at

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1W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 19, 1902; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, October 13, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. His wish was not granted until 1906. See pp. 296ff. below.

2A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, February 15, 1932, OF 198, EGWRC-DC. The remark applies to Prescott's Review editorship and his general leadership role during the period. Prescott's involvement in the Kellogg controversy is dealt with in chapter 13.
the time of the annual council in Battle Creek in October-November 1902. While the meeting confirmed both Daniells' position on finance and Prescott's positions on The Living Temple, it did not by any means alleviate the tensions. Information from Kellogg via S. H. Lane soon made Prescott aware that "every possible effort" would be made "to overthrow the present administration at the next General Conference." Moves were also apparently afoot to put A. T. Jones in as the next General Conference president.

The General Conference session at Oakland in March-April 1903 proved to be almost as crucial as the one in 1901 because the previous two-year interim had revealed significant weaknesses in the new organizational structure. As he had done previously, Prescott pushed hard at the outset to ensure that the conference act for itself and not be dominated by existing committees. In this he was successful. The session's first action was to appoint a nominating committee of twenty-five which then appointed the committees. During the conference the constitution was modified to provide for the election of the General Conference officers by the delegates in session instead of being appointed by the General Conference committee. Formal constitutional provision was also made for the creation of departments in the General Conference. In addition, the work of the Foreign Mission

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1 W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, October 13, 1902, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902); A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, December 13, 1902, RG 21: Fld 1902-D, GCAR. Apparently a minority of the executive committee attempted to unseat Daniells. See Schwarz, Lightbearers to the Remnant, p. 280.

2 W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 25, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P, GCAR.

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Board was formally passed to the General Conference committee. The issue of amending the constitution to provide for the formal appointment of a 'president' by the session caused great difficulty. The proposition was vigorously attacked by A. T. Jones, P. T. Magan, and D. Paulson, who were supported largely by the medical fraternity. During the conference, Daniels and Prescott were repeatedly called for privately by Mrs. White, who recognized the pressure they were under. She encouraged them and advised them concerning how to meet the onslaught.

The newly amended constitution provided for a president and two vice presidents, one to care for the European field and the other the North American field. Prescott, whose position as field secretary of the Mission Board had become obsolete with the phasing out of the Mission Board, was elected as the vice president to work in the Union Conferences of North America. This meant a continued heavy work load since he had also served as the editor of the Review for the past year (1902) in addition to being vice president—another indication of his capacity for much work.

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1 GC Recording Secretary, March 27, 1903, RG 1: GCAr. Both of these latter moves had actually been intended at the 1901 General Conference but were not formally provided for.

2 RH, April 28, 1903, pp. 12, 13. Cf. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, February 15, 1932, DF 198, EGWRC-DC. According to Daniells, Prescott suffered intensely during this session on account of an infected tooth. He was apparently quite ill for a time. See "Unedited manuscript of L. E. Froom's interview with A. G. Daniells," RG 58: LEF(1) Fld A. G. Daniells, GCAr.

3 RH, April 28, 1903, pp. 12, 13. L. R. Conradi, the other vice president, lived and worked in Europe. GC Bulletin, April 10, 1903, p. 145.

4 See p. 348 below.
Prescott's talents as an administrator and his previous experience in publishing were extremely useful in the months that followed the 1903 General Conference. It was at that session the delegates voted to remove the church headquarters away from Battle Creek. This was perhaps the most far-reaching decision of the session. It involved an upheaval of huge dimensions for the 75,000-member church. Undaunted by the magnitude of the task, the vigorous opposition, and the attendant legal and administrative complications, the brethren boldly pulled up their stakes. Prescott, in his dual role of editor and General Conference vice president, played a prominent role in persuading the church in Battle Creek of the wisdom of the move. He was also one of the first to arrive at the new location. His expertise in publishing matters and his general administrative skills helped smooth the transition as the two most important institutions of the church re-established themselves in Washington.¹

Although the move to Washington meant extra administrative work for Prescott—he had been appointed the founding president of the new Review and Herald Publishing Association and therefore was responsible for establishing the new institution—he continued to make time for preaching. Mrs. White had written to him in mid-1902 urging that his gift for preaching not be quenched. She wrote:

"Your testimony is greatly needed in our large gatherings and important meetings . . . Brother Prescott, the Lord has a message for you to give to His people in regard to the preparation that must be made

¹The first issue of the Review published at the new location was dated August 20, 1903. A fuller discussion of Prescott's involvement in the move is given in chapter 14.
for the coming of the Lord." Remembering his preaching in Australia five years earlier, she stated further that he had a message 'that will be adaptable for the highest and the most lowly' and that he was to bear it to "the people in the field, "... in our campmeetings and in other assemblies."¹

³Prescott responded positively to the counsel and regularly spent several weeks each year visiting campmeetings and union sessions.² Because his preaching appealed to young people he also received requests to conduct college weeks of prayer. The great burden of his preaching during these years was the "plain truths" of "this message," his intent was to protect the church against the inroads of Kelloggism. His Bible studies and meetings for ministers were frequently geared to this end. He also frequently used the occasions of his campmeeting visits to raise money for missions and for the struggling work at Washington.³

In spite of his many other duties, public evangelism received much of his attention. After settling into Washington, he yoked up with Luther Warren and took a leading role in a large evangelistic outreach in the national's capital. Winter weather hampered the

¹E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, July 7, 1902, EGWRC-AU.

²W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 19, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P, GCAR. RH, February 17, 1903, p. 18. In 1903, Prescott spent two weeks in the Southern Union and several weeks on the west coast. In 1904 he spent several weeks visiting camps in the midwest, RH, August 18, 1904, p. 24.

³W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 19, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P; E. R. Palmer to W. A. Spicer, June 1, 1903, RG 21: 3x 77 Lb 35, GCAR. W. C. White to Mrs. W. W. Prescott, June 12, 1903, W. C. White Lb 22, EGWRC-DC.
meetings, but some new members were added and the church gained considerable publicity.¹

As the struggle between the General Conference and the Kellogg forces continued into 1905, Prescott found himself increasingly burdened by the demands of his office. He was actually carrying the responsibilities of two or three men.² Consequently, his health began to deteriorate and he was not able to do justice to all that was expected of him. Daniells explained through the Review that Prescott's publishing house duties "made it impossible for him to devote a large amount of time to the details of the administrative work in North America." These therefore "could not receive the attention they required." The problem promised only to get worse as the need to build a new plant for the publishing business began to loom in 1905. Prescott decided, in consultation with his colleagues, that the publishing work was going to require more of his time than heretofore. Consequently at the 1905 General Conference session in Washington, Prescott vacated the office of vice president in order to focus his energies on establishing the new publishing house. G. A. Irwin was elected in his place.³

¹RH, January 12, 1905, p. 3.

²Prescott was Review editor, publishing house president and General Conference vice president. See W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, July 31, 1905, RG 11: Fld 1905-P, GCAr.

When Prescott left England in early 1901 to attend the General Conference, he expected that shortly after his return to England he would be able to establish his long-hoped-for training school. The new responsibilities assigned him at the 1901 session, however, meant he had to leave that task to others. Even though he carried more general administrative responsibilities, he retained a keen interest in the educational work of the church. Just after the General Conference session he had been assigned to the education department committee of the General Conference and he quickly became involved in promoting educational reform. A General Conference summer school for teachers, particularly designed to help the work of reform, was one of the first projects. Originally scheduled to be held at Gull Lake near Battle Creek, it was transferred to Berrien Springs when that town became the chosen site for the proposed new college that would replace Battle Creek College.

Later, in February 1902, in addition to his appointment as vice president, Prescott was asked to serve as the chairman of the General Conference Education Department. He retained this position until the General Conference session in Oakland in 1903. In this capacity he was at last able to facilitate the establishment of an elementary church school at Battle Creek. On Sabbath, June 7, 1902, he preached a sermon in the Tabernacle on educational reform and made an appeal. That same afternoon the church met and voted to establish

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1 General Conference Education Department Minutes, May 20, 1901, RG 51: GCAR. Prescott either moves or seconds the majority of the actions.
their own church school.\footnote{1} In this official capacity he also gave some guidance to the developments at Berrien Springs.

The proposal to transfer the college from Battle Creek to some new country location was made in October of 1900, according to P. T. Magan.\footnote{2} Disapproved by Mrs. White at that particular time, the idea was suggested again at the 1901 General Conference session and this time met with approval.\footnote{3} Although not formally a school trustee Prescott, before departing for Europe in June of 1901, participated in the discussions that authorized the move and helped set in motion the planning for the new curriculum. He had also participated in the nostalgic closing exercise for Battle Creek College on May 19, 1901. During his absence in Europe, the Berrien Springs site for the new school was formally decided upon.\footnote{4} Upon his return to Battle Creek in August, Prescott was formally elected as a trustee of the new school. Consequently he was also installed as board chairman, albeit somewhat reluctantly.\footnote{5}

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{1}{RH, June 17, 1902, p. 24. Prescott had endeavored to persuade the Battle Creek church to start a school of their own back in 1886.}
\item \footnote{2}{P. T. Magan's remarks are stenographically reported in EMC Bd Min, July 12, 1901, AUHR. The idea of moving had been seriously considered as early as 1895, when room was needed for the new medical school. O. A. Olsen to W. C. White, November 30, 1895, RG 11: Bx 51 Lb 14a, SCAr.}
\item \footnote{3}{The stockholders voted on April 12, 1901, to relocate. The Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association voted to purchase the old property on April 16, 1901, GC Bulletin, April 18, 1901, p. 313.}
\item \footnote{4}{General Conference Education Department Minutes, May 20, 1901, RG 51: GCAr. The board voted to purchase the Berrien Springs site on July 16, 1901; see EMC Bd Min for that date.}
\item \footnote{5}{Prescott remarked to A. G. Daniells almost a year later; 'You doubtless know that I have not felt altogether free in this

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According to Magan, sometime during October, just prior to the start of the school's first term, a further move was made by the anxious General Conference leaders. It was suggested by the "leading brethren" that Prescott be installed as president in place of Sutherland. They apparently felt, according to Magan, that the professor's "age, experience, and general bearing would give him a standing and a dignity which would help bring Emmanuel College into favor more than anything that might be done by Brother Sutherland or myself." Magan was not sure how enthusiastic Prescott was with the idea, but he felt that "to a greater or lesser extent" he shared the view of Daniells and W. A. Spicer who seemed to push the issue. When the matter came to the board, however, it met with opposition from Kellogg and other trustees and was thus dropped. The incident did not do much to help the self-confidence of either Sutherland or Magan.

At the board meeting on September 24, Prescott was invited to

\[\text{position from the first.}\]

W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, July 16, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), SAVr. Minutes of the fourteenth meeting of the board at 4:00 p.m. on September 24 state simply that Prescott occupied the chair. No previous mention is made of his election to the board. It may be that he was elected at a thirteenth meeting of the board, scheduled for 10 a.m. on September 24. The minutes of this meeting are not extant. The twelfth meeting had been held July 12 and Prescott was not then a trustee. The appointment seems to have been made in an endeavor to balance Sutherland's youthfulness and zeal.

P. T. Magan to E. G. White, June 23, 1902. It was evidently Daniells who felt most concerned about Magan and Sutherland not being competent enough. According to Magan, Daniells had urged that "broad-minded, able" men were needed. P. T. Magan to S. N. Haskell, August 6, 1901, RG 9: General and Historical Documents Fid, SAVr. The matter of Prescott as president is not mentioned in the board minutes. It apparently did not become a formal motion. J. H. Kellogg in later years traced the beginnings of his clash with Daniells to this episode. J. H. Kellogg to S. N. Haskell, April 5, 1904, JHKCC, Bx 1 Fid 8, AUHR.
teach Bible during the first term of the school; a proposition that Mrs. White heartily endorsed. 'I think that if it is possible, you should have Elder Prescott connected with your faculty during the first term. This first term must be a success." As it happened, however, neither Prescott nor Spicer nor Daniells, all of whom had been asked to teach, were able to do so. All were too deeply involved with work in Battle Creek. Prescott, though, even if somewhat uncomfortable as chairman of the board, seems to have endeavored to take an active interest in the school's developments. At a series of board meetings at the new college site during January 1902, actions were taken to plan the layout of the campus. Prescott played a leading part in formulating these plans. He was also involved as chairman of the sub-committee on campus layout when, in April-May 1902, the plans "as had been outlined by W. W. Prescott" were modified and the location of buildings was finally decided. In May, two days before the final decisions were made concerning the layout of the new campus, Prescott also delivered the commencement

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1 E. G. White to P. T. Magan and E. A. Sutherland, November 5, 1901, EGWRC-AU. This letter (if the date is correct) was written six days after the term had already started.

2 A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott and E. A. Sutherland, May 15, 1902, RG 11: Bx 57 Lb 28, SCAr. Prescott was busy writing a series of Sabbath School lessons and preparing materials for the "Forward Movement." See p. 308 below.

3 EMC Bd Min, January 29, April 23, May 29, 1902. Prescott explained the changes to Daniells: "After measuring up the ground and laying it out carefully, it was found impracticable to locate the buildings on the ground which we selected without putting the principal buildings on the very lowest ground. All have felt troubled over this matter, and before going out there I decided to suggest a change."
address at the conclusion of the successful first year of operation.¹

Relationships between chairman Prescott and Sutherland and Magan deteriorated rapidly in mid-1902. During the summer break a misunderstanding occurred that created an unfortunate rift among the men and resulted in Prescott's resignation from the board of trustees. The conflict flared over arrangements to have E. J. Waggoner come to the Berrien Springs school as Bible teacher. This dispute is important because of the light it throws on Prescott's relationship with Sutherland and Magan. It is therefore important to note the details.

As already observed, Prescott, himself reform-minded, was not too sure about some of the extreme ideas Sutherland and Magan were planning. Neither was he fully confident of their abilities to conduct the school successfully. "I have felt uneasy a good deal of the time," he commented to Daniells in July about his role as chairman of the board. Prescott's uncertainty had communicated itself to Sutherland and Magan. Complaining to Daniells in the midst of the upset, Magan commented that neither of them felt "that Prof. Prescott has ever given our educational work his hearty or enthusiastic support." He gave them the impression that he did "not have unbounded confidence in [their] Christian ability to make the thing win." "I should judge," Magan continued, "he felt that we were good, well-meaning boys, who wanted to bring about certain reforms which he himself believes are good, but that we do not have sufficient grasp of the educational problems to carry them through on solid and

¹Commencement occurred May 27. RH, July 1, 1902, pp. 16, 17.
Magan commented further, in his report to Mrs. White, that, personally, Prescott had been "kind and brotherly" to them and that he had never done anything to make their work hard. But neither had he shown in any specific way that he had really strong confidence in it. Magan thought that it may have been somewhat hard for the professor "to see young men who were his students now standing at the head of the Educational work." Whether this was so or not, tension heightened by overloaded work schedules on both sides provided a situation that flared easily.

Before the first term at the school in 1901, frantic efforts had been made to provide a good Bible teacher, but to no avail. Elder J. A. Brunson eventually helped out, but ideally the board would have liked to have secured the services of Waggoner. "You will remember," wrote Daniells to Prescott and Sutherland, "how many times we have talked over our great pressing need for a good Bible teacher . . . and how we usually wound up with a wish that we might have Dr. Waggoner but with the supposition that this would be altogether impossible."  

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1W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, July 3, 1902; P. T. Magan to A. G. Daniells, June 23, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

2P. T. Magan to E. G. White, June 23, 1902, EGWRC-DC. Magan had not been well, suffering from overwork in his campaign to push the sale of Christ's Object Lessons. Prescott was pressed by his duties as vice-president and Review editor.

3A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott and E. A. Sutherland, May 15, 1902, RG 11: Bx 56 Lb 28, GACr. It was evident, however, that Magan was not too enthusiastic about the idea although he apparently did not voice his concerns. He had quietly tried (unsuccessfully) to encourage S. N. Haskell to come and join the faculty. P. T. Magan to S. N. Haskell, August 6, 1901, RG 9: General and Historical Documents Fld, GCAr.
In May 1902, while Daniells was in London, he broached the subject with Waggoner himself, who surprised him by stating that he would indeed be interested. Daniells then wrote enthusiastically to Prescott and Sutherland about the matter. He concluded: "I know of no man in the denomination who is better prepared to give the Bible its place, and so conduct a model Bible training school than Dr. Waggoner." At the same time, Daniells sought counsel from Mrs. White. Both W. C. White and his mother heartily agreed with the proposition. According to W. C. White, Mrs. White, who apparently still had memories of the injustices of the post-1888 period, stated that it had been shown to her "that whereas some of our people were well pleased to have him [Waggoner] removed from the work at Battle Creek by his appointment to work in England, that [sic] he would be brought back again to assist as a teacher at the heart of our work." 

Shortly after Waggoner had talked with Daniells about the matter, Waggoner wrote enthusiastically to Prescott about his hopes and plans for his new task. Later Daniells explained to W. C. White that Waggoner never intended that his letter should be a formal statement of the conditions on which he would come to the school, nor even a careful, thoughtful statement of his ideas. He had written it hurriedly, late at night, after a hard day's work to indicate his favorable response to the proposal and to simply try to express his

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1 Ibid.

2 W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, May 30, 1902, RG 9: A. G. Daniells Fld 2, GCAR. Waggoner had been sent to England in 1891 in the midst of the controversies over the law in Galatians and the two Covenants. A. Bacon, "A Farewell Gathering," The Missionary Worker, October 14, 1903, p. 157.
hopes of what he might accomplish. According to Daniells, who had talked at length with Waggoner before and after he wrote the letter, Waggoner would have liked all the teachers to be together a few weeks before school started for a kind of institute which he would lead, so that they could be united. He also hoped that they might develop some skills for making the Bible the center of the entire curriculum. Upon receiving the letter, Prescott telephoned Sutherland indicating that Waggoner was indeed willing to come. He understood Sutherland to be agreed upon the proposal and therefore replied affirmatively to Waggoner. At the same time, he wrote more formally to Sutherland sending him a copy of the relevant parts of Waggoner's letter. He indicated that he would also like to try to join the institute.¹

Sutherland and Magan, already feeling somewhat insecure, were immediately suspicious when they saw the letter. Taking it as a formal proposal, they understood Waggoner to be demanding complete control of the school. They felt they had already established "a new order of things" and were offended that Waggoner should suggest that he would need to do that.² Prescott's accompanying letter tried to explain that he did not think Waggoner intended taking any "independent course that would not commend itself to the rest of us," but

¹E. J. Waggoner to W. W. Prescott, June 11, 1902; W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, July 3, 1902, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902); A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, August 22, 1902, RG 11: 3x 56 Lb 27, GCAR. P. T. Magan to E. G. White, June 23, 1902, EGWRC-DC.

²E. J. Waggoner to W. W. Prescott, June 1, 1902, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. Waggoner had stated with perhaps not so evident hyperbole that there had "never yet been such a thing as a Bible School among us."
Wagoner and Sutherland felt considerably threatened, thinking that Waggoner was intimateing that they did not know how to "reform."

A few days later, on June 19, a board meeting was held at Berrien Springs at which Prescott presided. For some reason the Waggoner appointment was not discussed, but after Prescott had returned to Battle Creek late that afternoon, Sutherland called the remaining board members together in the evening. They considered the Waggoner matter, expressed their opposition to what they understood to be Waggoner's insinuations, and voted that Waggoner's plans were too radical to be acceptable. They also voted to lay their position before Mrs. White.

Mrs. White had apparently already seen the letter from Waggoner--a copy of it having been passed on to her by A. T. Jones.

1 According to Prescott, who had caught a train out of Battle Creek at 4:45 a.m. in order to get to Berrien Springs for the meeting, the board was so busy they did not even stop for lunch. Prescott caught the train back to Battle Creek at 4:30 p.m. He left with the understanding that he board was formally adjourned "sine die." W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, July 3, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

2 EMC Bd Min, June 19, 1902. P. T. Magan to E. G. White, June 23, 1902, EGWRC-DC. Magan enclosed Waggoner's letter and asked her to read it "as carefully as you can." He also pointed out the propositions they objected to and concluded by stating that he did not favor Waggoner's coming. He reported to Prescott that "there was a general sentiment on the part of all present that if Dr. Waggoner should connect with the school according to the propositions outlined in his letter, it would only be fair to him and fair to Prof. Sutherland that Dr. Waggoner should be made president of the school.... It is clear to me... that he does not recognize that Prof. Sutherland and the present faculty have been making any reforms at all." P. T. Magan to W. W. Prescott, cited in W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, July 3, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. The board in fact passed a resolution affirming that they thought they were reforming satisfactorily. Prescott thought the resolution was a "very silly" one. "Their action comes nearest to the famous resolution: 'Resolved, that the saints will inherit the earth. Resolved, that we are the saints.'"
"Not being aware of the nature of the discussions between Waggoner and Daniells, she too apparently understood Waggoner to be wanting to displace Sutherland so that he could control the school and set things right. She sounded a caution about placing men in charge "who would for a limited period make a great showing as to how things ought to be done, and then go away, leaving everybody in discouragement."¹ Mrs. White also wrote several letters to Prescott on the matter stating that Prescott was "not to be confined in any school as a manager or a teacher" because his testimony was "greatly needed in our large gatherings." He was to let the Berrien Springs school be carried on by "those who are now acquainted with it" for the Lord had been leading them and they had been "working on right lines." He was to encourage Sutherland and Magan and should realize that "schools may be managed . . . successfully, by men who are not the most advanced in years and experience."²

Prescott was disturbed that Waggoner had been treated so rashly by Magan and Sutherland and disappointed that he would not now come to the new school.³ But he was more than "thoroughly

¹According to W. C. White, "Mother expressed the conviction that if Dr. Waggoner comes to take a leading part in the Bible instruction at Berrien Springs that [sic] he ought to come for steady earnest work for a couple of years. It seems that Waggoner was intending to stay for one year." W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, July 3, 1902, RG 9: A. G. Daniells Fld 3; W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, June 15, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

²E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, June 30, July 7, 1902, EGWRC-AU.

³Yande Vere assumes, incorrectly that Waggoner did teach at the school. He devotes two paragraphs elaborating on what Waggoner actually taught using Waggoner's letter to Prescott as a basis. The Wisdom Seekers, p. 114.
disgusted" at the way the two young men had acted in the matter. He told them plainly that he felt they had not handled the matter "in a fair and open way. . . . I do not consider it a fair thing that you should have a meeting of the Board of Trustees, of which I am chairman, and that such an action be taken and recorded as an action of the Trustees." He stated frankly that he did not wish to act as chairman of the board that did its work in this way, and that it seemed evident that his services "were not needed in helping to carry forward the educational work of the Emmanuel Missionary College." If they were going to stand by their action, "without any further conference or consideration" by the board, he would "know very clearly" what his own "duty" was.  

Daniells, who all this time was in England with Waggonor, was also disappointed. "I am thoroughly satisfied," he stated to W. C. White a month later, "that his position and motives were entirely misunderstood by our brethren at Berrien Springs," He explained that Waggoner simply wanted to do what Daniells himself had wanted to do when he was asked to take charge of Avondale and had tried to get the whole faculty together for a few weeks before the school opened. "This was the doctor's thought." He stated further that "in all our

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1W. W. Prescott to P. T. Magan, July 3, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. On July 16, Prescott informed Daniells of his intention to resign. He had read Mrs. White's letters. "I am inclined to think that the brethren who have charge of the school work will be relieved if I should withdraw from this position." W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, July 16, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. According to Prescott, Spicer had told the two brethren that "he thought" they had become a little panic-stricken seeming to fear that it was Dr. Waggoner's purpose to take possession of the institution and sweep them all out. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, July 30, Box 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), SCAr.

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conversation' Waggoner had "never intimated" that he had no confidence in Sutherland and that he was not working on right lines. Daniells felt that Magan's letter informing him of the board's action was a "long, ungracious," and "cruel attack" on Waggoner and he would not "hurt Professor Magan's standing by permitting him [Waggoner] to read it." He concluded: "All I could do under the circumstances was to let the matter drop."¹

The result was unfortunate for the Berrien Springs school. Previous to the incident, Daniells had given a lot of time and thought to the interests of the institution, intending to bring the weight of the General Conference to bear in helping make it the leading Bible school in the denomination. Now, however, he had come to see that "he was not giving the attention to our other schools that it was my duty [to give]." Besides, when he came back from Europe he found his hands full of troubles with Kellogg.²

Prescott, too, was laden with other burdens. Five months later, at the next official board meeting on November 17, in the midst of the first major confrontation with Kellogg, Prescott resigned.³ He stated his reason diplomatically. "His work was of

¹A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, August 22, 1902, RG 11: Bx 56 Lb 27, GCAr.

²A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott and E. A. Sutherland, June 9, RG 11: Bx 56 Lb 28, GCAr. This may have been sour grapes but Daniells explained that he had gained broader views during the intense study he had given the educational work while the question was under consideration; A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, August 22, 1902, RG 11: Bx 56 Lb 27, GCAr.

³The resignation came after the two long public sessions on November 15 and 16 in which Kellogg and Daniells clashed openly. Prescott had an opportunity in October to talk over "the Waggoner Episode" with Magan and Sutherland. They "exchanged views freely"
such a nature that he could not take the active interest which he
believed the chairman of the Board should take in the educational
work of the Association. 1 He maintained that he resigned "with the
utmost good feeling toward all the members of the board." Neverthe­
less, the breach coming particularly at this time seemed unfortunate.
The alienation between the General Conference brethren and Sutherland
and Magan provided an opportunity for Kellogg to claim their sym­
pathy.

Prescott's interest in education did not die, however. He
continued to participate actively in the educational conventions of
1903 and 1906 and served as one of the charter members of the board
that founded Washington Missionary College in 1904. As on previous
such occasions he played a prominent part in planning the layout of
the campus and the location of buildings. He also served as chairman
of the committee for the selection of the first faculty and later
taught occasional classes for theology students. His major concerns
during this period, however, were in other areas. Although there
were discussions as to whether he should serve as president of Wash­
ton Missionary College in 1907 and although he was invited to
consider serving as president of Union College in 1910, Prescott did
not return to formal education until he went to Avondale as president
in late 1921. 2

but things apparently remained tense. W. W. Prescott to A. G.
Daniells, October 13, 1902, Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.

1 EMC Bd Min, November 17, 1902, AUHR.

2 RH, June 23, 1903, p. 19; "Story of the Convention," Central
Union Conference Bulletin, October 1906, RG 51: Educational Conven­
tions, Bx 13, GCAr. Washington Missionary College Board Minutes,

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Part of the reason for the over-reaction to the Waggoner episode was undoubtedly the tension and stress that comes from overwork. In 1902, Magan and Sutherland were under a great deal of pressure trying to operate a school in rented premises and attempting to establish a new campus with little financial support. Magan had also taken on the added duty as financial secretary of the General Conference.

Prescott, on the other hand, was field secretary for the Foreign Mission Board, vice president of the General Conference, chairman of the Educational Department, chairman of the Emmanuel Missionary College board, member of the publishing board, and editor of the Review. Besides this, there was a financial scandal at the Nashville publishing house. The brethren in the Southern Union were unhappy with the new General Conference administration (Prescott reported that G. I. Butler considered himself "the new Moses" who, having spent his time in Midian, was now coming to rescue the people from the new Pharaohs), the sanitarium at Battle Creek had recently burnt down, and Prescott was beginning to get locked into the struggle over financial policy and theology with Kellogg.1

With Daniells away, the pressure bore heavily on Prescott. Likewise, the extra burdens involved in the move to Washington and publishing the Review in less than ideal rented quarters in the midst

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August 30, October 14, 1904, RG 278, GCAR. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, February 21, 1908, EGWRC-DC. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, June 2, 1907, RG 11: Fld 1907-P, GCAR. UC Bd Min, February 20, 1910.

1W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, March 12, April 12, May 19, July 3, July 7, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR.

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of the ongoing struggle with Kellogg was a continual strain on his health. In 1905 he had given up the vice presidency but this was only to enable him to give more time to the difficult task of establishing the new publishing enterprise in Washington, a task made exceedingly difficult by legal complications involving the former plant in Battle Creek. It seemed to Prescott that he was forever at work. According to Daniells, the professor was working so hard that only treatments given him each night by his wife enabled him to sleep.\(^1\) By 1906 the constant pressure began to seriously affect his nervous health. When the brethren therefore suggested in late 1906 that he make an overseas trip through the Far East, the opportunity seemed fortuitous.

A special General Conference council session had been planned for mid-1907 in Gland, Switzerland. Workers in China, Korea, and Japan were also calling for a visit by someone from the General Conference. It was therefore decided that Prescott should visit these Asian countries "to join the workers in planning and organizing for a strong and well-balanced development of the work" en route to the meeting at Gland.\(^2\) It was also hoped that the change of work and the change of pace would enable his health to recuperate. C. M. Snow and W. A. Spicer were appointed to edit the Review in his absence.

Prescott departed from Vancouver on the S. S. Princess, on

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\(^1\) A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, January 13, December 25, 1904, EGWRC-DC.

November 28, 1906, en route for Japan where he planned a two-week visit. The three-week voyage to Yokohama provided a good chance for rest. He reported to Daniells that he had twice read a book on Japan given him by Spicer, and that he had been able to retire early each night thus catching up on "some good sleep." "Of course," he continued, "three weeks are not sufficient to make any very marked change in a case of nervous trouble, but I think I have made a favourable beginning."¹

Uncertain shipping connections at first forced travel schedules and appointments for meetings to be more flexible than usual, but Prescott quickly learned to accept the exigencies of travel in the Far East. His two weeks in Japan were followed by a truncated visit in Korea and then several weeks in China. From China, his five-month-long itinerary took him to Hong Kong, Singapore, Penang, Ceylon, Bombay, through the Suez to Naples, and thence to Gland in Switzerland via Rome. Temporarily assuming his old role of field secretary of the Mission Board, he met along the way with groups of workers and officially represented the General Conference in their organizational meetings.²

As Prescott experienced the rigors of travel in the far East first hand and tasted the harshness of the conditions endured by the pioneering missionaries whom he met, he gained a heightened appreciation of the immense needs of the foreign fields and a


²A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, February 25, 1906, RG 11: Bx 62 Lb 41, GCAr.
deepened admiration for the commitment of the workers. His trip through China was particularly unforgettable. He described the journey in graphic detail to readers of the Review. After a two-day journey by boat from Korea to North China, and a two-day train trip overland to Peking, he and his missionary companion, J. N. Anderson, had to travel by donkey cart the last two days to get to the inland mission station at Hsiang Cheng by Sabbath. Sitting "turk fashion" on the floor of the donkey cart, surrounded by piles of luggage, was, for the tall, dignified American, uncomfortable to say the least. He remarked with kindly understatement, "It has been said of the Korean chair that the most comfortable way to ride in it is to get out and walk. And this applies in a general way to the Chinese cart also." Torrential rain, mist, and deeply rutted muddy roads meant that walking was often quicker than riding anyway. To ensure that they arrive at their destination before Sabbath, the two brethren ended up putting the driver in the cart with themselves walking and running beside it.  

Prescott was amused by the fact that as a foreigner in foreign dress he was "as much of an attraction in these inland towns as a circus in America," but his experience of staying in roadside inns left perhaps the most indelible impression on his memory. On one occasion in Kyote, Japan, the only hotel room they could secure opened directly on to the main street. Three of its walls consisted

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1Prescott's series of twenty-one "Editorial Letters" commences with the January 24, 1907, issue of the Review. From March 14 they continue to appear weekly until July 25.

of sliding screen partitions. The next morning Prescott and his companion, F. W. Field, had not long risen when the cheerful Japanese maid removed the partition, exposing his companion who was "decidedly de shabille" (to use Prescott's delicate expression) to a streetful of people. Another "hotel" in China also provided a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Prescott's party at this time included four missionaries, two native evangelists, and two drivers with their teams. The hotel provided one room with one small window. Beds consisted of Chinese mats laid on top of "two or three armfuls of sweet potato vines." The donkeys were denied the latter comfort, but, nevertheless, shared the same room. "Our companions in tribulation, ... their constant munching and treading around served to soothe our excited nerves," wrote Prescott to the Review. After a night of trying to sleep while the drivers talked, the donkeys munched, and their fellow Chinese snored, the travelling party arose at 4 a.m. to find that three members of the hotelier's family had also shared their room. The thirty-three cents (gold) rent also generously included a fire of corn-stalks. After warming themselves for an hour the group were glad to depart at five. At least Prescott's sense of humor enabled him to see the amusing side of such experiences. He delighted in relating them to his readers.¹

The journey was memorable in other ways as well. He was conscious of a marked change as he arrived back again "in the Western

¹W. W. Prescott, "Editorial Letter," RH, April 4, 1907, p. 3. W. W. Prescott, "Editorial Letter," RH, March 28, 1907, p. 3; A. G. Daniells to J. G. Rogers, April 3, 1907, RG 11: Lb 41, GCAr. Daniells was amused at "the rough-and-tumble-time" that his "staid, dignified" professor-friend was experiencing.
world" in Naples. Although he had left the East behind him, he
remarked, "I shall . . . never be able to shut out from my mind the
impression of the almost uncounted millions of the Far East . . . and
I carry a burden for them such as never rested upon me before. I have
left the East, but the East is still with me." At the conference in
Gland, he valiantly pled the cause of missions but was disappointed
and distressed when funds were voted for extra buildings at the
school in Washington rather than for desperately needy work in the
East. Daniells later assured him, however, that the requests for
help would indeed be met and that he appreciated Prescott's careful
analysis of the situation in those fields. Characteristically, Pres­
cott had provided to the brethren, a thorough, well-thought-through
report of this journey. Commented Daniells: "I felt more grateful
than I could express to see the grasp obtained of the situation
there. . . . Few of our men who have visited mission fields have
given the conditions such close study and systematized the results of
their investigations as you have done."1

At Gland, in May, Prescott was joined by his wife Sarah and
son Lewis. Although his health had improved considerably, it was
apparently not yet all that could be desired. The brethren therefore
asked Prescott to stay in Europe during the summer of 1907. With his
family he visited campmeetings, workers' meetings, and union confer­
ence sessions in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Germany before

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returning to America via London at the end of August.\(^1\) This last part of this journey with his family, although busy, was nevertheless relaxing. In London, he had time again to visit the second-hand bookstores and to spend quite a time in the British Museum collecting materials for his future work. On his return he reported enthusiastically that his health was "much improved."\(^2\)

Daniells, who had endeavored to help Prescott keep as free from worry as possible, kept in touch with Sarah and Lewis during Prescott's absence. Later when the whole family was in Europe, he kept a watchful eye on Prescott's aged parents who had remained behind. He personally ensured that the house was cared for and that the lawns were mown. While Prescott himself also endeavored to keep free of burdens, he nevertheless still found himself at times having to deal with the problems of the Kellogg schism. At the Skodsborg Sanitarium he was asked to take a series of meetings defending Mrs. White and the actions of the General Conference over the Battle Creek affair. He had also met with two former ministers, E. J. Waggoner, whom he encountered in Copenhagen, and Harry Champness, with whom he spent a day in England.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Daniells reported that Prescott's wife, Sarah, was determined "that if Professor Prescott is not in a very different condition physically from what he was when he left, she will hold him somewhere in Europe during the summer. She does not intend to allow him to return to the office to take up the grind in the run-down physical condition that he was [in] when he left" (A. G. Daniells to E. R. Palmer, March 5, 1907, RG 11: Bx 62 Lb 41, GCAr); RH, July 11, p. 4.

\(^2\) W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, September 3, 1907, RG 11: Fld 1907-P, GCAr.

\(^3\) A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, June 24, 1907, RG 11: Bx 62 Lb 41; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, July 5, September 3, 1907, RG 11: Fld 1907-P, GCAr.
On his return to the United States after an eight-and-a-half-month absence, Prescott took up the first task that fell to him--a defense against A. T. Jones' criticisms of the then current Sabbath School quarterly. Campmeetings demanded his presence and the old routine quickly re-established itself. "It seems natural to get back into the old swing and under the old pressure," he remarked to Daniells, "although I am trying to avoid some measure of it." The pressure did build again; this time, however, it was over other matters, and by the end of 1908 Prescott was once more struggling with his health.

Prescott's years as vice president of the General Conference and field secretary of the Mission Board were productive even though filled with conflict and tension. Daniells particularly valued Prescott's labors in these areas of responsibility. Thus, when in 1915, Daniells' own health broke down from over-work, the General Conference--looking for men to help ease his load--created the office of field secretary of the General Conference. Prescott was asked to serve in that capacity, and he was the first to ever officially fill that position.

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2See pp. 406ff below.
CHAPTER XIII

THE KELLOGG CRISIS

The controversy between John Harvey Kellogg and the Seventh-day Adventist church from 1902-07 constituted the most traumatic schism in the movement's history and involved extensive losses in both membership and property. Along with Daniells, Mrs. White, and Kellogg himself, Prescott figured prominently in the conflict. The episode is important because it casts considerable light on the professor both as a theologian and an educator who was concerned for the welfare of the denomination. Furthermore, it provides insights into the understanding of later developments in Prescott's career and into his personality. For these reasons, a detailed look at the conflict is warranted.

Most religious controversies involve a complex mix of a variety of factors and the Kellogg crisis was no exception. It involved not only differences in theology and in the understanding of the mission of the church but also personality clashes and a basic political or power struggle over the administration of the church. To some the conflict appeared to be primarily a contest between two very strong-willed men. Magan is reported to have remarked: 'That
was a fight between Daniells and Kellogg; no kingdom can have two kings at one time.¹

The specific political issues in fact, were drawn quite clearly in the dispute. Most of them surfaced in the first open clash between Daniells and Kellogg at the November 1902 Annual Council in Battle Creek. Daniells' two main concerns were (1) that the church should not go into debt to build new institutions and (2) that individual committee members had the right to think and act for themselves. Subsidiary to these two concerns were the matter of raising money to rebuild the sanitarium and the circulation and theology of Kellogg's book *The Living Temple*. All of these issues, however, revolved around one central issue—control. Kellogg refused to bring his sanitarium and its related agencies under the administration of the General Conference.²

While G. A. Irwin and I. H. Evans felt that the conflict was primarily one of administration, they also conceded that the doctor's doctrine "was not so straight either." Personally, Daniells also saw the issue as a basic power struggle. "I quite agree with you," he wrote to Irwin, "that the question of administration lies very much at the root of this great controversy." But he felt that "the question of doctrinal truth" had also come to assume "large proportions."³


²G. A. Irwin to A. G. Daniells, August 28, 1904, RG 11: Fld 1904-I; A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, October 5, 1904, RG 11: Lb 34, GCAr.

³A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, December 12, 1902, RG 11: Fld 1902-I, GACr.
For Prescott, the doctrinal issue became a primary concern and the weight of this aspect of the struggle rested largely on his shoulders. As vice president of the church, editor of its leading periodical, and the loyal ally of Daniells, however, Prescott also found himself prominently involved in the intense, drawn-out, political struggle.

At the height of the conflict Kellogg fumed that Prescott was the "wildest and most unsafe man that has ever undertaken to pose as a leader of this denomination."\(^1\) Daniells quite to the contrary was of the firm opinion that the professor's "good judgement and strength at the helm" was just what was needed during the crisis.\(^2\) To present Prescott's role in the struggles this chapter follows a basic chronological outline. A background delineating some of Prescott's differences with Kellogg is noticed first. This is followed by a discussion of the developments in the unfolding drama.

Background

Like both Daniells and Kellogg, Prescott also possessed a very strong will and had definite ideas.\(^3\) The strong personalities of the two men had led to earlier clashes between Prescott and the sanitarium director. In 1891, Prescott had protested to the General Conference committee over Kellogg's practice of enticing students


\(^2\)A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, February 15, 1932, DF 198, EGWRC-DC.

\(^3\)Schwarz suggests that the similarity between Kellogg's and Daniells' personalities may have accounted for a measure of the conflict. "John Harvey Kellogg: American Health Reformer," p. 394.
away from Battle Creek College to attend medical school or to take up courses of study at the sanitarium. In late 1892, Kellogg felt that Prescott was deliberately opposing his educational efforts at the sanitarium. He complained to Olsen, who subsequently reported the difficulty to Mrs. White: "I have sometimes wished that Prof. Prescott could better appreciate the needs of the work at the Sanitarium. I wish that he might be more thoroughly interested in the educational department of the work there." Olsen wondered if a word from Mrs. White would help Prescott. "If your mind should be led out to write anything on this question, I think it would be a blessing to the work," he wrote.

The two men had also clashed in the early 1890s over the issue of faith healing, but their biggest disagreement occurred in 1893 over Prescott's slowness to implement "hygienic" principles in the college dining room. While Kellogg acknowledged that to have introduced the changes earlier would have been difficult, he nevertheless felt that 1893 was the time to change and was frustrated at the college board's reluctance to move. He complained to Olsen that in his opinion, the board was "scarcely more than a figurehead" as far as the management of the college was concerned anyway: a sentiment that indicated something of the tension that continued between the two men and the institutions they represented.

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1 BCC Fac Min, April 26, 1891.
2 J. H. Kellogg to O. A. Olsen, November 18, 1892, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902); O. A. Olsen to E. G. White, December 4, 1892, RG 11: Bx 49 Lb 8, GCAR.

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It seems, in fact, that Prescott was not converted to a complete "health reform" diet until midway through his stay in England. According to Kellogg, the professor was finally convinced by Dr. Kress, who had gone to labor in England shortly after the 1899 General Conference. Kress, at the time, was actually rather extreme in his views, but both Prescott and Waggoner became eager disciples, and apparently took things even further than their tutor. As Kellogg expressed it later, "they became converted so suddenly that in straightening up, they bent over backwards a little and in their enthusiasm taught the people stricter doctrines than they were prepared to receive." 1

Health reform finally became attractive to Prescott because he saw it as an extension of the gospel. 2 Thus in the 1901 General Conference session there was a strong theological rationale behind his keenness to see a unifying of the medical and ministerial interests of the church. He labored hard to achieve this unity. In the months that followed the session he played a leading role in developing "The Forward Movement," a program designed to create a spirit of harmony and cooperation between the two worker groups in the church.

At their 1901 autumn meeting, the new General Conference committee voted to conduct a special six-month educational effort "on behalf of the gospel of health." A committee was appointed and Prescott was designated its chairman. The plan called for the printing of articles in the church papers, the development of study

1 J. H. Kellogg to E. G. White, 1903 (copy), W. C. White Lib 41, EGWRC-DC.

2 W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 14, 1900, EGWRC-AU.
materials for seminars in the local church, and the formation of
local committees to foster the program in different parts of the
field. Kellogg was assigned the preparation of the study materials
which would be published as a twenty-six chapter book entitled The
Living Temple. The program was scheduled to start in January 1902.¹

The end of December 1901 found Prescott as chairman of the committee,
belatedly yet vigorously promoting the program to the field. In a
series of circulars sent out to both local conferences and local
church leaders he stated that "the time has come for a genuine
revival of interest throughout the whole denomination in that phase
of Gospel truth which relates to the body as the temple of the living
God." Playing his familiar role of bridge builder, Prescott diplo-
matically explained to the conference presidents that although "more
recently there has been cherished on the part of some a feeling akin
to antagonism between the two classes of workers known as the
evangelical and the medical," the recent General Conference had
attempted to correct this. The plan was to unite in the General
Conference committee "the different departments" and "the various
phases of this message." It was now their task, he asserted, to
bring the church membership to an understanding "that there is but
one message to give." Such a movement he hoped would be a stepping
stone to a revival experience.²

¹"Circular to Conference Presidents," [December 31], 1901, RG
Osborne to W. W. Prescott, December 24, 1901, RG 21: 8x75 Lb 32, GCAr.

²"Circular to Church Elders," "Circular to Conference Presi-
dents," [December 31], 1901, RG 11: Presidential (1901-1950) Case
File: "Forward Movement," GCAr.
Mrs. White lent her enthusiastic support to the program. In the first issue of the Review in the new year (1902), she wrote: "We want to unite with Dr. Kellogg in doing this work. He knows what he is talking about; . . ." Thus the year began with high expectations and the best of intentions; but before the year was out, the thin fabric of unity was torn by a series of unexpected events that left the two branches of the work more divided than ever.

1902—A Year of Disasters

On February 13 the church was shocked to learn that the two main sanitarium buildings had burned to the ground. Kellogg, who was out of town at the time, returned late the same day, but before he had even inspected the disaster, he was busy "making plans for a new and better structure." Immediately after the disastrous fire, Daniells wrote to Prescott from Kansas urging restraint in the rebuilding program. Prescott met with the sanitarium board at their first meeting and presented Daniells' concerns. He also conferred privately with Kellogg who gave assurance that the building would be built no larger than could actually be paid for in cash.

Shortly after the fire, city council members, public-minded citizens, and businessmen concerned with the impact on their own businesses if the sanitarium was moved, initiated a move to support

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3 The cash was to come from the insurance and cash donations. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, February 20, 23, 1902, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCar.
its rebuilding in Battle Creek. They set up a committee of investigation with whom Dr. Kellogg met. He assured them that if they would contribute to the rebuilding and meet other requirements, the management of the sanitarium would erect a building "far surpassing the structures destroyed by fire" in capacity, design, convenience, and beauty. Daniells strongly favored a moderate building. In the midst of the citizens' investigations, in Daniells' absence, Kellogg and Prescott again consulted together. Prescott, anxious about the citizens' enquiry, stressed to Kellogg that he should keep close to the "organized work" and that "the Sanitarium work would meet with its highest success only as it was carried forward as a definite part of this general advent movement." Kellogg felt he needed the counsel of "representative brethren," so a number of union and local conference presidents were called in. Kellogg was given the go-ahead, plans were quickly drawn up, and estimates called for. It was evident to those directly concerned that already there were different expectations about the project. Kellogg was saying different things to different people, and his laborious statement in the Review to affirm that he was not building bigger and better but was building in harmony with the counsel of the brethren did nothing to quiet all the fears. Eighteen months later Daniells recalled that in the clash he had had with Kellogg in England, Kellogg had boasted about his schemes to bring the Battle Creek citizens to

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their knees, and his intention not to move from Battle Creek even while pretending to the General Conference committee that he wanted them to counsel and pray over the matter. This destroyed Daniells' confidence in Kellogg as an honest man. ¹

A month after the sanitarium burned, the General Conference made a gesture of financial support when it decided to use Kellogg's new book as a fund-raising tool. Kellogg would donate the book to the church and the General Conference would push its sale to help finance the sanitarium in a plan similar to the Christ's Object Lessons campaign to raise funds for the schools. Daniells was enthusiastic about the prospects for he had heard good reports of the manuscript. Later, though, he cautioned Kellogg that some brethren were concerned that he was "grazing about very close to pantheism" and suggested that the book should be "entirely free from any just criticism" if it were to be circulated so widely. Daniells said he was glad that Kellogg had asked Prescott to critically review the manuscript because he was sure that "what will pass his reading will stand with the people." ²

Relations between the men were apparently still cordial when Kellogg left for church meetings in London in mid-May. Prescott, as the leading resident church official, had served as Master of


Ceremonies at the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the new sanitarium. Kellogg also arranged with him to officiate at the graduation at the medical college in June while Kellogg was in England. Before Kellogg left, however, he and Prescott had several interviews about *The Living Temple*. The two decided it would be necessary to delay publishing the book because the field was not ready. Prescott suggested to Daniells that he thought the delay was rather fortunate because he was concerned about portions of the book that might be misunderstood. He mentioned these to Kellogg and agreed to write out his criticism. This he did, sending a copy to Kellogg, Daniells, and Waggoner, all of whom were in London for the meetings.

Prescott felt that in his book Kellogg stated some things none too carefully. He was concerned that the statement, "God himself enters into our bodies in the taking of food" would be misunderstood if not qualified. He was also unhappy about such expressions as "There is a tree-maker in the tree, a flower-maker in the flower." He also felt that some texts of Scripture were used incorrectly and was troubled over Kellogg's treatment of the will, consciousness, and the soul. While Prescott was not against the consideration of new ideas, he felt that a book designed for mass distribution was not the appropriate channel. Thus he suggested it

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1 RH, May 20, 1902, p. 7; July 29, 1902, p. 10.
2 W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 19, 1902, RG 11: 3x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. *Christ's Object Lessons* was still being circulated in the field. Prescott wrote out his criticisms the same day he wrote to Daniells.
would be better to eliminate several portions of the book. ¹

Kellogg's experience across the Atlantic was not one to predispose him to consider changes enthusiastically. He became disillusioned when he saw how many of his minister colleagues were meat-eaters in spite of their late promotion of the "Forward Movement."² Furthermore, his personal clash with Daniells over the financing of the proposed sanitarium for England frustrated him to distraction. Kellogg felt that Daniells was stubborn, unreasonable, and uncommitted to the health work; Daniells meanwhile seems to have felt that Kellogg was bulldozing him into plans against his own judgment and using the General Conference simply to further his own interests. "We had a very plain, clear-cut, stiff argument," recalled Daniells, "with the result that the doctor entirely broke with me."³

The various parties returned to America in late summer, sul­len and suspicious. In November the controversy erupted publicly at the Annual Council. Soon after his return, Daniells received a

¹[W. W. Prescott], "Suggestions on Matter Found in Galleys 1-129 of Matter for Dr. Kellogg's New Book, 'The Living Temple,'" May 19, 1902, RG 11: Presidential (1901-1950) Case File: J. H. Kellogg, GCAR. These suggestions apparently came from a cursory reading of the manuscript. When Prescott gave the book more exhaustive study later he found more things that disturbed him. See p. 316 below.


³A. G. Daniells to C. W. Flaiz, November 6, 1903, RG 11: Lb 32; A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, December 12, 1902, RG 11: Fld 1902-D, GCAR.
letter from Mrs. White warning him against Kellogg and urging him not to sanction Kellogg's activities. Daniells consequently firmly stood his ground. Three long sessions were held in which the two parties freely exchanged their views of the situation, but Daniells refused to yield his position and his committee supported him.¹

Financial policy was a major issue at the 1902 Council. The General Conference committee voted a number of actions to try to contain Kellogg. They refused the responsibility "for any obligations which they [had] not assumed by their own action" and voted to deny access to general calls for local enterprises. The Council also pointedly stated that the money raised for the British sanitarium would be spent "under the direction of the British Union Conference." The new sanitarium was not to be controlled by Kellogg. In terms of the Battle Creek Sanitarium the effect of these actions was clear. The General Conference was disclaiming responsibility for the increased debt on the sanitarium which Kellogg's board was accruing in spite of strong counsel to the contrary. In a further move to contain Kellogg, Prescott, in December, arranged that the Review and Herald board deny the sanitarium any further credit. Kellogg was enraged. According to Prescott, Kellogg's complaint that he was being driven out of the denomination caught the attention of the press nationwide.²

¹E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, September 5, 1902, EGRWC-AU. A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, March 13, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-W; Stenographic Reports of Fifty-Third Meeting of GCC, November 15-16, 1902, RG 1: General Conference Committee Folder: Stenographic Reports, GCAR.

²A. G. Daniells, "An Important Council," RH, December 9, 1902, p. 6; "General Conference Council," RH, December 9, 1902,
Another major issue of the 1902 Council was *The Living Temple*. Although Kellogg expressed willingness to change the objectionable parts, a committee comprised of Prescott, Kellogg, A. T. Jones, and David Paulson was appointed to review the manuscript. A week later, Kellogg, Jones, and Paulson reported nothing objectionable in the book. Prescott, however, submitted a minority report—an elaboration of the criticisms he had presented earlier—and took "several hours" to present it. He considered the book to be fatally flawed. The General Conference committee, as Daniells had anticipated, accepted Prescott's minority report and declined to go ahead with the campaign. Kellogg, apparently undeterred, immediately ordered a personal printing of 5,000 copies from the Review and Herald. On December 30, the final calamity of the year occurred. The printing plant of the church was destroyed by fire and thus Kellogg's order was not filled. Determined as ever, Kellogg quickly engaged another publisher and by May copies were available.

1903—A Year of Crises

Crisis followed crisis in rapid succession in 1903. Just days after the publishing-house fire, several communications were received from Mrs. White pointing out that the recent fires were divine judgments on the work at Battle Creek. Daniells was at this time in Mexico. Therefore the communications came to Prescott, who

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p. 17, SDAPA Bd Min, December 2, 1902, RG: 251; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 18, 1903, RG 11: Flm 1903-P, GCAr.

felt that they were actually intended for the church. His colleagues agreed, and a meeting was held in the unheated Tabernacle. (Heating had come from the publishing house.) The letters were read and there was talk about church members and institutions leaving the city. Kellogg, already disturbed at Prescott's refusal to publish advertisements for sanitarium bonds in the Review, was incensed. He exploded to W. C. White: "Prof. Prescott seems to have lost his head completely; . . . [he] appears to me to be in an unbalanced state of mind."  

Rumors soon began to circulate around the sanitarium "hill" that Mrs. White had turned against Prescott and Daniells, and before the month was out moves were afoot to plan a coup d'etat at the upcoming General Conference session. (Kellogg sympathizers planned to install A. T. Jones as president.) Prescott, however, contrary to Kellogg's assessment, appeared quite cool and in control of things in spite of the great difficulties he as editor encountered in continuing to publish the Review each week from makeshift quarters. He regularly kept Daniells informed of developments and tactfully tried to steer the Review and Herald board through the difficult decisions regarding the extent to which the firm should re-equip, given the uncertainty of whether or not the plant would be moved to another location.  

1 J. H. Kellogg to W. C. White, January 21, 1903, JHKCC, 3x 1 Fld 5; J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, February 8, 1903, JHKCC, 3x 1 Fld 6, AUHR. Prescott felt that the testimony "left a marked effect upon the people." W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 18, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P. See also W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 30, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P, GCAr.  

2 W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, Fld 1903-P, GCAr. The rumors were apparently sparked by a supposed letter from Mrs. White that was reported to have condemned
At the General Conference session in Oakland, the threatened attempt to dislodge Daniells and Prescott came to nought, but a vigorous discussion did ensue over ownership of church institutions. Formal action was taken to incorporate the denominational medical institutions into the church structure, but Kellogg defiantly vowed that he would not be bound by the regulation.¹ Later, at meetings in Battle Creek immediately after the conference, A. T. Jones attempted to mediate the dispute. Confessions were made on both sides and an attempt was made to patch over the difficulties. The settlement, however, was only temporary. Within a few weeks Daniells felt that the medical work was still competing with the church. "The flower and culture of this denomination is being swung almost entirely into the various lines of the medical branch," he stated to W. C. White. He wished that Mrs. White would "sound a ringing note of reform." Prescott heartily concurred. He felt that the basic issues were still unresolved and hoped Mrs. White would correct what he considered Kellogg's misuse of her writings in his "set and determined effort to make the medical work an independent movement."²


¹GC Bulletin, April 3, 1903, p. 67; April 6, 1903, pp. 73-82.

between the two branches, and the controversy that developed over Kellogg's efforts to re-open Battle Creek College under its old charter added even more tension. Kellogg had decided that a college was necessary for his medical students to make-up deficiencies and to keep accreditation for his medical school. To many it seemed a genuine cause, but the leaders of the church thought they detected other motives. They felt Kellogg was simply out to attract more of the best youth in the church to Battle Creek. "It is a deep-laid scheme to get control of the education of our young people," wrote Daniells, and added, perhaps ungraciously, "There is nothing Dr. Kellogg desires more than to innoculate the young... of this denomination with his new philosophy."¹ Prescott publicly opposed the venture through the pages of the Review, calling it an ill-advised move that would only bring confusion. The episode further polarised the two groups and created more bad feelings. According to Prescott, Kellogg was "greatly stirred" over the issue.²

Shortly after the move to Washington, Prescott became worried about the circulation being given to Kellogg's book. Hoping to begin a series of studies on the "principles" the book involved, he

¹Daniells saw the scheme as a trap to "force" all young people interested in medical work to go "through the mill at Battle Creek" (A. G. Daniells to W. T. Knox, September 2, 1903, RG 11: Lb 33; A. G. Daniells to I. H. Evans, August 20, 1903, RG 11: Lb 31, GCAR. J. H. Kellogg to Frederick Griggs, January 20, 1903, FGCC, AUHR.

wrote to Daniells: "we might as well face the fact that we have started in now for a campaign which will not end until these things have been fully and openly considered." He added a short time later that he feared that "the real crisis of the whole situation" was "now drawing on." His fears were correct. The crisis occurred at the 1903 Annual Council in Washington.¹

At the October Council a determined effort by the medical workers in attendance, led by David Paulson, almost swayed the rest of the Council in favor of accepting the ideas in The Living Temple. The timely arrival of some explicit communications from Mrs. White, who had eventually glanced through the book three or four weeks earlier (September 23), turned the tide.² According to Magan, Kellogg made a heroic effort to bend himself to work cordially with Daniells and Prescott. Magan stated that he made open confessions and agreed to eliminate all theological references in The Living Temple. At the close of the meetings, Kellogg had several long conversations with both Prescott and Daniells on theology.³

According to Daniells, their discussion was friendly but unconvincing. Kellogg said that he had recently changed his views on

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 30, 1903, EGWRC-DC. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, September 1, 10, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P, GCAR.


the Trinity and now his view was that "it was God the Holy Ghost, and not God the Father that filled all space, and every living thing." Daniells was sure when they parted that "the Doctor did not understand himself, nor the character of his teaching." At the same time, Kellogg tried to get Prescott to help him correct the book's misleading statements, but Prescott was wary. He stubbornly refused. According to Daniells, Kellogg urged Prescott to go through the book and "cut out" all he believed erroneous. Prescott eventually consented to give the book a careful examination and "write the doctor his decision."\(^1\)

Kellogg was anxious about the book because the sanitarium was in deep financial trouble and he was planning a campaign to sell 500,000 copies to liquidate its debts. In fact, he had hoped to sell 100,000 before Christmas. Daniells and Prescott, on the other hand, were still suspicious of the doctor's motives. In their view, his desire to change the book was simply a change of tactics to maintain his dominating influence. They had heard reports of Kellogg's "unholy scheming" and that in conversations he had said that if Daniells and Prescott would "fix it up" the book would have the stamp of orthodoxy. Consequently both men became quite stubborn and uncompromising.\(^2\) They still feared "domination" by the medical branch.

\(^1\)A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, October 29, 1903, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAr. It appears that Daniells was more intransigent than Prescott on this occasion over the matter of going through The Living Temple again. He was apparently not convinced that Prescott should consider working on it again.

\(^2\)Ibid.
Prescott, during the preceding twelve months had quite conscientiously come to the view that the theology of the book was very seriously misleading. The testimonies that came from Mrs. White in October simply confirmed his own study of the issues. He saw no way for compromise and the opportunity for reconciliation passed. After Kellogg's discussions with him, Prescott spent a full day examining the book again and was "thoroughly convinced" that it was impossible to revise the theological parts of the book. He wrote Kellogg of his convictions.¹

Unfortunately, before Kellogg received Prescott's letter, the sanitarium had sent out announcements all over the country that the General Conference committee was revising the book and it would be ready in three weeks. Even though Kellogg was not directly involved with the announcements, the events confirmed Daniells' and Prescott's worst fears. Before Daniells even knew of the circulars, he had written to W. C. White: "If another serious rupture should break out between the doctor and Brother Prescott and me, I would want you to know just where we stand." He was convinced Kellogg had not really changed at the October meeting.²

At the start, Prescott had been a little uncertain as to where W. C. White would stand. "So much depends, humanly speaking, upon the general attitude which W. C. W.[hite] takes in regard to the

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 30, 1903, EGWRC-DC.
W. W. Prescott to J. H. Kellogg, October 28, 1903, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAr.

²J. H. Kellogg to W. W. Prescott, January 16, 1904, RG 11: Fld 1904-K; A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, October 29, 1903, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAr.
Prescott and Daniells also knew that colleagues of Kellogg's were able to report that they had talked privately with Mrs. White and that she really supported his cause. Kellogg himself claimed that he had a "friend at court" in the person of Sara McEntire. As a case in point, Magan had reported that Mrs. White had told him personally that "Daniells and Prescott were trying to knife Dr. Kellogg." Such reports contradicted the private testimonies Daniells and Prescott had been receiving.

Daniells protested to Mrs. White about this "trading on your influence" and the "private walk to your residence" that some people claimed. He reported that he and Prescott had considered publishing the manuscripts they had received but had not done so. They wanted to avoid being "charged with hostility" toward some of their brethren. Neither did they want to be accused of being hard-hearted. It now seemed, however, that the only way to clear things up would be to publish the testimonies they had received and they appealed for permission to do so.

When the sanitarium distributed the flyers for a modified edition of The Living Temple in late December 1903, Kellogg claimed

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1 W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, October 13, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GACr.
2 Kellogg had claimed this in a letter to Butler. G. A. Irwin to E. W. Farnsworth, June 26, 1904, RG 11: Australasian Union Lb 33, GCAr. See also W. C. White to W. S. Sadler, January 20, 1904, RG 9: W. C. White Fld 1, GCAr.
3 A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, January 8, 1904, RG 11: Lb 33, GCAr.
4 A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, December 24, 1903, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAr.
that the circulation had been approved by W. C. White, who 'could see no objection to it.'¹ According to Kellogg, W. C. White had asked his mother if she had any objection and none had been raised. Now it was Prescott's turn to be angry. "For over a year now we have tried to stand against this thing. And you know something of the experience through which we have passed in doing so," he wrote to White. He reminded White that in October his mother had finally come out with a clear statement against the book. If White had indeed consented to the new moves to circulate the book, he stated very bluntly "I do not see why your course in the matter is any more excusable than Dr. Kellogg's." He objected strongly to the way in which Kellogg was able to hide "behind you and your mother. . . . You can perhaps imagine something how we feel over the matter. I hardly need to attempt to put it into words."²

The same day Prescott wrote to W. C. White, he wrote plainly to Kellogg. He protested that the modifications made in the book eliminating "the most striking expressions" did not change "the general character of the teaching in the least." He maintained that the issue was more than just theological hair-splitting. The whole theological base of the book was subversive.

White replied suggesting that, given the overall situation, it would perhaps be best for him and his mother to join Daniells and

¹The book had been modified by cutting out the few pages that dealt specifically with the personality of God. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, January 10, RG 11: Lb 33, GCAr.

²Ibid. A dozen other issues were crowding in on the Washington leaders at the time. Letters a few days later manifest a much more cordial spirit.
Prescott in Washington. Prescott quickly arranged accommodations. W. C. White came in February and Mrs. White joined them about a month later. Shortly after White's arrival, Prescott reported: "From some of the things which he has said, I feel quite certain that a view of the situation as it now is has been presented to his mother." He added, "I am quite sure that we are likely to see further developments in this experience which will indicate more clearly the real attitude of those who have been prominent in it." They had not long to wait.

The Berrien Springs Meeting—1904

A session of the Lake Union Conference was scheduled for May 17-26 at Berrien Springs. With Mrs. White, her son, and the principal men of the denomination planning to be in attendance, the meeting held promise of providing an occasion for the factions in the church to reconcile their differences. Unfortunately, however, the meeting did not become an occasion for reconciliation. Instead, it served only to polarize the groups so badly that hopes for reconciliation were finally all but given up. For Prescott, who unintentionally figured rather prominently in the meeting, it was an exceedingly trying time.

1W. W. Prescott to J. H. Kellogg, January 10, 1904, RG 11: Lb 33, GCAR. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, January 24, 1904, EGWRC-DC.

2W. W. Prescott to J. W. Watt, February 18, 1904, RG 11: Lb 33, GCAR. These incidents probably form the background to the 1910 remark attributed to Daniells by J. S. Washburn. Daniells allegedly stated, "We had all we could do to keep Sister White from going with Dr. Kellogg when the conflict was on" (J. S. Washburn, "An Open Letter to A. G. Daniells and the General Conference," May 1, 1922, p. 5, AUHR).
Prescott joined Daniells in travelling with Mrs. White's party to Michigan. They caught the train in Washington on May 15. Shortly after Mrs. White's arrival at Berrien Springs and her inspection of the campus, she was asked to take a series of morning sermons. Her first was delivered on Wednesday, May 18, and she used the occasion to address the problem of pantheism in The Living Temple. In graphic language she explained that when she eventually looked the book over on September 23, 1903, she immediately recognized the same sentiments that she had met in the earliest days of her ministry. She issued a strong warning again against their reception.¹

Prescott was slated to give the major Friday evening address, and he consulted with Mrs. White in advance about his topic. He too planned to talk about the pantheistic tendencies of Kellogg's book. Mrs. White advised him to go ahead. Later that Friday morning, however, Mrs. White had second thoughts. She realized that some who had come to the meeting would react negatively and might feel they should defend the doctor. She wrote a short letter urging that nothing be said that would give them occasion to side with Kellogg. She gave the letter to W. C. White to deliver to Prescott, but for some reason of his own White chose not to deliver the letter until after Prescott had given his talk.²

¹ A. L. White, Ellen G. White, p. 331. Selected passages of The Living Temple were actually read to Mrs. White by her son. Her strong condemnation of the book came immediately afterwards. E. G. White, "The Foundation of Our Faith," MS 46, 1904, EGWRC-AU.

² This was evidently not just a case of forgetfulness. According to Kellogg, W. C. White later stated in public that Prescott had some hesitancy about giving the address but that he eventually
Kellogg himself arrived on the campus on Friday evening and
was present for at least a part of Prescott's talk. During the
talk, Prescott quoted from some book other than *The Living Temple*
to make his points about pantheism. Some in the audience received
the impression that he was implying that Kellogg had written the
statements and reportedly challenged Prescott on the point. Pres­
cott allegedly concluded his talk "with a dramatic flourish" and cast
the book to the floor. The talk did what Mrs. White feared; it
brought others to Kellogg's defense.2

On the Sabbath following Kellogg's arrival, feelings against
Prescott and Daniells ran high. Emotions were even more severely
strained by the funeral on Sabbath of Percy Magan's wife, who had
died in tragic circumstances. The situation was further inflamed
unintentionally on Sunday by remarks made by Mrs. White about the

went ahead because W. C. White himself urged him to do so. J. H.
Kellogg to G. I. Butler, June 1, 1904, JHKCC, Bx 2 Fl 4, AUHR. E.
S. White to A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott, May 20, 1904, DF 354,
frequently referred to the note that Willie kept in his pocket all
15, 1941, cited in Schwarz, "John Harvey Kellogg: American Health
Reformer," p. 401.

1Kellogg stated that the talk was "too disgusting to be
endured. I listened five minutes and couldn't stand it any longer"
(J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, June 1, 1904, JHKCC, Bx 2 Lb 4, AUHR).

2Vande Vere reports these items on the basis of impressions
of one or two participants several decades later. Sources regarding
the meeting are scarce. See his unpublished manuscript, "The
Berrien Springs Meeting (1904)," DF 354, EGWRC-AU. E. K. Vande
Vere to G. M. Valentine, January 11, 1982. It seems unlikely that
Prescott would deliberately give the impression that he was quoting
Kellogg. In the highly charged emotional atmosphere, however, such
an impression could perhaps have been gained. Daniells does not
mention the meeting at all in his detailed report to G. A. Irwin,
August 5, 1904, RG 11: Fl 1904-1, GCAr.
blame for Mrs Magan's death. Her statements about evil speaking were mistakenly understood by many to refer to Daniells and Prescott. Thus on Monday morning, a major confrontation took place. A. T. Jones, at the 5:45 a.m. meeting, presumably after a short devotional, began a spirited two-hour reply to Prescott's Friday night talk. Jones had spent a good deal of time checking recent Reviews, and most of his talk consisted of extracts read from the Review purporting to show how Prescott himself had taught the same things as Kellogg. Kellogg also took the floor and asserted that Prescott was in fact the source of many of the ideas in The Living Temple. To add to the confusion, Sutherland and Magan, in the discussions that ensued, submitted their resignations from Emmanuel Missionary College. So intense did the proceedings become that breakfast was forgotten and the meeting continued until 1:00 p.m., resolving eventually in a series of confessions.

1 W. C. White asserted that the arrival of Kellogg stirred up the feelings. W. C. White to May White, May 26, 1904, W. C. White Lb 24, EGWRC-OC. Some time late in 1903, someone had reported that Mrs. White had turned against P. T. Magan. When his wife heard the report she suffered a mental breakdown. Her death occurred on Friday, May 20, 1904. When Mrs. White wrote just before the meeting closed, correcting the rumors that Prescott and Daniells had spread the reports, Haskell and Butler refused to read the letter to the conference. W. C. White read it to the session himself. The opposition to Magan had apparently come from Battle Creek itself. E. G. White, untitled MS, May 24, 1904 (MS 58, 1904), DF 354, EGWRC-AU. See also W. C. White to E. G. White, May 30, 1904, W. C. White Lb 25, EGWRC-OC.

2 Vande Vere's reconstruction of the dialogue in which Prescott replied to Jones by acknowledging that he had changed his mind is undocumented and conflicts with other evidence. Kellogg in fact asserts that Prescott did not confess that he had taught wrong things. J. H. Kellogg to S. H. Lane, June 13, 1904, RG 11: Fld 1904-K, SCAr. Vande Vere suggests that Prescott changed his views after a testimony by Mrs. White was read to the 1899 General Conference session, "William Warren Prescott: Administrator," p. 19. Schwarz

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Mrs. White's attempts to bring the parties together had come to nought; she left the meeting to return to Washington completely exhausted. Kellogg and his supporters, taking courage from the show of strength they were able to muster and from Mrs. White's efforts to draw close to Kellogg, interpreted the meeting as a significant victory. Immediately after his return home, Kellogg sought further discussions with a group comprised of Prescott, Daniells, Butler, Haskell, and W. C. White. Declining to participate collectively, the group designated Prescott to meet with Kellogg. He travelled to Battle Creek and his interview with Kellogg lasted until 1:30 a.m. It did not, however, produce any change except an agreement by Prescott to avoid what might be construed as attacks on Kellogg through the Review.¹

Kellogg followed his interview with Prescott by an all-night meeting with W. C. White. Here he suggested a meeting of the medical men and the General Conference to discuss the disputed theology. White absolutely refused to consider this, as did Daniells. Prescott's reaction was that "if such a thing was to be done, he would be ready to buy his ticket for Europe." (Spicer's stenographer thought follows this interpretation, Lightbearers to the Remnant, p. 289. This interpretation appears to be undocumented and conflicts with other evidence. Prescott did not emphasize his "Gospel of Health" until late 1899 and early 1900 (after his encounter with Kress). See p. 303 above. See also E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, February 18, 1900, RG 11: E. G. White Special Testimonies, Testimonies on Special Subjects; E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, November 12, 1900, RG 9: Fld S. N. Haskell, GCAr. See also pp. 331ff below.

¹A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, July 8, 1904, RG 11: Lb 34; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 27, 1904, RG 11: Fld 1904-P, GCAr.
that Spicer was glad he already had his.) Mrs. White, realizing that
her efforts to help Kellogg were being interpreted by the medical
workers as a victory over their brethren, strenuously advised against
the proposed doctrinal discussions. She stated later in July that
many were so blind they did not yet discern the misleading character
of the sentiments in The Living Temple.¹

On this matter Prescott was still battling with Kellogg, who
had re-issued The Living Temple under a new title, The Miracle of Life.
The professor reviewed the new book in harmony with Kellogg's request
but found just as many difficulties as he did with the former volume.
"Although it protests against pantheism," he wrote, "there is a
general tendency . . . to represent God as a universal presence."
Prescott felt that Kellogg's "constant emphasis" on the idea of the
"all-pervading intelligence" changed the scriptural teaching of the
omnipresence of God into a false argument in favor of a pantheistic
conception of God. He stated very plainly, though, that he was not
surprised to find this teaching still in the book because Kellogg
had told him he had not changed his opinions in the least since he
wrote The Living Temple.²

¹Estella Houser to W. A. Spicer, June 6, 1904, RG 21: Bx 78
Lb 38, GCAR. E. G. White to Union Conference Presidents, June 15,
1904; E. G. White, "The Berrien Springs Meeting," (MS 74, 1904),
EGWRC-AU. W. C. White stated years later that his mother was con
vinced Kellogg would have been permanently reconciled to the church
had not his associates at this meeting flattered and justified him
instead of helping him see that "he had sinned and ought to repent"
(W. C. White to W. A. Spicer, July 9, 1928, EGWRC-DC).

²W. W. Prescott to J. H. Kellogg, June 9, 1904, RG 11: Fld
1904-P, GCAR.
Whether or not at an earlier period Prescott had himself shared views similar to Kellogg's was a question he had to face on a number of occasions. A. T. Jones' attempt at the Berrien Springs meeting to show Prescott's culpability in the matter sounded persuasive to many. He argued that not until November 1902 did Prescott's editorials manifest a "specific change." Both Butler and Haskell were apparently convinced. Kellogg even felt that the Review ought to make a public statement about Prescott's change. Daniells on the other hand felt that Jones was far from proving his point. He recounted to Irwin that at the memorable, marathon, Monday-morning meeting, I. H. Evans had stood up after Jones' and Kellogg's lengthy speeches and asked how Prescott's editorials in the Review could possibly have been the source of some of the ideas in Kellogg's book. The editorials were written six months after the book was written. According to Daniells, Jones simply "looked into blank space and said nothing," while Kellogg acknowledged that "perhaps there had been a mistake on this point," although he thought that Prescott had "perhaps" taught similar things earlier at the sanitarium.

Apparently one or two others had made the same charge against

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2 J. H. Kellogg to S. H. Lane, June 13, 1904, RG 11: Fld 1904-K, GCAr. J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, June 15, 1904, JHKCC, Bx 2 Fld 4; July 31, JHKCC, Bx 2 Fld 5, AUHR. A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, July 9, 1904, RG 11: Lb 34; G. A. Irwin to A. G. Daniells, August 28, 1904, RG 11: Australasian Union Lb 1, GACr.
Prescott even before the Berrien Springs meeting.\textsuperscript{1} In his enthusiasm to link the "evangelical" and the "medical" work, Prescott among others, had used some expressions about the process of sanctification, which gave cause for concern. In late 1900 he had written with some earnestness to Mrs. White about his new insights. "I feel as though I had a new revelation of the truth for us in the books of Daniel and the Revelation." Prescott apparently saw a good basis for the health message in these books.\textsuperscript{2}

In the last years of the nineteenth century the church experienced a greatly heightened sense of the imminence of the second coming of Christ. (For example, during this period Prescott even doubted the need of taking out a three year lease on his home in London.) In this eschatological context many in the church became enthused with the idea that if one lived in accordance with the principles of health reform they would not see death but would become increasingly physically and spiritually perfect. (Some said this would even extend to having grey hair restored to its original color.) This condition of "physical righteousness" would enable believers to be translated at Christ's Advent. According to Haskell the idea was founded on what Mrs. White had said about the

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1} Andross had been concerned over some of Prescott's extreme statements on sanctification in England. E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, February 18, 1900, RG 11: E. G. White Special Testimonies, "Testimonies on Special Subjects," GCAR. A copy of this letter was apparently sent to Mrs. White. Andross later mentioned that after some discussion with Loughborough and himself, Prescott had let the issue die "as a hobby." E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, November 12, 1900, RG 9: Fld S. N. Haskell," GCAR. See also A. G. Daniells to O. A. Olsen, December 13, 1903, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAR.

\textsuperscript{2} W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 14, 1900, EGWRC-AU.
\end{footnotesize}
translation of Enoch and Elijah in one of her pamphlets, Redemption, or the First Advent of Christ with His Life and Ministry. Prescott apparently saw added support for the concept in the experience of Daniel in Babylon (regarding his diet and improved health) and became an enthusiastic exponent of it. Unsure about the idea, Haskell wrote to W. C. White and his mother for advice. According to Haskell, W. C. White seemed to see nothing wrong with the basic idea and suggested that the children of Israel "could have been translated and made immortal during the time of their existence, if they had faithfully kept God's commandments."

Apparently others added to the theory ideas about God's restoring work in the natural world that emphasized God's presence in nature. This led some to the conclusion that all life should be respected because it is God's life and that even bugs and mosquitoes should not be killed—an emphasis that was particularly popular at Battle Creek where Sutherland was encouraging farm work at the college. According to Haskell, Prescott did not entertain these conclusions but simply emphasized the "Gospel of health."

Four years later, in December 1903, Mrs. White, in a letter to Daniells, recalled how at the 1901 General Conference she had been warned about some of Waggoner's "extreme views of sanctification." She said these "over-strained ideas" and "over-drawn expressions"

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1 E. G. White, Redemption or the First Advent of Christ with His Life and Ministry (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press, 1877), pp. 24, 81. S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, October 25, November 10, 23, 1899; S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, February 5, May 9, 1900; W. W. Prescott to S. N. Haskell, January 15, 1900; W. C. White to S. N. Haskell, April 18, 1900, W. C. White Lb 15, EGWRC-DC.

2 S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, February 5, 1900, EGWRC-DC.
used by both Prescott and Waggoner should be feared and shunned. But although Mrs. White stated that she had been shown this in 1901 and had spoken words "intended to counteract their [the expressions Waggoner and Prescott were using] influence," she apparently did not mention the matter specifically until the end of 1903. In fact, in the period after the 1901 conference, Mrs. White wrote a number of communications to Prescott encouraging him in his gospel emphasis, stating that this preaching was just what the church needed.¹ In his reply to Mrs. White, Daniells reported that he had had many talks on the question with Prescott, and Prescott stated that he had become aware of some of the dangers just before he left England. Prescott also claimed, however, that while there was "an apparent likeness [to Kellogg's views of God in nature] yet there was an immeasurable difference between the two views."²

It seems clear then that Prescott did not suddenly change his views in November 1902, as Jones alleged. Six months earlier he had in fact written his first hurried critique of Kellogg's proof sheets for The Living Temple. He had pointed out that some expressions Kellogg used would be misunderstood unless they were "qualified and further developed." Some of these expressions were similar to

¹E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, December 14, 1903, EGWRC-AU.
E. G. White to Elder and Mrs. W. W. Prescott, July 7, 1902, untitled manuscript, July 18, 1902 (MS 104, 1902); "A Change of Feeling Needed," May 24, 1904 (MS 58, 1904), EGWRC-AU.

²A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, January 4, 1904, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAr. The difference unfortunately was not easily observable. At least some of the expressions Jones was able to cite were open to misunderstanding. Prescott's explanation is confirmed by Andross' testimony (E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, November 12, 1900, RG 9: Fld S. N. Haskell, GCAr), and by D. E. Robinson (D. E. Robinson to J. S. Washburn, April 25, 1940, Bx 1 Fld 3, JLMcCC, AUHR).
expressions Prescott himself had used and continued to use, so this would seem to indicate that he had begun to see how they might be given a meaning different from that which was intended. After the November 1902 confrontation with Kellogg, Jones, and Paulson over the Kellogg manuscript, when it became clear that these expressions were being interpreted differently and perhaps erroneously by others, Prescott began avoiding them.¹

Later, in 1904, Prescott expressed himself to Waggoner on the matter. He reminded Waggoner how in England they had seen things "in about the same light," until Waggoner began to present some views about the sanctuary with which he could not agree. "It seemed to me," he wrote, "that your view that every man was a temple of God without regard to his character involved conclusions which I could not admit." Because the conclusions were not then brought forward, however, he did not make them a "public issue." Later, after he had returned to America and found the same conclusions there, he wrote to Waggoner about the matter.²

¹W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 19, 1902, RG 11: Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. In May 1902 Prescott also suggested that if Waggoner's book, The Everlasting Covenants was going to be used for mass distribution, then it perhaps should be revised for the same reason. The expression "God himself enters into our bodies in the taking of food" is one that Prescott used. In the context in which he used it, however, he seems to mean simply that the Christian has a heightened sensitivity to and appreciation of God's provision of life's bounties in Christ; in a spiritual sacramental sense. See E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, February 18, 1900, RG 11: E. G. White Special Testimonies on Special Subjects, GCAR. Prescott seemed to sense that Kellogg was using the expression differently--more in an ontological sense. W. W. Prescott, "Suggestions on Matter, . . . " May 19, 1902, RG 11: Presidential (1901-1950) Case File: J. H. Kellogg, GCAR.

²W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, November 14, 1904, RG 11: Lb 35, GCAR.
After Kellogg had written his book, which seemed to Prescott "to be subversive of the Truth of the Gospel," the professor felt compelled to oppose the teaching. He stated that he had fully expected Waggoner to do the same. "I did not have the least idea that in your teaching about the revelation of God in nature you intended to set forth the same things as are set forth in that book. When therefore both you and Bro. Jones sided with Dr. Kellogg in the controversy over that teaching and openly sustained the book, I was terribly shaken up." Prescott asserted that from his own independent study he could not possibly accept the teaching of the book and added, "If I had known previous to that time [November 1902] that you would give your approval to such a book, I should have been obliged to take a different attitude toward your teaching in years past." He maintained that he "certainly did not include such interpretations of Scripture and such views of God in my teaching." He had decided that if such ideas were to be derived from the expressions he used, there was only one thing for him to do--repudiate the forms of expression.

In October 1903, at Kellogg's request, Prescott summarized his objections to the book. There were three: (1) "A wrong view concerning God and his dwelling place"; (2) a teaching of religion which "set aside any need of atonement and the work of Christ as our high priest in the Sanctuary above"; and (3) "A breaking down of the distinction between the sinner and the Christian by teaching that every man is a temple of God regardless of his faith in Christ."\[^2\]

\[^1\]Ibid.

\[^2\]W. W. Prescott to J. H. Kellogg, October 28, 1903, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAR. A comparison of F. M. and M. H. Rossiter's, The Story...
Prescott increasingly perceived that Kellogg's emphasis negated an objective understanding of the atonement. A focus on man becoming like the divine through his conforming to natural law effectively undermined the need for Christ's substitutionary death on the cross. This subjective view of the atonement (popular in the religious world at the turn of the century), in Prescott's view, denied the very essence of Christianity. In his preaching to counteract these dangers, Prescott gave great emphasis, therefore, to the mediation of Christ and the teaching of the book of Hebrews. He saw that a Christocentric message was the best defense against the teachings of Kellogg. This emphasis, undergirded by his new understanding of the "daily" of Dan 3:12 (a prophetic mandate for explaining the mediation of Christ), became the burden of his writing and preaching the rest of his days.¹

Because over the years Jones' criticism was repeatedly levelled at him, Prescott became quite sensitive on the matter.² For example, he encountered the criticism at the 1919 Bible of a Living Temple (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1902), with Kellogg's Living Temple shows how philosophical and theological Kellogg's book was. Rossiter's work addresses physiology and healthful living but it is entirely free of the kind of theological and philosophical statements that marked Kellogg's work.

¹A. G. Daniells, "The Pacific Union Conference," RH, May 5, 1904, p. 5. This analysis of the theological issues between Kellogg and Prescott is only a survey. The topic merits an exhaustive study of its own taking into particular account the larger theological context in the Christian church at the turn of the century.

²S. N. Haskell's agitation of the criticism in 1907-08 possibly contributed to Prescott being asked to leave the Review. See pp. 399ff. below. J. S. Washburn also publicly attacked him on the issue. The True Genealogy of the Startling Omega (pamphlet), [1921], AUHR. Norman H. Young, "Alona: Ellen G. White and the Kellogg Crisis," 1982, AUHR, offers some helpful insights on the nature of the issues.

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Conference in Washington, when he was giving a series of studies on the mediation of Christ. He recounted his 1904 experience and explained: "I was accused of having held exactly the same views as Dr. Kellogg had, and yet it fell to my lot to fight him face to face in our committee and through the Review." Then he added, "I held exactly the same views [then] as I hold now." To explain what he saw as the vital difference, he stated that Kellogg made no room for the work of Christ as mediator. He maintained that Kellogg saw God as "immediately" in mind and in nature, not "mediately," and therefore vital distinctions were denied and "the fundamentals of the Gospel" were turned aside.  

The explanation, however, did not allay the criticism and Prescott reacted with some feeling. Wounded by the charge that he was "just the same as Dr. Kellogg and Wagner [sic]" and "that I brought it over from England and was really in the mess myself," Prescott temporarily lost control of his emotions. He fumed that he would "rather get out among the heathen and teach them. Very much rather . . . I was not charged with teaching Pantheism [by them], and I brought people out of heathenism." He refused to continue his talk.

1 "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 13, 1919 (copy p. 683), AUHR. Pages of the copy of this document in AUHR have been numbered consecutively. The original at GCAR is not so numbered. Prescott's explanation seems consistent with the facts. In a sermon at Healdsburg in March 1904, at which Mrs. White was present, Prescott strongly emphasized the indwelling Christ--a constant theme of his ministry since 1890--but distinguished between this and God as an essence pervading all nature. He cited Mrs. White in support of the point that if God dwells in all men then man has only to develop what lies within him to attain holiness. "These theories do away with the necessity of the atonement" E. G. White, Testimonies for the Church (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1903), 8:29. See W. W. Prescott, "Sermon at Healdsburg," March 26, 1904 (VFM 323), AUHR.
that day and the meeting temporarily broke up, to be resumed after a prayer season.¹

For his part, Kellogg argued that the real reason the General Conference banned his book was not "heresy," but an attempt "to dodge the responsibility" of raising funds for his sanitarium.² Prescott, however, conscientiously believed that the basic underlying theology of the book was in error. While Kellogg vigorously denied the charge of pantheism and asserted that he believed in a personal God, as a "visible, tangible person sitting upon a throne," Prescott saw repeated themes and references in the book that virtually denied this.³ Statements such as "Sunshine is the True Shekinah, the real presence," "Light is the vehicle, the means by which God enters animate nature," "nature is simply a philosophical name for God," and "God is not behind nature, nor above nature, he is in nature," the professor took seriously. They were concepts he had never believed in. He saw in them a reflection of the liberal, pantheistic "New Thought" philosophy popular in the religious world of the day.⁴

¹ "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 14, 1919 (copy pp. 759, 760), AUHR.
² J. H. Kellogg to Sara McEnterfer, January 28, 1906, JHKCC, 3x 3 Fld 8, AUHR.
³ J. H. Kellogg to S. N. Haskell, July 13, 1904; J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, July 20, August 22, 1904, JHKCC, 3x 2 Fld 5, AUHR.
After Mrs. White published *Ministry of Healing* in 1905, Kellogg claimed that he was trying to say nothing more than what she herself had written. He expressed surprise that W. C. White permitted some things that were published in that book. He argued that the campaign against him was "nothing more than a struggle for supremacy, although an attempt has been made to dignify it by making it appear to be a battle for truth." While some felt that Prescott had possibly over-emphasized some of the theological aspects of the controversy, there were nonetheless important theological issues at stake. Perhaps these would have been resolved much more easily if the church had not been so politically divided. As it happened, the power struggle simply highlighted the importance of the theological issues.¹ Unquestionably, the professor contributed largely in the struggle of the church to maintain an objective doctrine of the atonement.


¹Bert Haloviak, "Pioneers, Pantheists, and Progressives: A. F. Ballenger and Divergent Paths to the Sanctuary" (Sanctuary Review Committee Research paper, 1980, GCAR), provides an excellent survey of the different theological emphases within the Adventist church in the first decade of the twentieth century. His suggestion that if the administrative struggle had not endangered church unity, the theological issues would have more easily resolved themselves without such large losses seems well made.
For a time after the Berrien Springs meeting the situation in the church was quiet. In August 1904, Prescott made an earnest plea to his two former colleagues, Jones and Waggoner, for unity. Their initial response was cooperation. At the October Council in College View, Nebraska, agreement was reached to transfer medical institutions to conference organizations and Daniells felt "the danger line" was past. Prescott had visited Battle Creek again in September in company with Mrs. White, but the controversy was not mentioned in the meetings that were held. W. C. White reported that, in his mother's opinion, developments depended very much upon the actions of Dr. Kellogg.\footnote{W. W. Prescott to A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, August 31, 1904; A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, October 5, 1904, RG 11: Lb 34; W. W. Prescott to E. J. Waggoner, November 14, 1904, RG 11: Lb 35, GCAR.}

On her return to Elmshaven, Mrs. White made another plea through her son that the brethren find ways to help Kellogg. Former experiences, however, had made both Prescott and Daniells wary, and W. C. White reported to his mother that they did not know what else they could do. One thing they did resolve, however. With the controversy dominating and almost ruining the previous three General Conference councils and the previous General Conference session, they vowed that in no way would the issues be allowed to affect the 1905 General Conference. That would be a world missionary conference and would be free from controversy.\footnote{W. C. White to A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott, October 21, 1904, W. C. White Lb 26, EGWRC-DC. A. G. Daniells to G. A. Irwin, July 8, 1904, RG 11: Lb 34, GCAR. A. F. Ballenger could not have known how ill-timed his "new light" was.}
The period of peace was short lived. A. T. Jones, as president of the sanitarium association, refused to transfer the Mexican sanitarium at Guadaljara to the church. Prescott, informing Mrs. White of the situation, explained that Jones in concert with Kellogg had "swindled" the General Conference. When the General Conference eventually assumed control of the Medical Missionary Association in 1905, virtually all that remained was $80,000 of liabilities. It went bankrupt. In July the General Conference leaders met with Kellogg to sort out the issues of property ownership. Kellogg reported that he "simply, sat right down like an old sitting hen and wouldn't stir nor beg" when the "big four" had their two "seances" with him. Thereafter Daniells resolved to deal with Kellogg only through an attorney, Judge Arthur (who, according to Prescott, also swindled the General Conference out of $8,000 in excess fees). Relationships became exceedingly bitter.¹

Kellogg's intransigence was an earnest of things to come. In early 1906, Daniells and Prescott visited Battle Creek. Numbers of church members were disfellowshipped, calls were made for members to leave the city, and the Review and Herald made its final withdrawal. Jones retaliated by vigorously attacking the church and its leaders including Mrs. White. Threats were made over the ownership of the Tabernacle and moves were made to get possession of the

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, February 16, 1905; W. W. Prescott to W. G. White, February 16, 1905, EGWRC-DC. J. H. Kellogg to S. N. Haskell, July 6, 1905, JHKCC, 6x 3 Fld 1, AUHR. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, March 8, 1906, RG 11: Fld 1906-P, GCAr. Daniells and Prescott refused to participate in the opening of the Philadelphia Sanitarium because Kellogg had also been invited. W. W. Prescott to Morris Lukens, October 12, 1905, JHKCC, 8x 3 Fld 4, AUHR.
sanitarium. Prescott advised Review readers that the church was no longer interested in attempting to regain control of affairs at the sanitarium. "Such a situation has now been created that I think those who brought it about may best be left to grapple with it, while we go on with our work." With the Tabernacle it was different. Daniells, who was almost convinced that the church would lose the building, remarked: "We are in for the bitterest struggle this cause has yet witnessed."

Mrs. White recognized in these moves the "end" she had seen with a prophetic eye when the troubles first broke out. She feared that Jones would get control of the Tabernacle and use it in his attacks on the church. The Tabernacle was eventually retained by the church, but many of its members were not. Among the losses was John Harvey Kellogg, who was disfellowshipped by the Battle Creek church on November 10, 1907.

For all Prescott's agitation of the pantheism issue, Kellogg's doctrinal views were not cited as the cause for termination of his membership. Non-attendance, non-support, and antagonism to


Mrs. White's work were the specified reasons. The conflict left many scars and ruined many friendships. Prescott's relationships with Sutherland, Magan, Haskell, and Butler were never warm thereafter. The conflict also helped impair Prescott's health. During the major part of the last year of the controversy he was on an overseas tour planned partially at least to help him recuperate.

A final irony of the tragic sequence of events was that while 1907 marked the end of one theological controversy, it also marked the beginning of another. Prescott again was in the center. This time as a defendant. Haskell and Butler, with their allies, were on the attack.

\(^1\)Schwarz, *Lightbearers to the Remnant*, p. 296.
CHAPTER XIV

PUBLISHING AGAIN

From its very earliest days, the Adventist church had found publishing to be one of its most successful means of accomplishing its evangelistic mission. Commencing in the late 1840s, when its adherents numbered probably no more than a hundred, the Sabbath-keeping group of Adventists began issuing periodicals and pamphlets. These early ventures eventually, in 1850, led to the establishment of the Review and Herald, a weekly journal which has survived until the present day as the church's pre-eminent periodical. At first printed on commercial presses, the magazine since 1852 has been printed on equipment owned by the church. In late 1855, the publishing plant and the magazine were moved to Battle Creek, Michigan. There they remained until 1903 when, under Prescott's direction, the magazine was transferred to Washington, D.C. The plant followed three years later.¹

By the time Prescott officially became connected with the church's publishing house at Battle Creek in 1902, the institution had become the largest and best-equipped establishment in the state of Michigan. The four-story building encompassed more than 80,000 square feet providing room for the 275 employees. Its annual sales

of approximately half a million dollars included religious books, pamphlets, periodicals, and a large amount of non-religious commercial material. In 1899, Irwin estimated that 80 percent of the printing done at Review was of a commercial non-religious nature, much of it not particularly uplifting. Many of the foremen and tradesmen were not even Adventists. Both managers and employees, it seems, saw the institution more as a money-making institution than a religious publishing concern. Sharp business practices flourished, apprentices and workmen were treated roughly, and a decidedly un-spiritual atmosphere pervaded the plant.1

During the years of the plant's expansion in the last decades of the nineteenth century, Mrs. White became increasingly concerned about it, writing repeated appeals to its managers to make changes. Prescott also was concerned about the state of affairs at the Review office. As previously noticed, in 1893 he had labored hard with its managers and employees to try to improve the spiritual tone of the place. Whatever results were accomplished, however, were short-term. In 1896, after his visit with Mrs. White in Australia, Prescott wrote asking her what might be done about the large number of "unconverted and unconsecrated" workers staffing the institution. Stating that the Review office was in a terrible condition so far as the spiritual experience of a large share of its workers was

concerned, he asked: "Would it not be better to cut down some of these large institutions" in order to make the working force more manageable. "Should unbelievers and unconverted persons be retained year after year in these institutions?" Major management changes were made at the 1897 General Conference session, but they just seemed to cause more bitterness and dissatisfaction. There was little improvement. Prescott himself had little opportunity to help the situation. He was appointed to Great Britain in early 1897. But Mrs. White did not give up on the matter. During the last years of the century she continued her protests.¹

Not many months after the 1901 General Conference session, Daniells began to focus his reform efforts on the publishing association. During the Week of Prayer in Battle Creek in December 1901, he met with the Review and Herald employees. His plain speaking about the need for reform seemed to touch "a responsive chord" in the hearts of the management and others. Before the week was out, Daniells found a crisis on his hands from which he could not back away.

The institution's board met during the week and decided to ask C. H. Jones of the Pacific Press to come and take over the management. They hoped he would help them implement needed reforms. At the same time, Daniells asked Prescott to join the publishing house board and help in the reforms. "We have placed our hand to the plow,

¹A number of these letters are published in E. G. White, Selections from the Testimonies setting forth important principles relating to our work in general, the publishing work in particular and the relation of our institutions to each other (Oakland, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1898). W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, July 30, 1896, EGWRC-AU.
and can not turn back. That unclean place must be cleansed from top to bottom," Daniells remarked. He noted further that the plant had been a "festering spot for a lot of evil" and the managers had "been scolded a great deal about the condition of things," but now he felt the board was "sincere in its efforts to reform." He assured Prescott that they would be glad of his help.¹

At the first meeting of the new board on February 14, 1902, attention focused on what should be reformed and how the reforms should be carried out. No consensus prevailed, however, and a subcommittee consisting of Evans, Daniells, and Prescott was named to formulate a recommendation on the policies of the institution.²

Apparently, the commercial work done by the house was not that easy to terminate, and the transfer of ownership to the General Conference was not a popular idea. Reaction to the reform moves came from a surprising quarter--fellow board member and editor of the Review--Uriah Smith.

**A New Editor for the Review**

Smith, one of the charter members of the publishing house board, had been associated with the Review either as editor or associate editor for almost fifty years. At the General Conference session in 1901, after serving as an associate to A. T. Jones for

¹ A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, January 31, 1902, EGWRC-DC. A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, December 28, 1901, RG 11: Bx 55 Lb 20, GCAr. Jones did not respond to the invitation. Prescott was apparently nominated to the board at the stockholders' meeting, February 11, 1902.

² SDAPA Bd Min, February 14, 1902, RG 251: GCAr.
three years, he had again been appointed as editor.¹ Somehow, though, he seemed to be out of step with the times. He apparently did not see light in the reforms Daniells was suggesting and protested publicly.

In an editorial entitled, "The Cause," published a little more than a week after Daniells' meeting with the board in late December, Smith protested the insinuation that "a heavy load of odium" rested upon the publishing association. The suggestion that the odium would be relieved "by placing the Review and Herald office on a new basis and transferring the plant to other ownership" he felt was quite unjust. Repudiating charges that the institution had proved false to its corporate obligations, Smith acknowledged that the publishers, like all men, had made mistakes and had acted selfishly as "Laodiceans" as the recent Week of Prayer sermons had pointed out, but he did not see how transferring ownership of the property to the church would necessarily cure that problem. The editorial apparently convinced Daniells that Smith did not understand what he [Daniells] was trying to do and was not solidly behind "the new movements" being set on foot "in the organization of the work." He felt that something must be done "to allow the Review to call the church to reform.²

¹The action was taken April 29, 1901, RH, May 14, 1901, p. 312.

²U. Smith, "The Cause," RH, January 7, 1902, p. 8. Daniells recalled years later that neither Butler nor Haskell fully understood the reform program Daniells was pushing. Apparently they were suspicious of Daniells' moves and had been in touch with Smith. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, February 15, 1932, JF 198; A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, April 14, 1902, EGWRC-DC. See also Eugene F. Durand, Yours in the Blessed Hope: Uriah Smith (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), p. 43.
Other matters about Smith's editorship of the Review also
gave concern to the General Conference committee. In early 1903,
Smith published a series of three articles on the Book of Galatians
by William Brickey. Arguing strongly that the law in Galatians was
not the Ten Commandments but the ceremonial law the articles caused
quite a stir.1 Daniells reported that Smith's disposition "to
revive the old Minneapolis controversy" and his "vicious attack" on
the 1888 message had confused and shocked Review readers and dis­
tressed the college Bible teachers. He could not understand how
Smith could avow confidence in Mrs. White and at the same time
"reject the Minneapolis message."2

One article on the race question had so offended southern
delegates attending the Autumn Council meeting the previous year
that the mailbags were retrieved from the railway station and the
article was replaced at considerable cost. Another article criti­
cized the musicians for a performance at a worship service in the
Tabernacle. The editor had to reply to the critic in face of a
threat of resignation from the musicians. Smith simply was not
managing things as the brethren felt he should.3

Consequently, the General Conference committee, at its mid-
February meetings, decided to recommend that the Review and Herald

1William Brickey, "Notes on the Book of Galatians," RH,
January 21, 1902, p. 36; January 28, 1902, p. 52; February 4, 1902,
p. 67. Brickey had been a staunch supporter of Smith's position in
the post-1888 years. "We are saved by His Life: Rom 5:10," RH, July
26, 1892, p. 466.

2A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, April 14, 1902, EGWRC-DCC.

3Durand, Smith, pp. 266-268. GCC Min, October 23, 1901.
board replace Smith with W. W. Prescott as "Editor in Chief" of the paper. Daniells recalled years later that the committee was greatly perplexed as to what should be done and they engaged in a "most earnest season of prayer." When they arose from prayer, reported Daniells, "there was a unanimous feeling that Brother Prescott should be elected editor."\(^1\)

The move was not good news to the seventy-year-old Smith. According to his wife Harriet, the demotion "cut him to the quick." During the night he suffered a stroke from which he never fully recovered and which probably contributed significantly to his death just ten months later. Although considerably discouraged over the turn of events—for a time he considered retiring to the South to can fruit—Smith eventually decided to bear his burden gracefully and he stayed loyally by the Review till his death.\(^2\)

The move was not all good news for Prescott either. He reported to Mrs. White two months later that he had been dumbfounded at the appointment and had not slept well since accepting it. Uriah Smith was a man whom Prescott respected greatly even though not always agreeing with him. Smith had in fact been instrumental in bringing Prescott into the organized work of the church seventeen

\(^1\)The meeting took place on Saturday night, February 15. The official minutes report that the question was "discussed freely" and there was "a remarkable unanimity of opinion as to the propriety of this action." GCC Min, February 15, 1902. According to Prescott the action was apparently discussed again on Sunday, February 16, 1902. See W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, February 20, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. Cf. "General Conference Committee," RH, March 4, 1902, p. 142. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, February 15, 1902, DF 198, EGWRC-DC.

years earlier. Thus Prescott was embarrassed at the turn of events and decidedly uncomfortable.¹

Four days after the action of the General Conference committee, he was still wrestling with the problem. "Much troubled" because he thought that the committee's "action would make it very hard for Brother Smith," he "studied" to see how the matter could be improved. Prescott consulted with Kellogg about his cogitations. He then talked over his ideas with Evans and with Smith himself. His suggestion was that the Review and Herald board elect U. Smith, L. A. Smith (Uriah's son), and himself as editors "without making any statement as to the relative standing of each one." Then the board would elect Prescott as the "managing editor" of the paper. Prescott felt that this would be kinder to Smith (after visiting Smith he said he thought it helped Smith's feelings "quite a good deal") and still accomplish what the brethren desired. He accordingly took the matter to the board stating that he much preferred not to be "Editor in Chief" but to have the Smiths act as editors with him. The board approved the action as being "in harmony with the spirit of the counsel received from the General Conference Committee."²

Prescott assured Daniells that he had made it clear to the two Smith brethren that "there could be but one managing editor of the paper," and added that this action "would leave the editorial management in my hands." He hoped that Daniells would be able to


²W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, February 20, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr. SDAPA Bd Min, February 20, 1902, RG 251: GCAr.
waive the technical part of the question." It was an exceedingly
delicate situation, but Prescott felt that the work could be con­
ducted without any friction. He added that he hoped his letter to
Daniells would reach him before he saw Mrs. White so that she would
understand the situation "just as it is."

The move was surrounded with controversy. Writing in 1904,
after eighteen months of fighting with the General Conference, Kel­
logg called the demotion "one of the most cruel things which I ever
saw." He complained that Smith had been "turned down square without
a word of gratitude or appreciation" and that the stroke he suffered
was "his death blow." On the other hand, S. H. Lane, a fellow board
member, felt that the professor "took a very wise course with
Brother Smith. . . . The more I am associated with Brother Prescott," he
went on, "the more I am convinced that he is not only a Christian
but a gentleman in the first degree. He is so free from anything like
harshness. He tries to take a fair view of everything, so that one
cannot but like him." E. R. Palmer was also impressed by the 'gen­
tlemanly way' in which Prescott handled the situation and recalled
later the "tender solicitude" for Smith manifested by all those con­
cerned. Painful though it was, the brethren obviously felt they did
the right thing--there were no regrets.

1 W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, February 20, 1902, RG 11:
Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GACr. The General Conference committee
took no formal action to retain the services of Smith as senior
editor as Durand suggests, Smith, p. 41.

2 J. H. Kellogg to G. I. Butler, April 12, 1904, JHKKC, Bx 2
Fld 2, AUHR. S. H. Lane to A. G. Daniells, February 28, 1902, RG 11:
Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902); E. R. Palmer to A. G. Daniells, March
26, 1907, RG 11: Fld 1907-P, GACar. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White,
February 15, 1932, DF 198, EGWRC-DC.
The rumor mill soon had it around Battle Creek, however, that
Mrs. White had written and rebuked Daniells and Prescott. Actually,
the story grew out of a letter Mrs. White had written to Haskell
before the change was made, a copy of which she had also sent to
Smith. In the letter she had commented that she was disappointed
when Smith's name had been put second on the list years before but
rejoiced when it had recently been put back at the top. A month
after the episode, Prescott himself received a letter from Mrs.
White. It simply confirmed what Prescott had already done of his own
accord. Mrs. White stated that she was pleased that Prescott could
join the Review and that he could be a great help to Smith who should
not be bypassed in the editorial work and whose name should not be
dropped from the masthead. But the rumors never died completely and
the episode left its scars. Part of the animosity L. A. Smith mani-
fested towards Prescott during “the daily” controversy\(^1\) seems to have
stemmed from lingering bitterness over the way he felt his father had
been turned out of the Review because of his theological views.
According to Daniells it seems that F. M. Wilcox thirty years later
entertained suspicions about Prescott's role in the episode.\(^2\)

Prescott's name first appeared on the masthead of the Review
with the February 25 issue. Six weeks later, in the April 8 issue,

\(^1\)“The daily” controversy is discussed in detail in chapter 15.

\(^2\)W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, April 10, 1902, RG 11: Bx
46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR. E. G. White to W. W. Prescott and
Wife, March 30, 1902, EGWRC-AU. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, April
22, 1902, EGWRC-DC. E. R. Palmer to A. G. Daniells, March 26, 1907,
RG 11: Fld 1907-P; L. A. Smith to A. G. Daniells, January 17, 1908,
RG 11: Fld 1908-P, GCAR. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, February 15,
1932, DF 198, EGWRC-DC.
an added note appeared on the masthead indicating that the managing editor was "responsible for all editorial matter which is not signed." In deference to Smith, Prescott repeatedly referred to him as the senior editor and in his funeral oration lauded Smith's gracious spirit in their working relationships under conditions which could easily have been made exceedingly unpleasant. "He has done during the last year all that a Christian could do to make my editorial work comfortable for me." Prescott declared he would never forget the experience.

The transition period at the Review was traumatic in other ways. During the same week that Prescott was working his way through the stressful situation related to the change in editorship, the sanitarium fire occurred. The first issue edited by Prescott, therefore, carried extensive reports of the calamity. In the weeks that followed, in spite of the busy round of meetings that followed the fire, Prescott still found time to plan for some new initiatives with the magazine. He realized that any changes he wanted to make would best be made in the transition period, then he could "settle down to permanent, solid work." At the same time, he was also aware that that "everybody" was "watching" and that he needed to move with care.

At a specially called meeting of the board on March 24, Prescott presented his plans. Following the North-Western Christian

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1Not until March 24, 1903, did Prescott's name appear as editor, although he had in fact been such from April 1902.


3W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, April 10, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.
Advocate as a model, he sought to change the format of the Review, reducing the size of the pages and increasing their number to twenty-four. The first page would be solely used for illustration and the second for a publishers page. A change of typeface was also proposed. At the same time he suggested that The Missionary Magazine which he had been editing for the past nine months be merged with the Review on the basis that the mission interests should be the interests of the whole field. All the changes met with the favor of the board. The new format appeared with the April 8 issue and has remained the basic format of the magazine to this day. The merger with The Missionary Magazine took place the following month.¹

Prescott’s aggressive drive upon taking over the magazine was evident. He seems to have known just where he wanted to go with the paper and exuded an air of confidence. The fresh, clean, and lighter lines matched the brighter tone of the paper. There were some tensions in the office though. Prescott found that he could not be away for long periods “and still have things go on [with] the paper as I wish to have them.” He therefore had to forgo some appointments. But his labor bore fruit and the circulation slowly increased. By 1905 he could report an increase of 3,000 in circulation. By 1908 it had increased another 2,000 to a total circulation of over 18,000.²


The Church becomes the Classroom

Prescott had been trained as an educator. By 1902, fifteen of the twenty-four years since he had left college in 1877 had been directly connected with formal schooling. Even during his five years of newspaper publishing in New England, he had maintained an interest in education. This was true also of his four years as church administrator in Great Britain. It seemed quite natural then for Prescott to see his role of editor of the *Review* as being largely educational. Now, however, his classroom was the entire church.

Prescott welcomed the opportunity to educate the church. Right at the commencement of his editorship he saw the articles he selected for the paper and the editorials he wrote "as a means of educating our people." At first, Prescott's focus was on "educating" the church "in a clear understanding of what our gospel message really is." He therefore used the *Review* to vigorously promote the "Forward Movement" and selected many articles that would inform and educate the church on healthful living. Reports of the medical work of the church appeared frequently, and readers were kept informed regarding the re-building of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

A long series of articles by Prescott entitled "Studies in the Gospel Message" began in the March 25 issue. The series complemented the Sabbath School lessons (also authored by Prescott) that were being studied by the church at the time. The emphasis of the series was the mediatorial work of Christ and seemed to be based on Prescott's new understanding of the expression the "continual" of

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1. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, April 10, 1902, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAR.
Dan 3:13 as applying to Christ's mediation. The union of Christ with humanity in the incarnation was to be experienced in a real way in Christian living, he noted. This truth of the indwelling Christ, he argued, was the "heart of the everlasting Gospel" of Rev 14. It was important because, for Prescott, it was also the theological undergirding of the health emphasis he was fostering.

Nine months after he had assumed his editorial responsibilities and two weeks before his series on the Gospel Message ended, Prescott felt obliged to issue a warning. He cautioned against any teaching which tended to weaken faith in the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary "by substituting a human conception of the presence of God for the reality of his presence in Christ through the Holy Spirit." He felt that the relationship between God and man could be expressed in such a way as to obscure the objective work of Christ. This was the first of many warnings against the teaching of Kellogg that subsequently issued from his pen.

When the Review and Herald board reappointed Prescott as editor of the Review in June 1903, they specifically requested him to "keep constantly before the people, the distinctive doctrines of this denomination." A few months later, after Kellogg began claiming that what he was teaching was simply what Mrs. White had taught, Prescott felt it his editorial duty to begin educating the church more thoroughly on the issues. "It seems to me," he wrote to W. C. White,

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"that the time has come to repudiate publicly this teaching as being a plain perversion of Gospel truth and as meaning the overthrow of this message as a distinctive work." Repeatedly, thereafter, he discussed aspects of the "new theology," "higher criticism," "Christian Pantheism," "the sure foundation," and "speculative knowledge." He appealed to church members to stay by the "original message," "the old paths," and he attempted to clearly set out the differences. During the next five years, over one hundred of his editorials related directly or indirectly to the Kellogg crisis.¹

Prescott was convinced that the church would be protected only as it was educated and informed on the dangers he saw confronting it. "We purpose that our people shall understand these matters just as they are. When the true situation is clearly understood, then an intelligent choice can be made," he wrote, concerning the conflict over Battle Creek College. Seeing Kellogg's emphasis as part of a world-wide movement also threatening other churches, Prescott gave illustrations of how other denominations had given in to the pressures and had lost their distinctiveness. "We do object to any effort to evaporate this advent movement into the thin air of

uncenominal onilantropy and glittering gospel platitudes," he wrote.¹

When Kellogg sympathisers criticized Prescott for "pushing pantheism hard" through the Review, he defended himself by stating that Mrs. White expected him to make a stand against the apostasy." He insisted that neither he nor Mrs. White were overdrawing the problem.² "Shall the church be censured for contending earnestly for 'the faith once delivered to the Saints?'" he asked. "We cannot be blamed for schism for refusing to leave the original platform." In spite of these protestations, though, it seems that Prescott was hypercritical at times in his reaction to some things that Kellogg had written. His criticism of Kellogg's use of the phrase, "Miracle of Life," for example, seemed to attribute far more significance to the expression than was intended by the author. In this respect Prescott seemed at times to have been guilty of over-kill—a factor probably resulting from the strong polemical atmosphere that had developed in what Prescott regarded as a state of war.³

Other matters besides the Kellogg crisis received Prescott's consideration in the Review. Favorite themes were the subjects of


² E. L. Macafferty to W. W. Prescott, April 9, 1905; W. W. Prescott to E. L. Macafferty, April 19, 1905, RG 11: Fld 1905-P, GCAR.

the Sabbath and the inspiration of Scripture. Prescott laid stress on the imminence of the second advent of Christ and frequently wrote on the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. He emphasized that the signs of the advent were to be fulfilled "in this generation," which he, like others at that time, understood as beginning with the falling of the stars in 1833. Religious liberty was also a prominent issue on which he felt it his duty to educate the church. He gave full coverage to the church's representations to Congress on Sunday Legislation and on the matter of religious education in the public schools.¹

When Prescott took over the Review, one of the new features he introduced was entitled "The Field." The intention of this column was to educate the church concerning its world-wide work. He presented articles on Adventist missions in foreign countries and attempted to inform the readership about different customs and cultures. To this end Prescott adopted a much more liberal use of photographs to illustrate and inform than had his predecessors. The photos became quite a feature of the magazine after the move to Washington and helped inform the church of the kind of area to which the denominational headquarters had moved.² Another facet of Prescott's educational approach began in the April 5, 1906 issue; an occasional column was designed to provide source materials for the ministry and


²At least four or five photographs appeared in each of Prescott's issues compared to the occasional one per issue prior to April 3, 1902.
Bible workers. These materials consisted chiefly of authoritative statements that supported denominational positions on the interpretation of prophecy or on doctrines.¹

In addition to editing the *Review* in 1906, Prescott played a major role in the establishment of a new religious liberty magazine, serving as one of its founding editors. But editing magazines accounted for only part of Prescott's connection with the leading publishing house of the church. Much of his time was actually taken up by his position as the chief executive officer of the publishing house. From 1903 until 1909 Prescott served as president of the new enterprise.

Transplanting a Publishing House

When Daniells had solicited Prescott's help in his attempt to reform conditions in the publishing house at the end of 1901, neither of them had anticipated that a change in editors would be the outcome. But with Prescott as editor of the *Review* and consequently much more intimately connected with the publishing house, and with the recent burning of the sanitarium providing added motivation, the efforts at reform were pushed with enthusiasm. Within three weeks of taking up his appointment as editor, Prescott was urging further reforms at the board meetings. He envisaged an infusion of new blood in the work force and a lifting of the morale and spiritual interests of the employees. To Daniells he reported, "I told them [the board] that if they would cooperate in an effort to bring in a

¹W. W. Prescott, "An Important Date," RH, April 5, 1906, p. 3. The idea of providing these materials gradually grew into the idea for a denominational source book.
niger standard of religious life and experience in the institution, I felt sure that we could bring in from the schools a better class of help." Prescott was encouraged that the board saw things "just as I do" and were willing to "cooperate."¹

Prescott encouraged Daniells to look around the colleges for suitable talent. He arranged a regular Friday night vesper meeting for the publishing house employees and steps were taken to start evening classes that included Bible study for the apprentices. Later a residence hall complete with preceptor was established for out-of-town apprentices. "I think we ought to do all we possibly can to change the atmosphere here permanently for the better, and this can only be done by educational methods," Prescott commented to Daniells.²

Large institutions have a way of being difficult to reform, and the publishing house seemed to be no exception. It seemed impossible to survive without the commercial work. After all, Roman Catholic literature, novels, and mail-order catalogues turned good profits, and the association's investment in large presses had to be made worth while. Working conditions and morale in the various departments were difficult to improve and dissatisfaction among employees was noticeable. Repeated incidents of wilful carelessness causing damage to the institution gave the board concern.³ By the

¹W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, March 12, 1902, RG 11: 8x 46, Misc Let (1893-1902), GCAr.
²Ibid.
³Whether moves by the management to increase the fire insurance by $50,000 and investigate the installation of a sprinkler
end of 1902, no revolutionary turnabout had occurred. Thus, when
the entire plant was burned to the ground on the night of December
30, many in the church were prepared to see the event as an act of
providence. At the first major board meeting after the fire, a long
discussion was concluded by Prescott offering two motions: "That we
do not expect to resume commercial work in the institution," and
"that our only interest is to care for the institution in reference
to our denominational interests." As one of its first official
actions after the fire, the board approved the motions. The fire
apparently proved to be very persuasive.

While the destruction of the publishing house meant at least
temporary hardship for a number of its employees, the disaster never­
theless provided the church with an opportunity. Apparently one of
Prescott's first thoughts was that at last it might be possible to
make a major move out of Battle Creek--a hope he had entertained
since late 1893. Three weeks after the fire he wrote to Daniells
system were related to these incidents or to the recent sanitarium
fire or both, is not stated. SDAPA Bd Min, March 25, August 23, 25,
December 2, 1902, RG 251: GCAr.

1 The fire interrupted a Week of Prayer meeting Prescott was
about to start in the Tabernacle. H. J. Baerg, "Artists and the Big
Fire," RH, December 8, 1977, p. 33. Mrs. White stated emphatically
that the fire was an act of judgment. At a meeting in the Tabernacle
a majority of the local church apparently concurred. W. W. Prescott
to A. G. Daniells, January 28, 1903, RG 11: Bx 46, Misc Let (1893-
1902), GACr.

2 SDAPA Bd Min, January 4, 1903, RG 251: GCAr. In fact, com­
mmercial contracts continued to be taken until 1906. A third motion
recommended that any major decision be left until the annual stock­
holders' meeting scheduled for April 20. The "special" December 8,
1977 issue of the Review is devoted to the fire and provides a good
survey of the event.

3 See p. 153 above.
about the board’s decision to delegate the printing of the foreign periodicals to the Union College Press at College View. "I am glad of every step that is thus taken which opens the way for the removal of our headquarters from Battle Creek." He reported that the more he talked the idea over in the office, "the more the idea seems to be accepted in a general way here that in all probability the work will be removed to some other place." No decision could be made, however, until the stockholders’ meeting. In the interim the uncertainty made decision making difficult.¹

Just how much equipment to purchase to replace that which was destroyed was a vexing question on the board. Prescott was averse to a full scale replacement since it would necessarily mean "that the institution remain in Battle Creek in the future." Other trustees differed. According to Prescott, "quite an effort" was made to set up a complete plant with $20,000 worth of machinery.² The fact that any move could not be made before autumn, if a move was to be made at all, provided a compromise and eventually a minimum of machinery was purchased. In the meantime, Prescott utilized Daniells’ office as his editorial rooms, and the Review was printed by other publishing houses in the town.³

¹ W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 20, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P; SDAPA Bd Min, January 4, 1903, RG 251: GCAr.
² W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 28, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P; SDAPA Bd Min, January 29 [?], 1903, RG 251: GCAr. Although this particular meeting of the board is dated January 29, Prescott’s letter to Daniells makes it evident that the correct date should be January 28. The meeting was adjourned to meet again on the 29th and the following meeting of the board is dated the 29th.
³ SDAPA Bd Min, January 4, 1903, January 29, 1903, RG 251: W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 20, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P, GCAr.
At the Oakland General Conference meeting three months after the fire delegates gave lengthy consideration to the subject of moving the church headquarters out of Battle Creek. After extensive animated discussion, Mrs. White, in an address to the conference, emphatically declared that the publishing association should be moved to somewhere on the eastern seaboard. Subsequently, a resolution was adopted recommending just such a course to the stockholders. The recommendation, however, did not carry much weight with some of the stockholders. When their meeting convened on April 20 in Battle Creek there was vigorous opposition.

Many in Battle Creek felt that the General Conference was venturing beyond its legitimate activity in wanting to assume ownership of the publishing house. Expressing strong doubts about the ability of the clergy to operate such business ventures successfully and offended at the thought that the fires in Battle Creek should be seen as judgments, a number, led by Lycurgus McCoy, stoutly resisted the move. Feelings ran high and threats were made about withholding stock and raising legal obstacles to prevent the move—threats which were indeed carried out. The fight was bitter and long remembered, but it did not deflect the majority who favored the recommendation. As a result the board was authorized to transfer the plant to somewhere in the East.  

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1 GC Bulletin, April 6, 1903, p. 85; April 14, 1903, pp. 216; April 7, 1903, p. 100.


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No time was lost in setting things in motion. Just a few days after the stockholders' meeting, the board appointed a committee to search for a site. As the committee planned their itinerary, Prescott wrote to his non-Adventist brother who had a business office in New York. In his letter introducing his General Conference colleagues, he asked if his brother might provide help in searching out an appropriate location. The editor thought that a New York date line on the Review would be to advantage. Subsequently, a property in Elizabeth, New Jersey, just south of where Amos Prescott operated his stove polish factory, and another site sixty miles north of New York, attracted the committee but proved unsatisfactory. E. R. Palmer reported that letters from Mrs. White in June suggested that Washington, D.C., ought to be considered as well. (J. S. Washburn, pastor of the church in Washington, D.C., also apparently sent a number of telegrams urging the brethren to consider the city.) Consequently, the committee extended its search to the nation's capital. Finally they found a site at Takoma Park, "A high, healthful, convenient place of residence," six miles from the city center, was found. The suburb was only sparsely populated, mostly by professional and government people, and the real estate brochures promised "no mosquitos, pure air, delightful shade, and a most abundant supply of pure water." A few weeks later, in mid July, a few key men assembled...
in Washington, made the final decisions, and purchased for a tenth of its real value a fifty-acre tract of land in Maryland. At the same time, a small adjoining property, just inside the District of Columbia, was investigated with a view to purchasing it later. The smaller property would enable the headquarters to have the all-important Washington, D.C., address.  

In the meantime, procedures had been initiated to make the transfers legal. In June, Prescott had been appointed to a sub-committee to establish a new publishing corporation in the East. In early July, the Battle Creek Publishing House Board sold the two main magazines, the Review and the Youth's Instructor, for $10,000 to the Foreign Mission Board which was then legally based in New York. When the new publishing corporation was legally set up in Washington in mid-July, it in turn purchased the periodicals from the Foreign Mission Board and was ready to begin business. Its temporary rented premises at 222 North Capital Street were in the heart of the city, just a block from the capital grounds.  

Back in Battle Creek on July 25, Prescott and Daniells

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2 GCC Min, June 18, 1903; SDAPA Bd Min, July 1, 1903, RG 251; FMB Min, July 8, 1903; A. G. Daniells to O. A. Olsen, July 28, 1903, RG 11: Lb 31, GCAr.
presented to the Tabernacle congregation a report on the arrangements and recounted the providential leadings and Mrs. White's specific directions in the locating of a site for the new headquarters. The meetings did much to dissipate hostility toward the move. In the August 11 issue of the Review, Prescott undertook to educate the church at large. "The developments of the last year constitute a turning point in the history of this movement," he editorialized. "Changes are now imperatively demanded which might have been avoided, and we must act accordingly." Not all in Battle Creek were impressed. Former publishing manager, A. R. Henry, leading a group of disenchanted stockholders, insisted that unless their stock was bought at a satisfactory price they would secure a court injunction against the move. Rather than face any drawn out litigation, Daniells agreed to pay the inflated price and the move was underway.¹

During the last days of July and the first few days of August, four railway freight wagons were packed with the General Conference office furniture and files and typesetting equipment and other small machinery from the publishing house. Dispatched on August 5, the thirty-six-ton load arrived in Washington on August 10. Prescott, who with S. N. Curtis was the first to arrive at the new premises that same morning, supervised the unloading and setting-up operation. The next day, August 11, the final details for incorporation of the new business was completed. Daniells' previously

arranged camp meeting itinerary at this time also proved helpful. It provided him with opportunity to solicit funds to pay the freight bill. The General Conference had been financially embarrassed by the stockholders’ last-minute demands.\(^1\) By August 20, the first issue of the Review, with the new Washington dateline, had been published. It was just two days late.\(^2\) Four days later, on August 24, the new premises were dedicated. In a short address to an audience of fifty, Prescott likened their new work to that of the Old Testament leader, Zerubbabel. While their buildings were not so large or glorious as those in Battle Creek, yet "the glory shall be the glory of [God’s] presence." The presence of God with them, he believed, would indeed make their work outshine the past.\(^3\)

The first few weeks in Washington were hectic. They were thus an omen of things to come. Prescott, remarking on Washington’s summer heat, complained that he found it difficult to sleep. The latter was understandable. "I have had my hands full in looking after many details," he explained to Daniells two weeks after their arrival. He was trying to find a house to purchase or rent so that his wife, still in Battle Creek, could come and join him. The Review


\(^2\)The two day lateness may have been by design. Previously the magazine had been published on Tuesday. After August 20, it continued to be published on Thursdays.

offices still needed a lot of organization, but S. N. Curtis, the business manager, was away in New York and the professor carried the burden. In addition, the other General Conference men had all gone off to campmeetings. Prescott was virtually having to fend for himself. For the next few years the pace of life slowed not at all.

By the end of September, the lino-type machine, composing outfit, and small-job press had all been finally installed in the basement in what had been the kitchen and dining room of the narrow six-story building, and the folding, trimming, and stitching equipment were also in operation. The press work on the periodicals, however, still had to be done by another firm in the city—an arrangement that lasted for three years until the erection of the new Association's own building at Takoma Park in 1906. With editorial offices on the fourth floor, the constant ascending and descending of the stairs to deliver copy and proof sheets became a problem. A rope and pulley system, complete with bell, attached to the outside of the building was soon set up, however, and copy was subsequently delivered through the windows. This arrangement remained until the publishing offices were moved to Takoma Park. Because the Capital Street building was too small, another building on Thirteenth Street, a few blocks away, had to be rented for a book depot. With a

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1. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, September 1, 1903, RG 11: Fld 1903-P; Estella Houser to I. J. Hankins, August 28, 1903, RG 21: Bx 77 Lb 24, GCAR. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 11, 1903, EGWRC-DC. Sarah joined her husband at the end of September after arranging the sale of their Battle Creek home. His parents remained in Battle Creek until 1905.

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beginning staff of ten, the new Review and Herald Publishing Association was in business.1

Building Again--"In Troubles Times"

If reforming an old publishing house had seemed difficult, establishing a new one was no easier. Writing in 1907, Daniells remarked to W. C. White: "The Review and Herald has passed through a terrific experience during the last three years, but I am glad the Lord has not allowed it to go under." In a letter to M. C. Wilcox he reflected, "I do not think that our brethren connected with the Pacific Press, or any other publishing house, have had any just appreciation of the tremendous difficulties Professor Prescott and his associates have been laboring under since the Review and Herald fire." Their struggle to carry on their work with scarcely any facilities prompted Daniells' admiration. When the Pacific Press plant burned down in late 1906, Prescott himself commiserated with the directors in their distress. "I know from our own experience, it will mean a long hard struggle before the brethren are established again in their work." Establishing the Review and Herald in Washington was indeed beset with difficulties.2

As president of the new publishing house, Prescott was its chief administrative officer and was responsible for the everyday

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2 A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, March 29, 1907, RG 11: Lb 41; [A. G. Daniells] to M. C. Wilcox, August 26, 1906, RG 11: Fld 1906-W(2); W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, August 8, 1906, EGWRC-DC.
conduct of the business. He therefore carried the burden of the new enterprise although much of the detailed work he delegated to his business manager and treasurer, S. N. Curtis. From the outset he was concerned about the financial security of the new venture and worried about the lack of operating capital. He was anxious to build up the business quickly to give it financial strength. In spite of the precarious financial position of the company, however, he was determined to establish a new order of things. At one of the first meetings of the board in early September (called specifically to establish policy), he presented the same five-day work week idea that he had successfully implemented in his own publishing business back in Vermont twenty years earlier. The professor was anxious to keep Sabbath and Sunday free for evangelistic work in the city. As a result, the board appointed a committee to investigate the practicability of the policy.

"Of course we all see that this would affect our financial showing unfavourably," Prescott reported to W. C. White, "but either the commercial idea must give way in favor of a more evangelistic basis," he argued, "or we shall drift upon the same ground and our work will bear the same impress as before." Whether the policy was implemented at this stage is not clear. It would not have been the only one of the many ideals these ground breakers cherished that they

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1 The president of the association maintained administrative authority until 1911 when this function was delegated to a duly appointed manager. Don F. Neufeld, ed., Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia, s.v. "Review and Herald Publishing Association."

2 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 11, 1903, EGWRC-DC.

3 Ibid.
found difficult to implement in practice. Hard realities and unplanned adversities modified a number of their hopes.

The first major disruption to plans occurred a few months after the move to Washington. The directors had hoped they might build their new plant in the spring of 1904, but some stockholders refused to allow their stock to be transferred to the new association. The refusal meant that the debts on the old association could not be cleared up, and therefore none of the stock could be transferred. Repeated appeals through the Review failed to produce results and the directors reluctantly abandoned plans for a building of their own in 1904.¹

Further difficulties occurred in mid-1904. The Review and Herald directors had voted in June to purchase jointly with the General Conference the added tract of land in Takoma Park that would give them a Washington address for the publishing house and church headquarters. Some of the owners of this Thornton estate of almost five acres, raised objection to the terms of the sale of the property. Court actions followed and on September 26, a decision was handed down in favor of the church. Further appeals were lodged, however, and hopes of settlement before April 1905 seemed unlikely. In December though, attorneys arranged a compromise and on December 29, Prescott informed W. C. White that at last he had obtained the deeds to the land just the previous day. Plans were immediately set afoot to get building materials on the property and the building

underway in order to have it completed for the General Conference in May, 1905.1

In the meantime, in the midst of the frustrating delays in mid 1904, Prescott embarked on a building project of his own. Originally intending to personally purchase one of the lots on the Thornton estate (along Willow Avenue), he was deterred by the legal challenges. In September, he purchased land on Blair Road and commenced to build his own home. The onset of winter delayed that project as well, and it was not until ten months later that he was able to settle in with "hardly a room ready to occupy." Not until near the end of 1905 was he finally settled comfortably at Blair Road (see fig. 15).2

In January 1905, arrangements for the legal transfer of the old Battle Creek publishing plant were finally concluded. Prescott and his colleagues traveled to Battle Creek for the changeover, because the new association actually had to be present to bid for the old association at a sale. There were no opposing bids and the directors paid $126,000 for the old property. According to Kellogg, Prescott suffered considerable anguish over the transfer fearing that the new association could not bear the cost of purchasing the old


2W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, September 4, 1904, RG 11: Fld 1904-P. Daniells purchased the lot next door. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, October 19, November 6, 1904; July 13, 1905, EGWRC-DC.
Fig. 14. W. W. Prescott's home in Battle Creek as it appeared in 1980. The house was originally owned by Harmon Lindsay.

Fig. 15. W. W. Prescott's home in Blair Road, Washington, D.C. as it appeared in 1981.
properties. He was also apparently worried that they did not have anyone to run the old business. The sale eventually went through without a hitch. The courts approved the transfer in February, and consequently, the old Battle Creek company legally ceased to exist. Still, for the next eighteen months or more the new association could not realize any money from the transfer. Instead the Washington directors had to borrow money to send to Battle Creek to keep the plant going—a development that frustrated even further their building plans in Washington.¹

Setting a Mold

As soon as the legal transfer of the old Battle Creek business to the new association in Washington was completed, the directors planned to sell off the Battle Creek equipment and property so that funds would be available to erect a new building in Takoma Park.² In early 1905, therefore, plans were set afoot for the permanent establishment of the new plant. Wary of getting heavily involved in what was obviously going to be a major business undertaking, Prescott, with Daniells' concurrence, apparently tried to get the board to call either W. D. Salisbury from Australia, C. H. Jones from California, or I. H. Evans to take over the publishing house so that he could give more attention to his editorial work and vice-presidential responsibilities. Neither of his two colleagues, ¹


²A. G. Daniells to W. C. White and W. W. Prescott, February 22, 1904, RG 11: Lb 33, GCAr.
S. N. Curtis and W. C. White, were impressed with the suggestion.  

In January, Curtis and White consulted together and White wrote to Prescott on the matter. Stating his view that Salisbury could not be released from Australia and that Evans was not well equipped for the special work that was needed in Washington, he urged that Prescott not allow his editorial work to become too absorbing. He felt that Prescott should call other businessmen and editors to assist him, but that he should "give himself principally to the study of the principles and plans upon which the [publishing house] work should be conducted, and to teaching these to faithful men who would teach others also." He considered it vital that Prescott take up the work "of molding the policy of the institution." He hoped that the Review and Herald would become a pattern, "a training house," and he knew of "no one else living who could give it such a high intellectual and spiritual mold." White wanted Prescott to continue to be an educator—a religious educator—even while directing a publishing company. 

Prescott gave "considerable study" to W. C. White's suggestions and decided he would "drop out of other things." Not feeling it his duty to relinquish the editorial work, he apparently decided instead to give up his responsibilities as vice president—a decision that was followed through three months later at the General Conference session. Although he would "greatly prefer" not to spend his time 

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1 W. C. White to A. G. Daniells and W. W. Prescott, January 25, 1905, W. C. White Lb 26, EGWRC-DC.  

2 Ibid. White felt that Evans was better suited to the financial affairs of the General Conference, but that he was not able to select and educate apprentices, journeymen, and foremen wisely.
'over business affairs' and did not know if he would make "any flattering success of the work," he realized that some one must do it or "the association's interests" would "suffer greatly."¹

White was "heartily glad" at the decision. "It seems to me that there is no nobler work you could undertake than to study how to reorganize and re-establish the work of our leading publishing house upon Christian principles," he wrote. He believed that all eyes would be on the work to see "if a real thorough reformation" was to take place. He considered it imperative that Prescott and Daniells "teach" Christian principles to their associates in Washington. Although the work might have to be started "in a feeble and humble way," he concluded, the professor had before him "the greatest, grandest opportunity that will ever be presented in this cause to put a thorough mold upon the work such as it had in the beginning but which it lost in the eighties and nineties."²

What spare energy he had, Prescott threw into the work with his usual intensity. He presented plans for the new building to the 1905 General Conference session. Delegates at the session, vigorously supported by Mrs. White, voted to extend the nearly completed $100,000 fund-raising campaign for the Washington work with a $15,000 overflow target designated for the Review and Herald building. In July, a newly appointed superintendent supervised excavations on

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, February 15, 1901, EGWRC-DC.

²W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, February 23, 1905, W. C. White Lb 26, EGWRC-DC.
the site, but perplexities continued to plague the work.¹

A New Plant

When the General Conference voted to extend the fund raising campaign to include $15,000 for the Review and Herald, the Review and Herald board had in turn voted to release the General Conference from a $15,000 debt it had inherited from the Old Battle Creek College. It was a generous move, but it soon caused embarrassment since in the meantime Mrs. White had sent instructions that the overflow money should be sent to the south. Prescott was "troubled" and "confused" by the move and asked W. C. White what it meant. In times past Mrs. White had sharply reproved church leaders who had publicly appealed for an offering for a special project in the south but instead diverted it to the work in the north. Now in a seeming reversal, she directed that money publicly solicited for work in the north should be directed to work in the south. If the former was "robbery," Prescott wondered how the latter could be made to "look straight." He felt that W. C. White was probably as perplexed as he was, but he wanted some explanation because the move had, in fact, embarrassed them causing them to contravene another cherished policy. They had had to go into considerable debt to start off the new institution. Prescott's attitude toward Mrs. White remained unaltered by the reversal. He stated that they purposed to do as they had done in the past--"follow the counsel which is given us, believing that the Lord

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, July 13, 1905, EGWRC-DC.
W. C. White's reply acknowledged that he too was perplexed by the development. He urged, though, that there was blessing in obedience and perhaps their experience could be likened to the widow who was prepared to share her last meal with Elijah. The work of Haskell and Butler in the south was also needy. In sharing whatever resources there were there would be unity in the work.

While the new building was being erected other financial problems hindered progress. In October, F. E. Belden brought suit against the Review and Herald for a large sum. Then attempts to sell off the property and machinery in Battle Creek failed. Worried about the future, Prescott urged Daniells to foster an aggressive "book-work" in the conferences as he visited campmeetings so that the new office could quickly become self-supporting. At the same time, he arranged for his associates at the publishing house to visit the field to begin promoting an aggressive literature ministry. By mid-December, a firm arrangement was at last in hand to sell the equipment at the Battle Creek plant and lease the buildings to H. W.

2. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, August 11, 1905, W. C. White Lb 28, EGWRC-DC.
3. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, November 3, 1905, W. C. White Lb 29, EGWRC-DC. F. E. Belden, hymnwriter and nephew of Mrs. White, filed suit over the Review and Herald's use of his Hymns and Tunes. W. C. White commiserated with Prescott in his having to stand in defense of some of the unethical things done by former managers. He urged that the matter be settled out of court to avoid publicizing things which the Review and Herald ought not to have done. He was disturbed that Evans had made moves to engage a non-Adventist attorney to contest the case.
Kellogg. Suspicious of the moves the Battle Creek people might make, Prescott sought Mrs. White's counsel on the matter.¹

A further hitch occurred in late February 1906. A. T. Jones had written a pamphlet highly critical of the church, and rumors had begun to circulate about a takeover of the Tabernacle. At the same time, Daniells began a series of articles relating in detail a history of the difficulties with Kellogg. This, added to public appeals by the church leadership in March for church members to leave Battle Creek and live elsewhere, finally led to a breakdown of the arrangements to sell the publishing house property—a financial blow. On top of this, Judge Arthur's exorbitant fee for winding up the Battle Creek business not only annoyed Prescott intensely, it further squeezed finances. In spite of it all, by the end of March 1906, the new $25,000 four-story structure in Washington was completed and ready for occupancy (see fig. 16). Curtis had been in Battle Creek since December arranging affairs from that end, and Prescott, therefore, again carried much of the burden in setting up the new plant. With the planned sale of equipment falling through in Battle Creek, Curtis had to send the entire inventory of machinery to Washington. The presses were stopped in early April, packed and loaded. By April 16, the one-hundred-and-ninety-ton load was on its way south. It was a large task to fit everything in and from the first the building was cramped.²

¹ W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, November 1, 1905, RG 11: Fld 1905-P. GCAr. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 11, 1905, EGWRC-DC.
The thirty-first of May witnessed publication of the first issue of the Review from the new location. By mid-June, with its newly installed presses, the new plant with its staff of thirty-one was humming busily. Some commercial work brought across from Battle Creek actually helped the business off to a good start, and overtime became necessary for a while to catch up on the backlog. By August, attempts were being made to finish off the commercial work, and Prescott hoped that the revival of the canvassing work would keep the presses busy producing denominational literature. The press had run day and night, but with the arrival of autumn, the overtime was no longer necessary and financially things were looking better. In fact, Prescott was happy to inform W. C. White that the Review and Herald was able to rebate a debt from the Southern Publishing Association—a gesture which Prescott, remembering the $15,000 episode, hoped would show that they did not have "any disposition to treat them harshly."

Prescott did his best to establish a Christian atmosphere and a new approach to things in the new-born publishing enterprise. Employees were carefully selected and a night school was established during the summer. Whether his five-day week work scheme was implemented is not known, but there were difficulties in establishing an eight-hour day in 1908, at least for the clerical force who were at


that time working a fifty-two-hour week. The move was rejected.¹

In the association's business dealings, there was a clear effort to
deal justly. Especially in the sometimes difficult relations with
the Nashville publishing house, Prescott evidently bent over back­
wards to avoid criticism and to deal on fair terms. Although
apparently suspected by his southern brethren of not treating them
fairly, he stated that, in fact, he did more for these brethren than
he could do for others.²

With crowded premises right at the outset, it did not take
long for an increasing demand for books and periodicals to make more
space a necessity. New presses had been added in 1907 and overtime
was again required of employees. On June 8, 1908, two years after
the erection of the building, the board voted to add a thirty-foot
extension to the sixty-by-ninety-foot structure, mainly for storage
space. Building materials had already been purchased when an article
for publication in the Review arrived from Mrs. White. One paragraph
in the article strongly protested the policy of adding debt to debt,
still practiced in many church institutions. Mindful of previous
instruction and experiences at Battle Creek, regarding enlarging
buildings, Prescott took up the matter with his board and then

¹RHPA Bd Min, June 9, 1908 (copy), RG 261, GCAr. The Gen­
eral Conference Archives holds copies of only a few meetings of the
board of this association. The full minutes are held at the Review
and Herald office. A more complete understanding of how Prescott
was able to "mold" the institution will perhaps be possible when the
board minutes become available.

²W. W. Prescott to S. N. Haskell, August 2, 1908, RG 11:
Fld 1908-P; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, July 31, 1905, RG 11:
Fld 1905-P, GCAr. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, November 28, 1907,
RG 11: Lb 42; A. G. Daniells to C. P. Bolman, December 12, 1907,
RG 11: Lb 42, GCAr.

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nastily wrote to Daniells and W. C. White. His letters, which evidence a clear and detailed grasp of the intricate financial circumstances of the institution, lucidly set out the difficulty. He asked for advice. W. C. White and his mother felt quite clear in proceeding with the addition. Before the end of the year, the addition had been completed. The need for such an early expansion of the plant was a clear evidence of the rapid progress of the new establishment.

The six-year struggle had been extremely difficult. In July 1905, Prescott reported that the strain for the previous two or three years had been "so terrible" that it had brought him "almost to nervous prostration." For years the work days had been long and the nights too short. Both Daniells and Prescott had driven themselves intensely. Prescott had become involved in evangelism in the capitol and in the important religious liberty representations at Congress. The protracted negotiations at Battle Creek and in Washington had absorbed much time.

In the midst of this was the feverish activity of the 1905 General Conference session held in tents at Takoma Park while headquarters were still in the city. Boards and committees followed, and then in July the building programs for both the Review and Herald and the General Conference occupied their attention. Prescott related that at one or two of the committees in late July, Daniells had almost collapsed and Prescott himself had been obliged "to take

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1 W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, August 7, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P, GCAR. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, August 20, 1908, W. C. White Lb 36, EGWRC-DC.
charge of the meeting in order to finish up the business."  

Prescott's associates became concerned that he was working too hard and they communicated with W. C. White. White wrote urging him to take time out "to make a garden," "saw wood," or "something that will make you sweat." Noting that "teachers are the hardest men in the world to teach," White stressed that it was important for the work in the long run for Prescott to ease up. Although the editor was able to take occasional vacations, yet with so many things demanding attention it seems that he did not know how to voluntarily shorten his work day. Finally, nature took her rest almost forcibly in 1910 when his health broke down completely after the death of his wife. 2

In 1909, when Prescott transferred from the presidency of the Review and Herald to other work, he had been the association's chief administrative officer for six years. In that time, the periodical output had reached 50,000 per week—a doubling of the periodical circulation since the move from Battle Creek. The plant was binding an average of 350 books per day. Staff on the payroll had increased from thirty-one in 1905 to 102 in 1909, and the total daily retail value of literature produced by the firm had surpassed $1,000. 3

In 1905, Prescott had wondered if he could make a success of

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2. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, September 18, 1905, W. C. White Lb 28, EGWRC-DC.
the new establishment. In 1909 he was being modest when he acknowledged that "it was not by any special ability of those who have in charge the management of this institution that it succeeds." For Prescott, the success of the institution was ultimately a result of the success of the church at large, and that success was God's own doing. His own contribution, however, was no small measure.\footnote{W. W. Prescott, "Legal Meeting," \textit{GC Bulletin}, May 19, 1909, p. 70.}
Andrews University
School of Graduate Studies

WILLIAM WARREN PRESCOTT: SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST EDUCATOR
VOLUME II

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Gilbert Murray Valentine
August 1982
# PART FOUR
1909-1919

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PART FOUR

1909-1919
 CHAPTER XV

A THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY AND A CHANGE OF JOB

The theological controversy in Adventism over "the daily" at the end of the first decade of this century, seems today to be very much like the proverbial storm in a teacup. For William Warren Prescott though it was a serious and a costly experience. The professor's attempt to educate the church and to change its thinking on this doctrinal point met with some extreme hostility even though he had evidently followed all the correct procedures. His being asked to leave the editorship of the Review in 1909 occurred in the midst of his involvement in this controversy. The unfolding drama casts light both on Prescott as a religious educator and the development of the church. It is therefore worth exploring quite closely.

Controversy Again

Prescott's nine-month trip through the Far East and Europe in early 1907 had been a welcome release from the continuous whirlwind of activity in Washington, D.C., that had worn out his nerves. At least partially refreshed and restored, he returned to headquarters on August 29, 1907. He had not been back at his editorial desk in Washington more than three or four months, however, when he found himself embroiled again in a rapidly escalating theological
controversy. This time his primary opponent was S. N. Haskell. The sabre-rattling, in fact, had commenced during the summer while Prescott was still in Europe. Haskell had written to Mrs. White warning that he could see some "errors" here and there and some he considered "very dangerous." He said that he longed to write "something on the sanctuary question" because positions were being taken by "some of the leading brethren," which, if pursued, would prove "not only a ruin to their own souls, but [would] undermine present truth. . . . There are many who know that Prescott and I differ and are really waiting to see how that will yet come out." 2

The primary issue over which Haskell and Prescott differed was the interpretation of the expression "the daily" in Dan 3:11-13 and 11:31. In these passages the translators of the King James Version had added the word "sacrifice" in an attempt to express the sense of the term "daily" thus suggesting that it referred to the services of the Israelite sanctuary. In his exposition of Dan 3, William Miller had rejected the word "sacrifice," apparently because he wanted to avoid the application of the prophecy to Antiochus Epiphanes. Instead, by relating Dan 8:11-13 to the Apostle Paul's statements about the anti-Christ in 2 Thes 2:7, 3, he was able to interpret "the daily" to mean Roman paganism. Then, by paralleling Dan 11:31 with Dan 3: 11-13, Miller asserted that paganism would be "taken away" by "the abomination that maketh desolate" which he

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1 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 23, 1907, EGWRC-DC.

2 S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, June 30, November 18, 1907, EGWRC-DC.

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interpreted to mean the papacy. Connecting these expressions with
the 1290 years of Dan 12:11 he declared that the event had occurred
in A.D. 508 when pagan England had supposedly been converted to
Christianity. Thus paganism had finally been removed and the place
of its sanctuary (Rome) had been cast down. This position was fol-
lowed quite uniformly, it seems, by Joseph Bates, James White, J. H.
Andrews, and Uriah Smith. The latter developed the line quite fully
in his classical exposition on Daniel and the Revelation.¹

The fact that the expression "the daily" was an integral part
of the most important biblical text for the Adventist church's
"sanctuary" doctrine, that it concerned what Haskell considered
important prophetic dates, and that Miller's interpretation of it had
been taught by the "pioneers" of Adventism made the question of its
meaning an important one for Haskell. He could not see how the "old
view" could be tampered with. Much more importantly, though, as he
saw it, Mrs. White had stated specifically that the "old view" was
the correct view. In 1850 she had written,

Then I saw in relation to the "daily" (Dan 8:12) that the word
"sacrifice" was supplied by man's wisdom, and does not belong to
the text, and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those
who gave the judgement hour cry. When union existed, before
1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the "daily";
but in the confusion since 1844, other views have been embraced,
and darkness and confusion have followed.²

¹William Miller cited in Signs of the Times, July 15, 1841,
p. 41. See also L. E. Froom, "Historical Setting and Background of
the Term 'Daily,'" 1940, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1), GCAr.
Uriah Smith, Thoughts on the Books of Daniel and Revelation (Battle
Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald, 1892), pp. 159-161, 260-268.

²Ellen G. White, Early Writings (Washington, D.C.: Review
and Herald, 1945), pp. 74, 75. The terms "old view" and "new view"
were in fact quite inaccurate. Unbeknown to any of the parties, it
seems, Crosier and others in the 1840s had advocated the Conradi-
Such a clear-cut statement by Mrs. White was the final word for Haskell—any further discussion was almost illegitimate. In fact, because of this statement, the authority of Mrs. White became the key issue in the controversy—much more important than the specific interpretation itself which Haskell later acknowledged as not all that vital—"Personally, it don't amount to a hill of beans to me."

But to adopt any interpretation other than that which Mrs. White had indicated as the correct one was, for Haskell, an undermining of her authority, and that really concerned him!

Prescott, on the other hand, understood the term "the daily" not to refer to paganism but to the mediatorial ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. This work of Christ had been obscured, or "taken away" from the Christian church, by the papacy, which had substituted for it the doctrine of the mass and a human priesthood. This "new view" Prescott believed to be more in harmony with the facts of history and with the context of the biblical text of Dan 3.2. Along with Daniells, he felt that the new interpretation was

Prescott position. Prescott did not discover that Crosier had taught the "continual mediation" interpretation in his celebrated 1846 Day Star article until 1930. See W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, January 2, 1930, P C 12: LEF(1) Fld "W. W. Prescott"; see also L. E. Froom, "Historical Setting and Background of the Term 'Daily'" 1940, RG 58: LEF(2) Fld "The Daily" (1), GCAr.

1S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, December 6, 1909; S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, February 25, December 29, 1908, EGWRC-DC. S. N. Haskell to C. C. Crosier, March 30, 1908, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1), GCAr.

2Prescott argued vigorously that there was absolutely no historical evidence that the English were converted in 508 and that therefore paganism was at that date taken away by the papacy. W. W. Prescott to J. N. Loughborough, December 12, 1907, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAr.
worth adopting not simply because it accorded better with history but because it made the prophecy Christocentric. The matter of history "pales before the importance of the glorious truth the Bible teaches regarding the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary," wrote Daniells.  

Prescott recognized the conflict between the "new view" and Mrs. White's Early Writings statement and sought to resolve the difficulty by appealing to the larger context of the 1850 article in which the problem statement appeared. Mrs. White was primarily concerned with time setting, he argued, and the "imperfect" "daily" remark should be seen as incidental to that larger issue. Daniells supported Prescott's approach to the difficulty. "It is a great injustice to your mother for men to place an interpretation upon her words that arrays her against all history," he wrote to W. C. White. "Another interpretation equally as well founded can be given. . . . They [sic] why not make that interpretation and save her and ourselves great humiliation which is as sure to come as the sun is to rise."  

Following Correct Procedure

Although probably the most prominent exponent of the "new view" in America, Prescott was by no means the originator of it. He

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1. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, January 3, 1910, RG 11: Bx 55 Lb 46, GCAr.


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had picked it up from L. R. Conradi seven years earlier while working in Britain. Conradi had been writing a book on the prophecies of Daniel for circulation in the European field. In his study of the text he arrived at the new interpretation, discussed it with Prescott and others, and then wrote to Mrs. White asking her to write to him if she had any counsel to give on the subject. If not, he would go ahead with the publication of his new volume. He did not hear from Mrs. White on the matter and his book was published. For many years it enjoyed a wide circulation.¹

In England, Prescott introduced the matter tentatively in discussions with his workers, but not all were persuaded. Andross was bothered by the apparent conflict it created with Early Writings. He complained to Haskell, who was thus informed very early on the matter. When Daniells visited with Prescott and Conradi in mid-1900, both men apparently discussed the matter with him. He too was impressed, although somewhat anxious about Mrs. White's statement.

In the months after the 1901 General Conference, U. Smith's counsel was sought, but he apparently reacted negatively to the new interpretation. In a veiled way and without exegeting Dan 3, Prescott alluded to the theme of the "continual mediation of Christ and Roman Catholicism's counterfeit system" in his 1902 series of Sabbath School lessons, but otherwise the matter was not discussed in public.

¹ "An Introductory Statement," MS K [Compiled by C. C. Crisler] RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (2), GCAr. See also Bert Haloviak, "In the Shadow of the 'Daily': Background and Aftermath of the 1919 Bible and History Teachers' Conference" (unpublished manuscript, 1979, GCAr), pp. 37-39. This paper provides an excellent survey of the contending positions on "the daily" and has a helpful discussion on the central question of Mrs. White's role in doctrinal discussions.
From 1902 on, the eruption of the Kellogg controversy preoccupied Prescott and Daniells and the issue of "the daily" was shelved until 1908.¹

As the first decade of the new century progressed, Prescott became increasingly enthused with the new concept and saw it as possessing the potential to provide Adventism with a new impetus. He talked of it privately with Daniells and Spicer and continued to study the issue but did not attempt to push it when Daniells urged restraint. The day before he left on his overseas trip in 1906, however, he expressed the hope that "at the proper time and in the proper way" the matter would "receive attention." Later in 1910 as Spicer reviewed the preceding decade, he expressed the opinion that Prescott had been "very conservative" in relating to the question. "During all these years he has let the other side shout away, and he held in..."²

Upon Prescott's return from the Far East in 1907, a development occurred that seemed to indicate to Prescott and Daniells that the appropriate moment to deal with the problem of Dan 8:11-13 had arrived. Sometime in October 1907, two former members of the editorial staff of the publishing house in Battle Creek published a 120-page book vigorously dissenting from the Adventist interpretation of

¹E. E. Andross to S. N. Haskell, November 12, 1900, RG 9: Fld S. N. Haskell; "U. Smith to General Conference Brethren" [1903], PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "U. Smith Correspondence," GCAR. W. W. Prescott to E. G. White, December 14, 1900; W. W. Prescott to L. H. Christian, November 27, 1906, DF 202, EGWRC-DC.

the prophecy of Dan 8. The book criticized J. Smith's interpretation generally and scorned his explanation of "the daily."¹ The book quickly came to the attention of the General Conference committee who, after discussing the question, asked Prescott if he would write an exposition of Dan 8 for the Review replying to the criticisms but without mentioning the book by name. Prescott informed the committee that it would be "impossible" for him to interpret the chapter "in harmony with Elder Smith's exposition," which he regarded as indefensible on the point of "the daily." He was then asked by the committee to explain to them his own understanding. This he did, whereupon the committee suggested that he submit a brief outline of his view to Mrs. White to ask whether it was contrary to her Early Writings' statement.²

The Kellogg-Kolvoord book also aroused Haskell and J. N. Loughborough, and Prescott entered into correspondence with them on the issue. He carefully and kindly explained to Loughborough why he could not publish an article entitled "Taking Away of the Daily" Loughborough had submitted to the Review. The article defended Smith's position. "We are being attacked from various sides now," explained Prescott, "and I desire to use all care not to give anyone standing ground upon which to successfully make warfare on our teachings." Prescott had also written Haskell a critique of some points (including "the daily") in Haskell's book, Daniel the Prophet.

² W. W. Prescott to C. C. Crisler, December 20, 1907. RG 53: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAr.
that Haskell was apparently planning to revise. He was evidently unaware of how strongly Haskell felt over the issue. His concluding statements that it would be "only a question of time when the present teaching concerning the daily will be discarded" and "the sooner the better" were not easy for Haskell to accept. The elderly minister responded vigorously. He simply could not accept Prescott's explanation. "We ought to understand such expressions by the aid of the Spirit of Prophecy. . . . For this purpose the Spirit of Prophecy comes to us. . . . All points are to be solved" this way, he wrote.¹

Both W. C. White and Crisler soon informed Prescott that Haskell was anxiously seeking an interview with Mrs. White to lay the dispute before her. Accordingly, and in harmony with the request of the General Conference committee, Prescott wrote to Crisler asking him to arrange "a delay until the whole subject" could be "properly presented." He noted that Daniells would soon be at Elmshaven and could make the matter clear.²

The closing days of 1907 brought an earnest request from Crisler for Prescott to visit Elmshaven himself. The Elmshaven staff were troubled by recent criticism of Mrs. White's work. They needed Prescott's keen scholarly help in making a reply to the criticisms, as well as in preparing some of Mrs. White's manuscripts on Ezra for publication. He could also use the opportunity to have a

¹W. W. Prescott to J. N. Loughborough, December 12, 1907; S. N. Haskell to W. W. Prescott, November 15, 1907, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection]; W. W. Prescott to S. N. Haskell, December 1, 1907, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (2), GCAr.

²W. W. Prescott to C. C. Crisler, December 20, 1907, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAr.
face-to-face conference with the various parties on "the daily."\(^1\)

Prescott, heavily burdened by editorial work in Washington and conducting a series of lectures on Matt 24 at the Foreign Mission Seminary, was reluctant to accept the invitation. On New Year's Day 1908, he wrote to Daniells for advice. Both Daniells and W. C. White encouraged him to make the trip, stating that he could also visit the Pacific Union Conference session at the same time where his "very strong earnest sermons" would surely be appreciated. The General Conference committee concurred.\(^2\)

The second issue of the Signs of the Times that year quickly persuaded Prescott of the wisdom of making the trip. The California-based paper edited by M. C. Wilcox had published an article taking the new view of "the daily." Fearing how Haskell and others might react, Prescott complained to Daniells about the lack of restraint on the part of "the Signs people." He added, "It seems very desirable that we should have a personal interview [concerning "the daily"]... as we are likely to get into some embarrassment unless we make an effort to get together on common ground." Within a matter

\(^1\) C. C. Crisler to W. W. Prescott, December 26, 1907, RG 58: LFD(1) Fld "The Daily" (2), SCAr. According to Crisler, Mrs. White had already been approached by Loughborough, Conradi, and A. O. Johnson. All had apparently written letters but they had been pigeonholed until Mrs. White could consider all sides of the question. See also C. C. Crisler to W. W. Prescott, December 14, EGWRC-DC. C. C. Crisler to W. W. Prescott, December 27, 1907, RG 11: Fld 1907-C, GCAr. Dr. C. E. Stewart's "Blue Book," A Response to an Urgent Testimony, had also just been issued. It raised questions about Mrs. White's literary borrowing and inconsistencies in her testimonies.

\(^2\) W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 1, 7, 1908; A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, January 7, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P, SCAr.
of days, Prescott was on the train for the six-day journey to California.¹

The help Prescott was able to render the Elmshaven staff in their preparation of manuscripts and in dealing with Dr. C. E. Stewart's "Blue Book" criticisms was greatly appreciated. Both Crisler and W. C. White were much encouraged.² The conference of the brethren on "the daily," however, was not as productive. On Sunday morning, January 26, the group met together in one of Mrs. White's offices for a lengthy session.Daniells, Loughborough, Haskell and his wife, W. C. White, Crisler, and D. E. Robinson participated. According to Mrs. Haskell, Prescott talked for four hours and then Haskell and Loughborough responded. She thought that for Prescott to talk so long "to two old men over seventy-four years of age" was "hardly a fair chance." It had made their heads weary. She felt that there was no real dialogue. "Brother Prescott is so sure that he is right and everyone else wrong." The next day Haskell himself wrote to Daniells stating that he had less confidence in Prescott's view than he had before. Then, in what Daniells considered to be a very uncharitable attack on Prescott, Haskell suggested that because

¹"The 2,300 Days," Signs of the Times, January 8, 1908, pp. 6, 7. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, January 10, 1908; A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, January 7, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P, SCAr. The letters crossed in the mails. Prescott was not sure if Daniells advised the trip until January 10.

²Crisler wrote that Mrs. White was very grateful. "We feel very thankful he [Prescott] could spend these days with us. Our future work will be done with more assurance and courage on account of the counsels we have received." Prescott wrote a new foreword for Steps to Christ while he was with them. W. C. White stated that it was "a splendid visit." C. C. Crisler to A. G. Daniells and F. Griggs, February 6, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P; W. C. White to E. R. Palmer, February 7, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-W (2), SCAr.
the professor had erred in regard to Anna Phillips in 1894, and (as far as Haskell was concerned) had taught the same things as Kellogg, he certainly wasn't to be trusted on the matter of "the daily."¹

Prescott stayed at Elmshaven for another week after the meeting and continued to discuss the question with Crisler and White.² On February 6, he left Elmshaven with the understanding that it was now all clear for him to write a series of articles in the Review indirectly responding to Kolvoord and Kellogg. He informed Daniells:

"Brother White and I are agreed that after what has been done here on this visit, the way is open for me to do what the brethren requested me to do, namely give an exposition of the eighth chapter of Daniel through the Review." He also planned to begin a general exposition of the book of Daniel.³

Educating the Church

Shortly after his arrival back in Washington in late February, Prescott commenced writing and announced plans for the

¹Mrs. S. N. Haskell to A. G. Daniells, January 26, 1908, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection]; A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, March 18, 1908; A. G. Daniells to S. N. Haskell, March 19, 1908, RG 11: Lb 42; S. N. Haskell to A. G. Daniells, January 27, 1908, RG 11: 1908-H, GCAr. Three days after he had sent his letter to Daniells, he sent a copy to Mrs. White. See S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, January 30, 1908, EGWRC-DC.

²He also had opportunity to visit and to discuss the issue with M. C. Wilcox and A. O. Tait, the editors of the Signs of the Times. W. W. Prescott, "On the Pacific Coast," RH, February 27, 1908, p. 5.

³W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, February 4, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P, GCAr. According to Haskell, Prescott had remarked to him, "I see no other way now then [sic] we shall both be at liberty to teach what we regard as the truth on this subject." S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, March 1, 1908, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAr.
upcoming series in his leading editorial in the March 5 issue of the Review.¹ Unbeknown to Prescott, however, Haskell had written to W. C. White threatening to cause trouble by starting a public campaign against Prescott if he went ahead with his plan.² Crisler wrote to Prescott urging further delay and sent him more materials to consider. W. C. White also urged delay. He reported, somewhat belatedly, to Prescott: "About the time you left here Mother told me that there were some things presented to her that would lead her to caution you about publishing in the Review just now any articles about the Daily which would unsettle our brethren." He apologized that he had not mentioned the caution to Prescott earlier in view of what they had agreed on in their last discussion on the subject. Unfortunately, the caution came too late to prevent the mass circulation of an advertisement announcing the series and making a subscription drive for the Review. Nonetheless, Prescott dutifully complied with the counsel and expressed his willingness to withhold publication "for a time."³

¹ "Announcement," RH, March 5, 1908, p. 3. The series was to include a number of articles on the theme, "The Priest and the Sanctuary." It was to be followed by a general exposition of Daniel.

² W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, March 24, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-W (2), GCAR. Haskell had informed White that he already had plates made for an 1842 chart and that he would circulate the chart widely. The chart supposedly supported the "old view." It had been endorsed by Mrs. White in the 1840s.

³ The advertising circular distributed by circulation manager, D. W. Reavis, stated, "The editor has been giving much thought and hard study on some contested points of our former interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel. He has taken careful and safe counsel and will be able to give the readers of the Review during the next six months . . . some unusually interesting and highly constructive thoughts. . . ." D. W. Reavis to W. A. Spicer (circular) RG 21: Domestic: Fld 1908-P; W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, April 13, 1908.

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Discouragement and Despondency

The disappointment on finding so much resistance to the "new light" and his frustration at the start-stop policy when added to his perplexities at home apparently proved almost too much for Prescott. Shortly after he had arrived home, his wife Sarah became seriously ill with cancer. In March, she underwent major surgery in Baltimore. So serious was the illness that Prescott did not expect her to live. Happily the operation proved successful, and over a period of months Sarah slowly recovered. The experience was a sobering one for Prescott.

In mid-March, when Sarah was at her lowest, Daniells reported to Crisler, who had just suggested that Prescott do some further research on "the daily": "Poor man he is feeling very nearly discouraged. In the first place he is continually over-worked and his physical strength and vitality are so low that every additional burden seems like a mountain. Besides," he went on, 'the anxiety that he has carried for Sister Prescott with the rest of his labours and perplexities has proved to be nearly the last straw."

RG 11: Fld 1908-W (1), GCAr. M. C. Wilcox did not feel in any mood to postpone his dealing with the subject in the Signs of the Times simply to appease Haskell. He argued that he and the writer of his series, E. J. Hibbard, had arrived at views similar to Prescott's from their own independent study. He did not see any need to hold off publication. Eventually, however, he did delay the series.

M. C. Wilcox to C. C. Crisler, April 1, 1908, RG 58: LCF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAr.

Haskell's unpleasant letter of January 27 eventually found its way to Prescott. According to Daniells, it quite distressed the professor. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, March 18, 1908, RG 11: Lb 43, GCAr.

As it turned out, Prescott had already checked the additional sources Crisler had suggested. A. G. Daniells to C. C.
To W. C. White, Daniells was a little more frank and talked of things he could not say to Crisler. He expressed his fear that Prescott "would definitely . . . retire from the work for a time" and reported that the professor had told him that "he did not think he would try to hold on any longer." Daniells was distressed at the prospect because he felt Prescott to be a "keen scholarly man . . . greatly needed where he is"; that he had "keen vision" and "a good perception of what to leave out of the Review as well as what to put in--the former being more important." He reported furthermore that he had known for a long time that his colleague had been working very close "to the breaking down line." "He may rally and pull along until the next General Conference," thought Daniells, "and he may not." Changing the metaphor he explained that Prescott was "so near the water's edge that another ounce of weight would sink him." As it turned out, Sarah's health improved, Prescott's courage returned, and he did "pull along" until the next General Conference.

Meanwhile, Haskell continued to write threatening letters to Elmshaven and reported that other "leading men" were rallying to his side. He stated that W. C. White was "unwise" to encourage Prescott. It would be different if this "new view" substantiated old positions, asserted Haskell, but in fact it was "contrary to old established

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Crisler, March 18, 1908, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAr.

A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, March 18, April 2, 1908, RG 11: Lb 43, GCAr. Two months later Prescott reflected on Sarah's confrontation with death in an editorial, saying that when the believer is "in Christ, . . . however boldly death may stare us in the face, . . . we can assure ourselves with the thought that 'though our outward man perish yet it is but for a short dreamless sleep. . . ." "Anticipating Death," RH, May 7, 1908, p. 3.
points of [the] faith.' He warned that he would "not be responsible for the result" if Prescott published anything in the Review. ¹

Prescott did not publish anything, but during the last weeks of April he met twice with the full General Conference committee to explain his view. As he saw it, "there was an almost unanimous conviction that the general ground as held by Elder Conradi and myself is warranted both by scripture and history," but he was not sure what move would be made next. ²

Within a month, Prescott's colleagues had apparently recommended that he go ahead with the planned series on Daniel. On May 14, he announced to his readers that "after further consideration," rather than begin with his preparatory articles on "The Priest and the Sanctuary," it had been decided that he should simply begin a general exposition on Daniel and the subject of the Sanctuary would be considered "in its natural place in the prophecy." ³ He began the series that same issue. ⁴ It was an in depth treatment and he proceeded slowly. A. O. Tait commented to Crisler, "If his

⁰ S. N. Haskell to C. C. Crisler, April 13, 1908, RG 58: LEF(1) Fl 6 "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAR.

² W. W. Prescott to C. C. Crisler, May 1, 1908, RG 58: LEF(1) Fl 6 "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAR. Because of the delay necessitated in dealing with Daniel 8, Prescott published other general materials supporting the church's position on the time prophecies in an effort to reply to Kolvoord and Kellogg's book. See "Aids for the Bible Reader," RH, March 26, 1908, p. 11; April 2, 1908, p. 12; April 9, 1908, p. 11; April 16, 1908, p. 12.

³ The series "The Priest and the Sanctuary," were the ones intended to deal with Daniel 8 and "the daily." Prescott had never mentioned publicly, however, that they would deal with "the daily."

[Prescott's] first article is a sample of those that follow, he will have a pretty good book written before he gets into the merits of the prophecy itself. He probably hopes for an adjustment of some things by the time he gets to it."

The Opposition Reacts

As Prescott proceeded the battle was joined. The Watchman, published by the Southern Publishing Association, announced that Haskell's 1842 chart would be made available, while Haskell himself pestered Mrs. White for permission to republish and circulate the out-of-print Early Writings. 2 To W. C. White, he strongly advocated

1A. O. Tait to C. C. Crisler, May 24, 1908; W. W. Prescott to C. C. Crisler, June 28, 1908, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (1) [C. C. Crisler Collection], GCAr. Tait was right. Prescott reported to Crisler: "It will be sometime before I reach the theological portion of the book of Daniel. . . . I hope in the meantime that matters may take such shape that we may have clear light as to what ought to be done in the exposition of the eighth chapter."

2Daniells wrote to the manager of the Southern Publishing Association, I. A. Ford, asking him not to proceed with the 1842 chart. "In view of all that has happened in connection with this question, and all that is involved in it, I believe a mistake is being made in printing that chart. Those who differ with the views of Brethren Smith and Haskell have thus far restrained from expressing their views in our papers. They do not want any controversy. They have counselled quietly with their brethren, and have taken with care every step pointed out by the Spirit of Prophecy as the right course in such a case. They are still willing to counsel." Daniells indicated that if the chart were published he would not feel duty bound to "restrain" the others. Ford replied that he saw the "new view" as moving the "pins" and the "pegs" of the "platform" and "tearing up the landmarks." He agreed, however, not to advertise the chart any further. Nonetheless, Haskell still had it published. A. G. Daniells to I. A. Ford, July 13, 1908, RG 11: Lb 43; I. A. Ford to A. G. Daniells, July 20, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-F, GCAr.

Haskell felt that the wide circulation of Early Writings would be an effective counter to Prescott's view, but Mrs. White refused to give permission for this. Haskell reported: "One great battle I was defeated in and it almost overcame me. That is the circulation of Early Writings." W. N. Haskell to E. G. White, August 13, 1908, EGWRC-DC.
a change of jobs for Daniells and Prescott, while to Prescott he wrote vigorously protesting his actions. Prescott's reply to Haskell was gracious and gentlemanly but indicated that he was becoming exasperated. "You have made a very strong issue over the question of the interpretation which should be given to the instruction found in Early Writings," he wrote. "I have shown you plainly that your interpretation would make the Spirit of Prophecy contradict history and there are . . . from fifty to one hundred ministers in this denomination who I must think are as intelligent and honest as any of us, who think your interpretation of this passage is incorrect."2

On the personal elements that Haskell had introduced into the discussion, Prescott replied by briefly citing two or three incidents where Haskell had also been rebuked by Mrs. White concluding, 'I do not think it is kind or a wise course to watch for each other's failings and make charges of this kind . . . neither do I think it is fair for you to assume that we are the ones who are failing to be guided by the Spirit of Prophecy while you always make your following of it an excuse for disagreeing with your brethren."3

The reaction from those who held the "old view" was so intense,

1S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, October 22, 1908, EGWRC-DC.
2W. W. Prescott to S. N. Haskell, August 2, 1908, RG 11: 1908-P, GCAr.
3Ibid. At the very time Prescott was proposing a re-interpretation of the Early Writings statement to allow the Bible to stand as a final authority in its own right, he was nonetheless seeking counsel from Mrs. White on affairs relative to the conduct of the church. It seems clear that he was not being inconsistent in his approach to Mrs. White's authority but simply recognizing a distinction in functions.
however, that even the series on the book of Daniel was stopped on August 27, when Prescott was still commenting on Dan 3. A note on the back page of the Review that week mentioned that "for various reasons" the articles would be omitted during September, and "unless something unforeseen should prevent" they would resume in October. The articles were not resumed and the whole matter dropped.¹

Towards the end of May, or possibly later, Prescott had received a letter of warning from Mrs. White. She mentioned that he had at times come near to making shipwreck of his faith and that he was still in danger of making mistakes. Mrs. White said that sometimes he placed too much weight on minor matters and that upon some questions silence would "reveal a spirit of wisdom and discretion." The letter gave a general warning but did not mention anything specific.² Prescott apparently was puzzled by it.

Several months later, Daniells visited California and spent a week at Elmshaven with Mrs. White. He talked with her at length about "the daily." According to Daniells' later report, she found it difficult to concentrate on the matter but had said she had no "light" on it. Prescott was encouraged by Daniells' report that seemed to indicate a favorable reaction. "I judge from what Sister White said that the way will certainly be opened to deal with the matter when I reach the eighth chapter."³

¹RH, August 27, 1908, p. 24.
²E. G. White to W. W. Prescott, May 22, 1908, EGWRC-AU. Prescott's response to the letter seems to suggest that the letter may have been sent some time after it was written.
³A. G. Daniells to E. Arneson, September 10, 1908, RG 11: Lo 43; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, August 28, 1908, RG 11:
In early September, after Daniell's return, Prescott wrote to W. C. White: "Sometime ago I received a communication from your mother containing some good counsel and some things which I was quite at a loss to understand." He explained further that in the meantime he had had a chance to talk to Daniells "about the situation in California and the representation which has been made to your mother [by S. N. Haskell] concerning our position on 'the daily.'"¹ He noted that since this discussion with Daniells, he thought he understood more clearly "what she had in mind in writing to me." He was glad that Mrs. White now had "a better understanding of the position" which he held on Dan 2 and asked White to convey to his mother that he would "try to profit by the counsel" which she had given him.²

In the weeks following her May letter, Mrs. White wrote two other letters to Prescott. The first dated June 24, 1908, mentioned Prescott's connection with Waggoner in England and the dangers he faced during that period. Then she wrote:

¹Daniells apparently informed Prescott that S. N. Haskell had endeavored to "prejudice the case" against the new view and had misrepresented Prescott. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, August 28, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P, GCAr. Mrs. White stated that she could not understand the argument. E. G. White to S. N. Haskell, August 28, 1908, EGWRC-DC. Mrs. White's health was not good during this period. W. C. White, Daniells, and Prescott all expected that she would not live long. They spoke of protecting her from the well-meaning intentions of her friends as well as her enemies so that her last days would be tranquil. Many in the church were apparently having difficulty allowing Mrs. White to grow old with all that that involved.

²W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, September 7, 1908, EGWRC-DC.
You sometimes allow your mind to center upon a certain train of thought and you are in danger of making a mountain out of a molehill. Brother Prescott, there has been a serious weakness in your work of ministry. It is a tendency to sway from clearly defined truth and give undue attention to some items which seem to require hours of argument to prove, when in reality they do not need to be handled at all. It will be nice for you to say, when tempted to do this work, "We cannot afford to arouse arguments upon points that are not essential for the salvation of the soul."

The other letter was first written a week later on July 1, 1908. In this second letter she specifically advised Prescott against agitating any questions in the Review and that he should not agitate "the daily" at that time. She said it would become a great mountain unless he determined to let it alone. Neither of the two letters, however, were sent in 1908. Prescott did not receive them, in fact, until over two years later when W. C. White sent them to him when the professor was in New England recuperating from a nervous collapse. He received them two months after the death of his wife. White explained that several times Mrs. White's staff had been instructed to send them, but just as they were ready to mail them his mother would ask to have them brought to her to read again and then would decide against mailing them. (The letters show considerable editorial amendments.) W. C. White was not sure whether they were ever sent so he sent them on his own responsibility in August 1910.

Hurt and bewilderment were evident in Prescott's reply. Indicating that he had never seen the two letters, he stated:

Of course, it is a little difficult for me to understand why they were not sent to me at the time, if they were designed to be of any practical benefit. Now the circumstances have so

Perhaps only the May 22 letter was sent after this process. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, August 12, 1910, EGWRC-DC.
completely changed that it does not seem that they can make
any difference in my present course of action, as I have not
been editor of the Review for more than a year.

The two unsent letters inadvertently seemed to have contributed to further misunderstandings over the doctrinal issue troubling the leading brethren.

It seems evident that if Prescott had received the letters in 1908 he might have adopted a different approach to the problem of "the daily." W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, August 23, 1910, EGWRC-DC.

Two possible reasons why the letters were not sent might be suggested. (1) It seems Mrs. White experienced some ambivalence of feeling about Prescott. In early 1907, she had written to Daniells expressing her anxiety about his needing to be cautious concerning issues that would divert the church. In this letter an interlineation appears mentioning that Prescott may introduce some things, but Prescott’s name is crossed out by the same pen. E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, February 4, 1908, EGWRC-AU. The context suggests that Mrs. White was evidently worried about "the daily" as something which might be like putting new timbers in the foundation. (2) It was Daniells’ opinion in August 1908, that Haskell was seriously misrepresenting Prescott’s position to Mrs. White. Perhaps Mrs. White suspected this and therefore hesitated to send the letters. Haskell at this time was the president of the California Conference and was in weekly contact with Mrs. White by letter. During this period of the controversy on "the daily" she stayed in his home on occasion.

On August 28, 1908, Mrs. White wrote to Haskell reproving him for printing his chart and informing him that she had already written to Prescott warning him about introducing the subject in the Review and that it was not a vital question. It is evident that she was referring to her July 1, 1908 letter to Prescott. But the letter had not yet been sent to Prescott. See W. C. White to J. S. Washburn, October 27, 1910, RG 58: LEF(1) Fid "The Daily" (3), GCAr.

W. C. White also cited portions of the two unsent letters in his correspondence to others. Again this was before the two letters were ever sent to Prescott. See W. C. White to P. T. Magan, July 31, 1910, RG 58: LEF(1) Fid "The Daily and the Shut Door," GCAr. Whether copies of the letters were made and sent to others in 1908, as was Mrs. White’s occasional practice, is not known. In the light of these developments, Prescott’s bewilderment and perplexity at what others were saying about his wrongful urging of the question of "the daily" during this period, therefore, seems quite understandable.
Further Misunderstandings

Other misunderstandings also arose among the church leaders that heightened the tensions of this period. The brethren in Washington were somewhat disturbed over the large debts being incurred in California in the strong drive to establish health and educational institutions. W. C. White's occasional brusque approach and aggressive promotion of his enterprises ruffled his colleagues who were tempted to respond by resisting his efforts. Newly appointed publishing department chairman, E. R. Palmer, for example, felt that White was wanting to manipulate the book market independently of the publishing department and was blunt in telling him so. On the other hand, White and others were fearful that an attitude was developing in Washington that insisted that everything had to go through the General Conference.¹

According to W. C. White, his mother was also worried about some trends and feared that Daniells was being influenced too much by Prescott, Palmer, and Evans. White tried to warn Daniells about the need to be careful of the weaknesses of these men. Daniells was perplexed. He waited three months before replying as tactfully as he could about what was obviously a delicate matter.²

Concerning Prescott, Daniells acknowledged that he had seen

¹At least White thought Palmer was blunt. W. C. White to E. R. Palmer, February 19, 1908; W. C. White to C. H. Jones, February 7, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-W (2). Haskell repeatedly complained of the tendency to centralization. S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, October 3, 1907, November 13, 1908; S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, November 6, 1907, EGWRC-DC.

²W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, March 22, 1908, cited in A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, June 25, 1908, RG 11: Lb 43, GCAr.
his failings "the same as some who would set him aside." But he added, "I have also seen in him some of the rarest gifts possessed by any man in our ranks." He did not feel though that he was being unduly influenced by Prescott. Diplomatically he suggested, "I think the man who has the greatest influence over me is the one I am now addressing. There are a good many who have for years felt that W. C. White has fully as much influence and domination over me as is good and safe." Daniells went on to explain that he had greatly valued White's counsel and cooperation, but he mentioned that others saw more in White's weaknesses and dangerous tendencies than they did in what Daniells viewed as his "strong, safe, and valuable gifts." Daniells stated that all they could do as brethren was to affirm each other's strengths and help each other with their weaknesses.\(^1\)

Another misunderstanding arising from differences in personalities developed between W. C. White and Prescott over the matter of royalties on Mrs. White's books. On this occasion in mid-1908, Prescott, with his overly sensitive nature, reacted to what in his opinion was White's heavy handed, dominating, business style. White had written requesting a raise in the royalties on Great Controversy, stating that all his mother expected was "simple justice." Prescott, who understood that the Review and Herald itself had paid for the Great Controversy printing plates, took offense at what he thought were White's insinuations about his character.\(^2\) He had given up any

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\(^1\) A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, June 25, 1908, RG 11: Lb 32, GCAr.

\(^2\) Prescott took White to mean that the Review and Herald board had been "unjust." W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, July 27, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P, GCAr.
none of trying to adjust things by correspondence and had let the matter pass. This time Daniells was the bridge-builder and helped to straighten things out when he visited California. White was apologetic for the impression he had created. "I will ask you to permit me to assure you," he wrote to Prescott, "that I have a very high regard for you personally as a friend, and a very high estimation of your standards of honesty, justice, and strict integrity. . . ." The misunderstanding was quickly resolved and was soon in the past.1

These incidents, though, together with the disarray over "the daily" consumed much of the time and energy of the church leadership. For five years Daniells and Prescott struggled to transplant the headquarters of the church and build up its institutions. Much time had also been absorbed in the Kellogg crisis. The two men had taken a keen interest in evangelism, but these other things also claimed their time. Consequently, the evangelistic thrust of the church was none too effective.

A Change in Labor

In 1907, Mrs. White began to repeat her call to the church to give more priority to the task of evangelizing the nation's large cities. For various reasons the appeals went unheeded.2 Others

1 W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, August 30, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-W (2), GCAr.

2 The neglect was not deliberate. With limited time and money Daniells had to set priorities. Mrs. White had also been strongly pressing the General Conference to be more supportive of the work in the south. This had become a priority of Daniells. He reported in 1909 that he had succeeded in transferring "a large number of good capable men to the south . . . during the last year or two. This is
outside the church, though, were making plans for a major evangelistic thrust. The arrival of 1909 saw a series of aggressive moves by the Roman Catholic church to make America Catholic. While the Adventist church began to make a response to these moves by publishing the Protestant Magazine and giving more attention to religious liberty, it moved slowly on the evangelistic front. At the 1909 General Conference session in Washington, held from May 13 to June 5, Mrs. White issued a strong call for the church to take up the work in the cities. Three days before the end of the conference, on June 3, she instructed Prescott that his "ministerial ability" was needed in the cities. He was to unite with other workers "in seeking to bring souls to the truth." She also noted that the spiritual advancement he had made was not adequate and that he was "not where the Lord would have him to be."¹

A week later, on June 11, after the conference had ended, Mrs. White met with the General Conference committee. It was her last morning in Washington. Again she instructed the brethren that Prescott was not to stay in Washington "to do a work that another man can do." Seemingly recalling her experience in Australia, she already lifting the cloud in the south" (A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, February 10, 1909, EGWRC-DC). In response to the repeated appeals of the 1890s, Daniells had also made overseas missions a priority. This had occupied a great deal of his attention.

¹E. G. White, "A Message to Responsible Men and Church Members," June 3, 1909 (MS 41, 1909), EGWRC-AU. Haskell, feeling he was losing the battle over "the daily," had been advocating a change for both Prescott and Daniells. He argued that if a change was not made "the cause" would be in trouble. It seems evident that he shared this burden with Mrs. White. S. N. Haskell to W. C. White, October 22, 1908; S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, December 16, 1908, EGWRC-DC.
stated: "He can stand before the people and give the reasons of our faith in an acceptable way. I know this because I have been associated with him in labor. He has a precious gift, and here he is employed in work that other men can do, while there is a dearth of laborers who can warn these large cities." She assured him that in taking up this work his health would be restored.1

The suggestions took the General Conference leadership by surprise. G. A. Irwin asked whether her counsel meant that Prescott was to continue as editor and preach in the cities as well. Mrs. White replied that he was not to continue as editor but was to give his time to the cities, although he should also be involved in preparing "special literature to go out among the people." Mrs. White later remarked to her son, Edson, that some of the brethren did not "take willingly to the idea of losing Elder Prescott." She reported that she had to speak plainly to them.2

There seemed to be several reasons why some of the brethren were surprised by the counsel. (1) They genuinely did not know who could replace Prescott as editor. As Daniells explained in the Review, "It is no light matter to make a change in the editorship of our church paper, and the subject was carefully considered." None of the associates seemed adequate. F. M. Wilcox had joined the editorial staff just two months before. He was quite inexperienced and his health was not strong. The brethren were not confident that C. M. Snow was adequate for the task, and W. A. Spicer could not be


2Ibid. E. G. White to J. E. White, June 16, 1909, EGWRC-AU.
spared from his post as secretary of the General Conference. (2) The Review and Herald had just launched a new magazine, at great expense and labor, to meet the aggressive moves of Catholicism. Prescott was the editor and the brethren could see no one else equipped for the task. (3) It would seem that some thought Prescott was being singled-out--perhaps unfairly--for his involvement in "the daily" controversy.¹

At the 1909 General Conference session, when the discussion on "the daily" was meant to be "in state of truce," A. O. Johnson distributed in the delegate's tents a pamphlet he had recently written on the subject. The pamphlet defended the "old view" so that those who held the "new view" were cast in a very questionable light.² The brethren then felt it only fair to discuss the topic publicly. Two evening sessions, with W. C. White as chairman, were devoted to the matter. Despite White's best efforts to keep the discussion above the level of personal attack, an element of combative ness entered. L. A. Smith's paper defending the "old view" cast no small slur on Prescott, Daniells, and their associates. Evidently the topic could not be discussed unemotionally, and Mrs. White was alarmed that the issue might divert the church from the call to work the cities. Furthermore, in her advancing years she could not understand the question at issue. G. S. Starr (a vigorous


defender of the "old view"; and Haskell apparently thought she was fearful Prescott would lead the denomination astray. However, Mrs. White never mentioned publicly any doctrinal concerns as the background to her counsel to Prescott to leave the Review. The great need of the cities was her repeated reason. Starr and Haskell may simply have heard what they wanted to hear.

At the next Review and Herald board meeting, Prescott, acting as temporary chairman, introduced the matter of Mrs. White's instruction to him and indicated that it would be necessary for him to leave Washington. After a lengthy discussion W. A. Spicer was appointed Review editor and C. M. Snow Liberty editor. Prescott retained editorship of the new Protestant Magazine because it was especially adapted to his planned campaign in the cities.

Five days later the General Conference committee took up the discussion of his future work. Prescott indicated that he understood Mrs. White's counsel to mean that he should visit from place to place. He suggested the need for a tent and a stereopticon. In

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1M. C. Wilcox to A. G. Daniells, September 28, 1909, RG 11: Fld 1909-W; W. C. White to J. S. Washburn, October 28, 1910, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "The Daily" (3), GCAr. G. B. Starr's remark was made in 1919. It was based on his memory of a private conversation he had with Mrs. White shortly after the Washington meetings. Mrs. White had toured cities in the northeast with Haskell and Starr after the conference. These men apparently spread the word that Mrs. White was against Prescott. Starr reported that Mrs. White was also annoyed thatDaniels had not invited her to the Philadelphia sanitarium board meeting when she was there. G. B. Starr to A. G. Daniells, August 29, 1919, JLMcC, 8x1 Fld 2, AUHR.

2W. A. Spicer to C. P. Bollman, July 8, 1909, RG 21: Bx 85 Lb 51, GCAr. RHPA 3d Min, June 15, 1909. Eight regular members and four invitees attended the board meeting. All present voted. Spicer was appointed editor, eight to four. He himself did not want the job and voted against his own name.
addition, he explored with the brethren what kind of campaigns he might conduct. A committee was set up to plan his work in more detail. Daniells reported to a mutual friend late in June that Prescott was very cheerful and courageous about it. "He has taken the counsel Sister White has given him like a Christian and a whole-souled man, and has helped us in every way possible to make adjustments in the office."¹

Prescott, however, was retained as an associate editor of the Review, evidently for the purpose of providing some mature judgment. Although away from Washington much of the time, he continued as associate editor until April 25, 1912—a total of eleven years in connection with the paper. His editorials appeared very infrequently until the end of 1911, when they appeared more regularly. During this period his major editorial concerns were related to the developments in the Roman Catholic Church.²

The change in the editorship of the Review caused little reaction in the church. Butler and the Haskells were exceptions. Three months after he had moved to the editor's chair, Mrs. Haskell wrote to Spicer that she had not read more than two editorial columns during the past five years because they held "very little charm" for her. "Since the late change," she reported, the editorials were "the first things read." She related that that very

¹GCC Min, June 20, 1909; A. G. Daniells to G. B. Thompson, June 29, 1909, RG 11; Lb 45, GCAR.

morning her husband had been reading the paper and had commented every few minutes, "There is a different spirit all through it."

Haskell was also glad that Mrs. White's articles were back on the front page. The Haskells did not know that Spicer was only nominally connected with the paper. He remained General Conference secretary and explained to C. P. Bollman that he would relate to editorial matters in the future just as he had in the past as associate editor. His major function, he said, would be "to take the blame when we don't do something somebody wants us to do." When G. I. Butler congratulated him on his new appointment he wrote: "Do not take the change . . . too seriously. I am going on with my regular work, and will be merely an editor in the saddle." F. M. Wilcox was office editor and carried most of the editorial load. Within a short time, the General Conference committee felt that the nominal editorship of Spicer was causing a deterioration in the tone of the paper because Wilcox was unable to take a really strong hand. Consequently, in 1911 Wilcox was appointed as editor. Spicer was happy to be free from the extra burden.

"The Continual" Continues

Prescott's removal from the Review did not quell the disturbances on "the daily." Rather, the circulation of Johnson's tract

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1Mrs. S. N. Haskell to W. A. Spicer, September 22, 1909; S. N. Haskell to W. A. Spicer, September 27, 1909, RG 21: Domestic Fld 1909-H, GCAr. Haskell remarked that he had written several letters to Spicer on the same theme.

2W. A. Spicer to C. H. Jones, July 5, 1909; W. A. Spicer to C. P. Bollman, July 8, 1909; W. A. Spicer to G. I. Butler, July 12, 1909, RG 21: B x 85 Lb 51; I. H. Evans to A. G. Daniells, April 29,
on the topic at the 1909 General Conference unleashed a minor pamphlet war. According to M. C. Wilcox, Johnson scattered his tract far and wide. Later in 1909, L. A. Smith also came out with a tract pointedly calling into question his opponent's loyalty to the Spirit of Prophecy. Wilcox pledged with Prescott, Daniells, and Salisbury to publish their views in a tract. He empathized, "I know you have been rather hindered because you did not wish to do anything that would stir up division." Now he felt it was time for a frank setting forth of the issue. Prescott responded in the Week of Prayer reading that year with a very brief, carefully worded indirect statement about Christ's "continual" mediation. Spicer thought the allusion would be recognized only by those whose attention had been called to the controversy. He called it "the opening shot" from their side.

According to what Daniells said at the Atlantic Union Conference session at South Lancaster in December, Smith's tract had raised a number of questions. Daniells therefore arranged for a private meeting with the Union committee to explain the dispute. The committee suggested that a presentation be made to the delegates.

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2. W. W. Prescott, "Our Time and Work from the Prophetic Standpoint," RH, November 18, 1909, p. 7. W. A. Spicer to L. R. Conradi, October 26, 1909, RG 21: 8x 85 Lb 52, GCAR. Spicer envied Conradi's freedom to present the matter in Europe. He asked Conradi to "take pity on us poor fellows who have to sledge along on this side." He urged him to keep a "wide open door" in Europe in case he needed it.
Daniells encouraged Prescott to present the topic and later commented that it was the "best exposition, . . . the finest series of studies on the prophecies," he had ever heard. He thought it would be good to repeat them at every Union conference. Consequently, the talks were given again at the Columbia Union and the South-eastern Union Conference sessions.¹

Daniells also arranged for Prescott to present the series at the Foreign Mission Seminary in Washington. Students, Sanitarium workers, Review and Herald employees, and General Conference workers were encouraged to attend. The studies were stenographically reported. The transcript of the eight chapel talks totalled 240 pages. Daniells defended himself to W. C. White: "I cannot believe that we are forever to remain silent while these men [Smith, Haskell, Johnson, and Loughborough] are printing and presenting what we believe to be error, to place us in a wrong light before our brethren." He protested, "Unless we are able to state what we believe and why we believe it, our influence must soon be destroyed."²

W. C. White agreed. He was disturbed over Johnson's and Smith's tracts and considered it only fair for the brethren to defend themselves. He asked for several copies of the pamphlet that Prescott had written in reply and expressed surprise that he had not

¹A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, December 20, 1909; A. G. Daniells to C. F. Vaugh, December 2, 1909, RG 11: Lb 46, GCAr. One gets the impression that although Prescott did the presenting it was Daniells who was doing the "promoting" of the "new view."

²A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, December 31, 1909; A. G. Daniells to L. R. Conradi, January 20, 1910, RG 11: Lb 46, GCAr.
already seen it. He urged another conference of the various parties and tried to prevail on Irwin and Haskell to organize it, but they were reluctant to do so. Haskell became incensed and blamed Prescott for all the trouble. W. C. White, trying to keep things reasonable, reported that he was writing a long letter to Haskell concerning the way he thought differences of opinion should be handled. The two issues that he felt needed attention were: (1) attitudes towards each other and (2) how his mother's writings should or should not be used.2

The intensity of feeling developed by the controversy resulted in personal attacks made on Prescott and Conradi at the Southern Union session at Nashville in early 1910. In a confidential handwritten note to W. C. White, Daniells protested earnestly about the way Washburn, Smith, Haskell, and others were attempting to destroy the good name and standing of those who differed with them. He asked White to help these men change their course. "It hurt me very much," he wrote, "to hear the unkind things that were said about Bro. Prescott and Bro. Conradi. . . . Poor Prescott was handled terribly, and the worst of it was that it was done in the name of your mother and on the authority of the hard things she said about him in private conversations here at the General Conference." He went on,

1W. W. Prescott, "The Daily: A Brief Reply to Two Leaflets on This Subject," [1910]. Prescott's pamphlet was apparently developed out of his chapel talks. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, March 13, 1910, EGWRC-DC.

2W. C. White to J. S. Washburn, October 27, 1910, RG 58: LEF (1) Fid "The Daily" (3), GCAr. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, January 11, March 15, 1910, EGWRC-DC. S. N. Haskell to C. C. Crisler, February 25, 1910, RG 58: LEF(1) Fid "The Daily" (1) [C.C. Crisler Collection], GCAr.
"Your brother and J. S. W. [asnburn] said most cruel things and vindicated them by telling of their private interviews with your mother. To me this was shockingly indiscreet. I would not have this get to Bro. Prescott for anything." Daniells was fearful that too much of that kind of talk was being indulged in which would eventually get to Prescott. "When it does it will stagger him and his friends." To Daniells these tactics were quite unacceptable. He was positive that "men of thought and conviction would not be silenced" by them.¹

In July, White informed Daniells that his mother felt "the daily" had become a "troublesome fad." He stated that she was very "decided in the conviction" that it had been a mistake to make the issue so prominent at some of the Union Conference sessions and that Prescott was in danger of giving too much attention to minutiae of comparatively little importance.² Mrs. White herself wrote two letters to the brethren. "I have had no instruction on the point under discussion," she said, "I see no need for the controversy... This is not a subject of vital important... Let all contention cease. At such a time silence is eloquence." Evangelism in the cities was the present duty, she emphasized. Her writings were not to be used to settle the point at issue and it was certainly not to be made a test question.³

¹A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, March 31, 1910, EGWRC-DC. The note was marked "For you only."

²W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, July 28, 1910, EGWRC-DC. W. C. White to P. T. Magan, July 31, 1910, JLMcCC, 8x1 FlD 1, AUHR.

³E. G. White to "My Brethren in the Ministry," August 3, 1910; E. G. White, "Preach the Word," 1910 (MS 11, 1910), EGWRC-AU. These letters led W. C. White to change his mind on the wisdom of Daniells and Prescott replying to the attacks against them, but he
In most theological controversies, it seems, personality and political issues play an inevitable role alongside the theological question. This was true in the conflict over "the daily." For example, the longstanding dissatisfaction of the southern field toward the General Conference administration made the reception of new ideas from Washington difficult. Prescott's confident and sometimes imperious manner also seemed to be a contributing factor to the resistance to the new ideas. "The daily" episode, therefore, casts considerable light on both Prescott and the church.

Prescott, even while involved in church administration, clearly was one who energetically pursued the search for truth. Furthermore, as an evangelist and a reformer, he was strongly motivated to disseminate his new insights. One might expect that as an experienced religious educator he would have been more aware of the dynamics involved in educating a large community and in bringing about change. But the results of modern sociological research on the still felt that the "old view" supporters were the unfair aggressors in the conflict. He stated that the letters from his mother applied principally to those holding the "old view." Her instruction that her writings were not to be used actually represented a plain negation of the major argument Haskell and his colleagues were making and was an indirect vindication of Prescott's view. See W. C. White to J. S. Washburn, October 27, 1910, RG 58: LEF(l) Fld "The Daily" (3), SCAR.

Mrs. White's statement that "the daily" was not an important issue needs to be understood in its context. It seems evident that it did not mean that the issue per se was unimportant but that in the situation where a serious rift in the church had become possible it was not an important issue. The unity of the church by comparison was of much greater importance. In fact, although "the daily" concerned only a few verses of Scripture and involved many minor details, the issue represented a major new approach to the understanding of Dan 8. It formed the basis of Prescott's Christocentric interpretation of the prophecy and underlay his strong emphasis on the mediation of Christ. The principles underlying the discussion would seem to be of continuing importance.
complex processes involved in effecting change were not available to him. He thought he had done the right thing and followed established procedure in introducing the new view to the church. Furthermore, his concern at the Signs pre-empting the discussion would seem to indicate the measure of his pastoral responsibility. He did not want to create difficulties and sought to avoid doing so.

Perhaps more than anything else "the daily" controversy illustrates the truth that conflict is inevitable when changes are proposed in the field of religion (even so-called minor changes), because religious issues lie so close to the sensitive core of man's being. While Prescott seems to have followed all the correct procedures in his effort to educate the church he perhaps forgot the principle of learning readiness. On the other hand, the experience may have taught him that in some respects the church is never really ready for learning. The lesson was costly for the controversy left scars on Prescott. He was suspect by some of his brethren for the rest of his life. The six years after 1909 seemed to be particularly painful for him as will be noticed in the next two chapters.

The conflict was also costly for the church because some of those who opposed the "new view" were disposed, on that account, not to cooperate with the General Conference. (The controversy lay behind the difficulties created by the Columbia Union in its resistance to the organizational changes proposed by the General Conference in the 1930s.)¹ The problem of educating and modifying the perspective of those who hold a rigid, somewhat static view of truth

¹See pp. 578-79 below.
to allow for more rapid development in understanding was a challenge
neither the church nor Prescott seemed able to grapple with success­
fully. It is a problem that still confronts the church.

Caught between the two groups and unable to understand the
discussion, Mrs. White sought a way out. Delicately, she tried to
keep the two groups together by downplaying the significance of the
issue and refocusing the attention of both sides on a common task--
evangelism in the cities. Although the passing of time ultimately
vindicated Prescott's position both on the interpretation of Dan 3:
11-13 and the non-determinative role of Mrs. White in exegeting
scripture (forty years later opposition dropped as defenders of the
'old view' died off and the Conradi-Prescott interpretation became
the accepted interpretation in the church), Mrs. White's counsel to
him seemed appropriate. From her perspective, Prescott's conscien­
tious single-mindedness, an essential strength for a reformer, had,
on this occasion, tended to become a weakness. In focusing on just
one issue, she believed, he had unwittingly ignored the larger pic­
ture. This judgment was probably hard for Prescott to accept, but
past experiences had taught him the wisdom of accepting such counsel.
CHAPTER XVI

THE TROUBLED YEARS

The General Conference session of 1909 introduced a period of considerable trauma in the career of fifty-four-year-old Prescott. Mrs. White's instruction at the conference that he should leave the editorship of the Review and engage in city evangelism evidently took him by surprise. The two years following his transfer from the Review, attended as they were by personal family tragedy, became years of depression and deep discouragement. Not one to resist or ignore counsel from Mrs. White, however, he apparently intended to do his best to comply with her directions, but carrying out his new commission proved difficult.

A New Commission

Evangelistic work was not new to Prescott. Before the turn of the century he had preached in tents, public halls, and even on sidewalks to interested audiences in Michigan, Australia, South Africa, and England. After moving to Washington in 1903, he had continued to maintain an interest in evangelism. Just a few months after his arrival at the capital, he was elected by local Adventist churches as chairman of a committee to foster evangelistic work in the area. A campaign was planned and during his first winter in the city he was a leading speaker at an "effort" conducted in the Masonic 427
Temple. Severe weather hampered plans and cut back attendance, but the church leadership felt that a good impression was made and valuable contacts were established with prominent people.¹ Two years later, in the winter of 1905 and in the midst of the building program for the new headquarters and the preparations for the upcoming General Conference session, an interest in Sunday legislation and religious-liberty issues in the city provided occasion for another series of public meetings. This series, held in the La Fayette Theatre, was later transferred to the Opera House. Along with Luther Warren, Prescott was again a leading speaker. The Sabbath was featured prominently.²

The idea of a full-time evangelist working as a "professional" in cities like Boston and New York was something new. Previously Prescott had had little to do with the basic planning and organizational side of evangelism. Even in England he apparently had relied largely on his workers for erecting tents, advertising, creating an interest, developing aids, and organizing the teams of Bible workers. On most occasions, Prescott had been involved primarily as an idea man and leading speaker.

The prospect of having to assume responsibility for the


²Prescott appears to have been quite deeply involved in this program. As well as preaching he reported the sermons for the Washington Post and conducted a correspondence in the "Letters to the Editor" column. Forty thousand copies of an open letter to the city's clergy concerning the "Sunday law" issue were circulated and personal invitations were sent to every high city and government official. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, January 19, 30, 1905, EGWRC-DC. W. W. Prescott, "The Sabbath Observance Campaign," RH, January 12, 1905, p. 3.
organizational aspect of the work weighed heavily on him. According to Daniells, he felt his lack of experience quite keenly.\(^1\)

Making a Start

The plan for Prescott's new work indicated he was to maintain his home in Washington and to visit various cities for campaigns of several weeks' duration. Two months after he had vacated the editor's office at the Review, he traveled with his wife and son to New England for a short vacation. He also visited campmeetings in several cities in the northeast where he had speaking appointments. At the same time he attended meetings to plan for his upcoming campaigns. He probably would have started his new work sooner, but General Conference committee meetings kept him busy, the next issue of Protestant Magazine had to be prepared, and an automobile accident just after the General Conference temporarily put him out of action. While he was not seriously hurt in the accident, his car was badly damaged. (It had been sandwiched between two trolley cars on a city street.)\(^2\)

Late September found the professor and his family back in Washington. Eighteen-year-old Lewis was settling into his college studies for the year while his father prepared to visit the last campmeetings of the season in Wisconsin. An ominous recurrence of

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\(^1\)A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, January 3, 1910, RG 11: Lb 46, GCAR.

\(^2\)SCC Min, June 8, 1909; T. E. Bowen to A. G. Daniells, August 3, 1909, RG 11: Fld 1909-B, GCAR. RH, August 26, 1909, p. 24. Some of Prescott's theological critics felt that his motor accident was an admonition from God that he should immediately begin his city work. G. B. Starr to A. G. Daniells, August 29, 1919, JHMCC, 3x 1 Fld 2, AUMR. E. G. White to J. E. White, June 16, 1909, EGWRC-AU.
Sarah's earlier illness, however, disrupted the family's activities. This time Sarah's sickness was serious enough to warrant the cancellation of William's campmeeting appointments in order to be with her. During his time at home, the professor worked on the next issue of Protestant Magazine, helped Daniells with the end-of-year Union Conference sessions, and gave a series of lectures at the Foreign Missionary Seminary.1

It was not until early January that Prescott was again in the northeast planning for evangelism. By now he was finding it more difficult to muster enthusiasm for the task, but the General Conference had made an appropriation to the New York City Conference, and Prescott met with the brethren there to plan more specifically for a campaign. "Tent efforts" during winter were out of the question, but plans were laid for the summer.2 According to the conference president, W. B. White, it was decided to conduct three "tent efforts" simultaneously in the city. Prescott would lead the one in the Bronx. A team of four Bible workers, a tent master, and associate workers and singers were arranged and Prescott organized a team of "magazine workers" to begin working the territory and developing interests. O. O. Bernstein, an experienced city evangelist, was


2R. D. Quinn to A. G. Daniells, January 9, 1910, RG 11: Fid 1910-Q; A. G. Daniells to W. B. White, January 19, 1910, RG 11: Lb 46, GCAr. W. C. White was disappointed that Prescott did not conduct evangelistic campaigns in some of the southern states during the winter. Daniells had explained that Prescott had asked for a tent but the General Conference had been unable to provide one. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, January 3, 1910, RG 11: Lb 46, GCAr. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, January 11, 1910, EGWRC-DC.
slated to work in neighboring Brooklyn, and another worker in
'centers. Advertising was to be coordinated. W. B. White was greatly
enthused, "I think everybody thinks that a new era has dawned for
Greater New York. . . . Brother Prescott . . . seemed to be full of
courage to take hold of the work." Daniells was anxious to report
the plans so that W. C. White could let his mother know what was
being done. He expressed the hope that Prescott might receive en­
couragement from both of them.1

Daniells' letters during this period seem to indicate that
Prescott had difficulty grasping his new work. Discouraged by the
reaction to "the daily" discussion and by the attitudes of some of
the senior ministers towards him, he seemed to move more from a
reluctant sense of duty than from any positive enthusiasm. Plans
therefore took shape slowly. Furthermore, the general lack of
evangelistic expertise among conference leaders made for slow
progress.

That Prescott was indeed committed to city work—even if only
from a sense of duty—would seem to be indicated by his refusal of an
offer to become president of Union College. In February, 1910, when
the proposal was made to him, he declined because of Mrs. White's
counsel to him to take up evangelism. But his lack of enthusiasm
concerned his close friends. Daniells remarked confidentially in May
1910, "I regret very much that the way has not seemed clear to him to
throw himself entirely into the evangelistic work in our cities, . . .
that kind of work would have been a stimulus and an inspiration to

1W. B. White to A. G. Daniells, January 26, 1910, RG 11:
F1d 1910-W, 3CAr.
him. Daniells himself was being heavily criticized by Mrs. White at this time, and Prescott's slowness was making it more difficult for him.\(^1\)

While the teams of workers were being organized in New York, Prescott went back to Washington to participate in hearings on Sunday laws before the Senate and Congress and to lead out in mass meetings for the public on religious-liberty issues in the city. Again the Sabbath was highlighted and a significant amount of correspondence reached the newspapers. The professor also conducted a series of public meetings in Battle Creek and visited Union Conference sessions with Daniells. In March, his wife became ill once more and the future was clouded. William's spirits sank as Sarah struggled with cancer.\(^2\)

A Lost Battle with Cancer

Sometime during March, as the disease progressed, a further operation was necessary. The treatment at first seemed successful and Sarah responded quite favorably. There were hopes that she would make a speedy recovery. By late April, though, it was evident to William that any recovery was going to be very slow. His wife would need much of his time, and he recognized there would be little prospect of his meeting his summer evangelistic appointment in New York.

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Greatly discouraged, depressed, and restless, he consulted with his colleagues about his work, suggesting that perhaps he could connect temporarily with the Review again. He felt that it would take at least a year for Sarah to regain her health. Evans thought the idea was worth exploring and took up the matter with Daniells who was visiting California. He asked if it was worth Daniells talking with Mrs. White again now that the situation had changed rather drastically. "If Prescott cannot go from home while his wife is in her sad condition, would it be discrediting Sr. W[white] for him to take his place back in the office?" Evans noted that Prescott's melancholic personality was getting the better of him at this time, but he was very sympathetic. "Professor Prescott is in need of help. He told me today he was seriously contemplating taking up other work. He has surely had a hard year. What he has suffered no one knows better than yourself."^1

Daniells, distressed by the news that Sarah was deteriorating, hoped that the setback was only temporary. He was fearful of what would become of the professor if he should lose his wife but was perplexed as to what to do. With Mrs. White still burdened about city work and her anxiety over the controversy about "the daily," Daniells did not feel free to even mention Evans' idea to either W. C. White or

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^1I. H. Evans to A. G. Daniells, April 29, 1910, RG 11: Fld 1910-E, GCAr. Evans, realizing how sensitive the question was, typed the letter himself. Although he approached the issue tentatively and in an explorative way, he asked Daniells not to make the letter public and to destroy it if Daniells did not concur with the suggestion.

^2Ibid. Evans added, "We have but few men of Professor's ability, and with ability comes peculiarities of temperament. We all have these peculiarities I suppose, and each has to help the other."
his mother. In fact, Mrs. White was feeling so "intensely," she refused to have any interview at all with Daniells on this occasion.\footnote{This period was a very perplexing one for Daniells. Mrs. White, greatly exercised by the issue she thought Daniells had made of "the daily" and distressed at what she perceived as the lack of attention being given to city work, had written several strong letters to Daniells about his need to become involved in evangelism. In January, W. C. White mentioned that every time he went into his mother's room she spoke about the matter. So burdened was she that W. C. White became convinced that "there must be some crisis just before us in the United States." Daniells, however, could not understand exactly what more he should be doing. He had set up committees to plan for city work, set aside large appropriations, and had succeeded in transferring prominent evangelists from the western states to the eastern cities. He was clearly not consciously ignoring Mrs. White's counsel. Somehow though Mrs. White felt that more should be done, although Daniells did not know what. Neither did W. C. White.

Daniells got the impression that she was hinting that he should resign. Eventually, after Mrs. White refused to see him, Crisler, W. C. White, and Daniells consulted together. White and Crisler suggested two extra measures. They suggested that he should personally get involved in some city programs and that he should then write and get others to write to inform Mrs. White of what was being done. These suggestions he followed and the burden lifted from Mrs. White. The personal involvement also opened Daniells' eyes as to how ill-equipped the conferences were for evangelism. He was inclined to think that in the end "blessing would come to the cause as a result."

Mrs. White was not very well herself during this period, and suffered periods of depression. Age was taking its toll on her health and abilities. Prayer was offered for her "in her great weakness" by her group of workers. She was also worried and perplexed by rumors that Daniells and Prescott were trying to revise the church books to introduce new ideas. W. C. White had to be very diplomatic in the way he introduced to her the matter of revisions in The Great Controversy. With all these complications, Daniells did not feel able to introduce Prescott's difficulties.

The situation was so tense he feared that Evans' suggestion would certainly be misunderstood. Though Daniells agreed with Evans in his concern about the deterioration of the quality in the Review, he felt that even if Prescott were to temporarily connect with it, "it would place him in a false and embarrassing light, and I fear would result seriously for all of us." At the same time he wished that the professor would not get so utterly discouraged. It "unmanns him for life's duties, and makes it almost impossible for us to help him."

Daniells' hope that Sarah's setback was only temporary was a forlorn hope. By early May Sarah had worsened. Reluctant to take her to the hospital, William arranged for a nurse to attend her at home and had physicians call regularly. By May 19, Sarah's pain had become intolerable despite everything the doctors could administer. It seemed to Prescott that the case would terminate fatally within a day or two. Once more Sarah was rushed by train to the Baltimore hospital where a cancer specialist, Dr. Kelly, performed another series of operations. Again there was temporary relief, but this time Kelly informed William that the cancerous growth had returned "in a malignant form" and that there was "no further help for it." He gave Sarah several months to live. Prescott remarked to W. C. White that all he could do now was to stay by and "devote" himself to "making her as comfortable as possible." He stayed with her in

[ uncatalogued handwritten manuscript, EGWRC-DC. A good general discussion of the problems of city evangelism at this time can be found in Howard B. Weeks, Adventist Evangelism in the Twentieth Century (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1969), pp. 11-60.

1 A. G. Daniells to I. H. Evans, May 13, 1910, RG 11: Fld 1910-D, GCAR. ]
Baltimore. A week later the doctor informed Prescott that the cancer was making "astonishingly rapid progress," and he now expected that Sarah would live only a few weeks. William reported that his wife was "very weak after passing through such a terrible struggle" and he painfully resigned himself to the fact that the growth "must do its work very soon." He cancelled all his appointments and took her home in order to "make the few remaining days as comfortable and pleasant as possible for her."¹

Repeated earnest prayer seasons were held but to no avail. Sarah continued to fail. Daniells returned to Washington in June to find his friend quite desolate. Then, from the Pennsylvania camp-meeting on June 9, he reported to W. C. White that the end was near. William and Sarah had arranged everything and were quite resigned, though it was "a sore experience." Daniells also stated that he had talked with Prescott about his future. "The poor man does not know what to say. I question whether he will be able to do much for some time. It is a most pitiful experience..." The following day, Friday, June 10, at 3:40 a.m., Sarah died. She was fifty-four. A telegram quickly brought Daniells back to his colleague's side. He remarked to a friend that Prescott felt "the stroke severely." They had been married almost thirty years. (According to one who had lived next door to them for four of those years, the two were "unusually devoted to each other." Expressing his own grief, Daniells wrote of Sarah as "a beautiful character, a bright faced Christian and a friend to everybody. She will be missed in the church, in her

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, May 23, 29, 1910, EGWRC-DC.
neighborhood, and most of all in her home. . . . Brother Prescott is broken-hearted, but he is bearing up well for him."¹

The funeral was held on Monday, June 13, on the large verandah of the Prescott home where, in the sunshine, Sarah had spent many of her last days while life slowly ebbed away. The General Conference and the Review and Herald closed their offices to enable workers to attend and a large number of relatives and neighbors gathered on the lawn. Daniells preached the service. He reported to W. C. White, after returning from the Rock Creek cemetery where Sarah was buried, "I do not know of ever having had a heavier task assigned to me since I began my work in the ministry."²

Retreat for Rest

Prescott apparently retained his composure quite well during the sorrowful weekend. But after the funeral, when the relatives had gone and the home was quiet again, the professor found that his depleted resources were not sufficient for his heavy burden of grief. According to F. M. Wilcox, "his experience and affliction" had broken him down so much that "he would burst into tears and could not control his feelings." Prescott himself later confided to W. C. White why he had not written immediately after the funeral. "I found it about all I could do to keep quiet and avoid anything like further


strain on my feelings."1 Daniells reported that he was so "broken up and nervous" that he had decided to go to Maine to his relatives and spend the summer recruiting his strength.2

While Maine's cool summer and frequent long walks along the beach of Cape Porpoise helped, William still was restless. Time dragged slowly. The six weeks since Sarah's death seemed like six months. He worried about his commission to take up city work and explored fruitlessly the idea of teaching at the seminary instead. The attitude of Haskell and L. A. Smith troubled him and he could not relax. So restless was he that eventually he returned to Washington earlier than planned, though his emotional health was still not much improved. When E. R. Palmer's mother died in late August, Prescott did not feel strong enough to conduct the funeral. He was not yet

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2 A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, June 13, 1910, RG 11: Bx 55 Lb 46, GCAR.
far enough removed from his own great sorrow. He reported to W. C. White: "At times I have felt quite desperate, and have had a great inclination to withdraw from any further public work, and to spend my time quietly in some other work." The conviction that he was not strong enough to undertake a city campaign was quite firm. He was glad, however, that some of his brethren understood his needs and had arranged for him to take a trip to India for the biennial meetings in October. It was planned that he should spend two or more months in that field in work similar to that which he had done in China in 1907. Prescott grasped the opportunity with some relief. "Perhaps this trip will be as well as anything for me now, as it will be quite impossible for me now to undertake any heavy work."

According to Daniells, by the time the professor was boarding the S. S. Adriatic on September 21 to sail to Bombay via London, he seemed to be feeling brighter. Daniells had had a long talk with him just prior to his departure and reported that he was feeling "more hopeful and courageous" and had expressed his intention to "throw himself with all of his heart into the city evangelistic work" upon his return. He was beginning to understand better the meaning of the call to evangelism and had asked Daniells to make plans for him the coming summer. He did not, however, want to be placed in any

wanted to go to some neglected city and begin work quietly where he would not be under any observation.\(^1\)

The long voyage to India was restful. Prescott, nevertheless, was still struggling with his feelings. He reported that he had done a little reading and had slept all he could because he had so much to make up. Writing to Daniells he expressed the hope that he would be in good trim for the India meetings. Then he added: "I could write much about my feelings, but that is useless. I must push on as best I can." The meetings at Lucknow were scheduled to begin on October 21. Prescott arrived the day after they commenced. He entered into the committee work with courage, and his counsel was appreciated. Particularly so were his morning Bible studies and his evening evangelistic meetings in the tent erected on the mission compound. The ninety-five delegates appeared to enjoy his preaching. He noted happily that the evening meetings were attended by numbers of "strangers" and that a good impression had been made. This was the kind of evangelism to which he had been accustomed.\(^2\)

At the close of the general meeting in Lucknow, the now beardless\(^3\) Prescott visited several of the mission stations in other parts of the country where he also conducted public meetings. Mussoorie, Calcutta, Burma, Bombay, and Tinvelly were all included.

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\(^3\) He had shaved off his beard after the death of his wife.
in his itinerary. Travel was by train and donkey cart. By December 24, he was back in Bombay boarding a ship for home.

After spending a week in London, Prescott was back in Washington on the first of February, bearing cheering news regarding the progress of the work on the Indian sub-continent. But in spite of the restful voyage and the change of labor, Prescott was not yet fully well. Still somewhat depressed, he was troubled with frequent severe headaches. The prospect of returning to his empty house was not a bright one either. Spicer sympathized and endeavored to encourage him: "I can well understand that once again it tears your heart to think of coming to the old home... It is only by throwing oneself into the work, with eyes upon the finishing of it, that the heart can find rest."

Another Summer in Maine

In Prescott's absence, Daniells had been seriously ill with malaria. Nevertheless, he had gone ahead and planned a series of ministerial institutes for early 1911 anticipating that Prescott would join him upon his return from India. The idea was to bring the ministers in each union conference together for what might loosely be called a field school in evangelism. Classes were to be held in the morning and public meetings at night. The first was held at Knoxville in March in a large Presbyterian church. Attended by fifty or sixty ministers from the Southern and South-Eastern Unions, the meetings seemed quite productive. Daniells reported a new

spirit among the workers and a renewed commitment to evangelism. Some of Prescott's Bible studies had been so deep they had made Daniells' head "crack," but he thought the brethren enjoyed them and he looked forward to the next institute at Philadelphia in April. In the meantime, summer evangelistic work in Boston was arranged again for the professor who was anxious to carry out his commission.  

This time an attempt was made to provide a variety of work. Aware that Prescott did not know just how to get hold of the inner city tent work, and that his health would not permit strenuous public labor, Daniells arranged for his work to include preaching at a tent operated by others in Boston, giving health and temperance talks in the city, preparing materials for the Protestant Magazine, and spending some time at the Melrose Sanitarium in chaplaincy work for the nurses. He was "exceedingly anxious" that Prescott "get hold of the city work" and thought this way would be helpful. Again Daniells wrote to Elmshaven and asked W. C. White to let his mother know "so that she may understand what we are doing."  

A. G. Daniells to G. B. Starr, March 26, 1911, RG 11: Bx 66 Lb 48; A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, March 31, 1911, RG 11: Bx 66 Lb 49, GCAR. GGC Min, April 2, 1911. One gets the feeling that Daniells was anxious to keep Mrs. White informed. (The anxiety suggests that an effort was being made to placate or pacify.) He presented the plans very positively. Prescott in his continuing state of depression was still rather intimidated and was struggling to see how his gift was really for big city evangelism.
Once again the carefully laid plans came to nought. While in England on his return from India, Prescott caught a severe cold. He continued to meet his appointments, though, and worked hard at Knoxville. This only worsened his condition. On April 1 he became seriously ill. The pain in his head was alarmingly severe. The doctor reported he was on the verge of contracting pneumonia and he was confined to bed. A thorough examination revealed his lungs to be in danger, his "nerve force" quite low, and his "resistance to disease" very low. Plans for his participation in the Philadelphia Institute fell through, and the doctors advised him to forego his planned summer work. After visiting him just prior to leaving for Philadelphia, Daniells reported that although the professor was sitting up in a rocker, he was suffering "a great deal" and could walk only "with a stick, like an old man." Further medical opinion was sought and finally, to Prescott's frustration, he was advised by his brethren to retire to Maine for the summer. The medical advice was for him to engage in light exercise and work in the sunshine. Reluctantly, Prescott cancelled his appointments, finished up what work he could on the Protestant Magazine, and with Lewis and his aged parents traveled north to his brother's beachside cottage at Cape Porpoise in Maine.¹

For three months Prescott rested, exercised lightly, and soaked up sunshine. He enjoyed the cool sea breezes and reported to

¹A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, April 11, 1911; A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, April 13, May 3, 1911, RG 11: Bx 66 Lb 49; W. A. Spicer to W. B. White, May 4, 1911, RG 21: Bx 86 Lb 54; W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, June 30, 1911, RG 11: Fld 1911-P, GCAr.
Daniells that he was getting brown. "I have made a good gain. . . . I am much stronger and I have tried to rise above my terrible de­pressions and to take a more hopeful view of things." Nearly all his relatives had been to visit the family--a "pleasant feature" of his stay. He hoped to be "ready for earnest work" upon his return. Dan­iells was delighted and expressed his anxiety that his friend should regain his old freshness and vigor, and that he should "get a good strong grip on things" so that he would have "lots of endurance." The nature of his future work, however, evidently continued to trouble him and caused him uncertainty.1

In the two years since he had left the Review, the church had made extensive moves toward making evangelism its primary goal. In addition, new developments appeared in the Catholic church in America. William explored with Daniells the possibility of making the Protestant Magazine a bimonthly and of writing a book on the papacy. He felt the church could become a major force in developing literature to respond to the developing Catholic crisis. Daniells indicated that the Autumn Council of the General Conference committee would consider his work. Prescott assured him that he would "be ready for whatever may seem best after that meeting."2

1W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, July 25, August 17, September 3, 1911, RG 11: Fld 1911-P; A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, August 9, 1911, RG 11: 3x 66 Lb 49, GCAr.

2Prescott worried that Daniells would not be re-elected president at the next General Conference session and that the new leadership would not look on his ideas with such favor. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, September 24, 1911, RG 11: Fld 1911-P. GCAr.
Back in Harness Again

When Prescott returned to his home in Takoma Park, he was indeed of brighter spirits. With his return came major changes to the family. Nineteen-year-old Lewis, who had lived at home and attended the Foreign Missions Seminary during the previous two troubled years, had applied for admission to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In the summer of 1911 he passed the entrance examination and in autumn, shortly after the family's return from Maine, he had gone to Boston to begin engineering studies. The large house on Blair Road was quiet for a few weeks but did not remain quiet for long. On November 27, William Warren took a new wife, Daisy Estelle Orndorff. He was fifty-six. She was thirty-two (see figs. 17 and 18).

Daisy had been closely acquainted with William for some time. In the dark days of early 1910 when Sarah had been struggling with cancer, Daisy, a trained nurse, had apparently gone to live with the Prescotts to provide professional care for Sarah. She stayed until death claimed her patient. Impressed by her conscientiousness and willingness, William had maintained contact with her. After his own health began to strengthen and his view of life became more hopeful, he decided that he was still in need of companionship. Reluctant at first to accept his proposal of marriage, she was eventually persuaded. Acquaintances of his new wife observed later that though not really his intellectual equal, she nevertheless complemented him well. Modest, retiring, and a "soothing" type of person, she was
Fig. 16. General Conference Office (left) and Review and Herald
Building (right) immediately after erection 1906
(Courtesy Review and Herald)

Figs. 17 and 18. Daisy Orndorf Prescott and William Warren Prescott
three or four years after their 1911 marriage
(Courtesy Review and Herald)
equally as devoted to him as was Sarah and it was the companionship that Prescott needed.¹

With his remarriage, life took on a brighter hue for Prescott. His work reflected his new zest. His editorials appeared frequently in the Review again. At the Atlantic Union session early in the new year, "The Growth of Romanism" and "True Protestantism" were themes about which he waxed enthusiastic. Observed the conference president about one of Prescott's talks: "His sermon was certainly a master-piece and it simply carried the Union Conference. . . . It seems to me I never heard Brother Prescott put so much life, ginger and good sense into his teachings as at our conference."²

Another surprise was in store for Prescott. On the first of February 1912, Daniells invited him to become secretary of the General Conference Religious Liberty Department.³

There had been many requests for K. C. Russell, the incumbent, to take up city work. Since he was an experienced evangelist, he would bring strength to that work. Prescott, on the other hand, had already been extensively involved in the religious liberty work and enjoyed it. His work on the Protestant Magazine led naturally into the religious-liberty area. The suggestion came as a complete surprise to him: "I had no intimation that any such action was


²W. B. White to A. G. Daniells, January 23, 1912, RG 11: Fld 1912-W, GCAr.

³The General Conference committee meeting at College View had approved the action. A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, February 1, 1912, RG 11: Bx 67 Lb 50, GCAr.
contemplated. Troubled by how the idea would fit in with what Mrs. White had said, he expressed his willingness to do whatever work his brethren assigned him but felt he needed to counsel further concerning the move.¹

Even though the General Conference committee formally approved the new position again in March, Prescott was not fully comfortable with the matter until he heard from W. C. White. In May, White indicated that Daniells had talked with him and his mother and that they both saw light in the appointment. White still hoped, however, that the professor would not be tied to the office, and that he would be able to speak to large congregations in the large cities.²

The aggressive attitude of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the clamor of Protestant groups for religious legislation prompted early action. Prescott quickly joined forces with Daniells in organizing an institute for city workers and conference religious liberty secretaries. This was followed by the development of campaigns in the large cities on the Protestant issue. America was keenly interested and large crowds were the order of the day. The Protestant Magazine became known nationwide and its editor was able to draw audiences in a way that he had never envisaged in 1909. Prescott seemed to have found his place at last and in a happy "educational" blend was able to use his gift for scholarly research and editing as well as his gift of preaching. In Prescott's view, a

¹ W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, February 6, 1912, RG 11: Fld 1912-P, GCAr.

campaign for religious liberty was a campaign of education. His role as head of the religious liberty department, however, lasted but one year. In 1913 the department was taken over by the newly created North American Division. By that time the Catholic-Protestant controversy had grown more serious, the Protestant Magazine had become a monthly, and the work associated with it had become a full-time job.\(^1\)

CHAPTER XVII

PROTESTING AGAINST ERROR--WITHOUT AND WITHIN

In the same year that the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists reorganized itself in Battle Creek, the Federation of Catholic Societies in America was organized in Cincinnati. Barely noticed by Adventists at first, the federation—a Catholic lay movement—soon began to cause Adventists much concern. In 1906 the organization numbered one and one half million members and by 1910, three million. Although disclaiming any intention of wielding political influence, the movement was quite successful in molding Catholic public opinion and in influencing legislative action during the first two decades of this century. To Adventists (who identified Roman Catholicism with the "beast" of Rev 13) the Federation typified the increasing influence of Roman Catholicism. They saw it as a fulfillment of prophecy.1

The rising fortunes of Catholicism in America were generally a direct result of the increasing numbers of Catholics in the population created by the heavy influx of European immigrants. This

growth, perceived by many Americans as a threat to republicanism, had in the past given rise to a strong national anti-Catholic sentiment—a feeling shared by Adventists. During the first decade of the century, the continued growth of the Catholic church heightened this feeling and raised the specter of a threat to religious liberty.

Religious liberty issues in the Adventist church during the first three or four years of the twentieth century had been temporarily obscured by the internal conflict of the church with Kellogg and the move of church headquarters to Washington. So low a priority did the matter receive, in fact, that the religious liberty journal Sentinel was discontinued in 1904 because its circulation was declining and it was running at a loss. According to Prescott, who wrote to W. C. White and his mother for counsel about it, one reason for the declining circulation was that religious liberty was a dead issue at the time. Within fifteen months, however, the matter of religious liberty had again become a live question. A movement in Washington in March 1905 to enact legislation enabling religious instruction to be taught in the public schools brought loud protests from Adventists. Prescott became prominently involved in the protests which involved mass meetings for the public and appearances before the district's education board. Following quickly on the heels of the religious instruction controversy was an effort by Protestant groups to enact federal Sunday laws. Both issues were

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1 Circulation of the magazine had declined to 2,500. It was losing $200 per month. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, January 15, 1904; W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, January 26, 1904, W. C. White Lb 23, EGWRC-DC.
extensively reported by Prescott in the Review.¹ These developments led to the founding of a thirty-two page quarterly journal, Liberty, in April 1906. Prescott, at first an associate editor, later seems to have become the leading editor. He invested a large amount of his time in working on the paper and in fostering its interests until 1909 when C. M. Snow took charge.²

As the first decade progressed, church leaders increasingly perceived Catholicism as adopting a more aggressive stance. Liberty magazine seemed inadequate to meet this new situation. Prescott thought that a journal designed particularly to confront the challenge of Catholicism seemed to be warranted, and in January 1909 presented the idea to his publishing house board. Enthused by the proposal, the board immediately and heartily approved the idea and recommended that the first number be published as soon as possible. By the time of the General Conference session in May, the first number had made its appearance.³

Prescott sought to explain the reasons for the new magazine to the session delegates by citing recent developments. Rome had recently decreed that America was no longer a missionary country, but

¹A. G. Daniells, "'Ministers,' 'Men of Means,' 'Brethren and Sisters,' 'Attention!'", RH, March 23, 1905, p. 6; W. W. Prescott, “Religious Instruction in the Public Schools,” RH, April 20, 1905, p. 5. Daniells commented that the eighty city ministers who attended one meeting were greatly impressed by the remonstrance that Prescott presented. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 3, 1905; W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, March 10, 1905, W. C. White Lb 26, EGWRC-DC.


a Roman Catholic Christian nation.¹ Large Catholic congresses were being held around the country; a new Catholic weekly, whose special purpose was to influence the public mind, had been started and the evident plan of the hierarchy at Rome was "to win America for the Church." All these constituted a significant threat, argued Prescott. The failure of Protestantism had opened the door for Catholicism. He explained that it would be difficult to deal effectively with the issue in the other journals of the denomination. "The revival of Rome in this country, and the apostasy of Protestantism," he concluded, "constitutes in itself a demand for a publication that shall be devoted especially and exclusively to that field." Thus was the Protestant Magazine born.²

The Protestant Magazine

In his introductory editorial Prescott forthrightly declared the journal's purpose. "We make no apology for issuing the Protestant Magazine. ... No other publication so far as we know has the same purpose in view." Its intent, he explained, was to protest against the apostasy of both the Roman Catholic and the professedly Protestant churches, and to plead for "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." Claiming to continue the tradition of the sixteenth century Reformation, Prescott asserted that the journal adopted the declaration of the protesting princes at the 1529 Diet of Spires. The problem of Protestantism generally, said Prescott, was

¹According to Prescott, the decree had been issued on June 29, 1908. See Protestant I:1 [1909], p. 64.
²GC Bulletin, May 25, 1909, pp. 149, 150.
that it had ceased to protest. Thereafter, an extract from the Princes' 1529 declaration became a permanent and prominent part of the paper's masthead.

Still basically an educator, Prescott viewed the journal as having an educational function. As editor, he hoped to "educate" his readers on "The Roman Question." Furthermore, he stated clearly at the outset that the style of the paper would be forthright and aggressive. "In dealing with the important subjects which will be considered in the Protestant Magazine it will be our purpose to use great plainness of speech, and to permit others to do the same." While he would, of course, endeavor to speak fairly and kindly, avoiding misrepresentation, he would nevertheless not hesitate "to state actual facts when occasion requires it." Prescott intended to be militant. "We have no sympathy with that sentimental Christianity which is ready to sacrifice essential truths of the Gospel in order to secure an outward appearance of unity." The magazine lived up to his word.

Early issues discussed the history of the papacy, analyzed key Catholic doctrines, and dealt in a general way with the papacy's involvement in politics. Nonetheless, positive presentations on justification by faith, the mediation of Christ, and the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation dominated the paper's content. Other topics discussed included such themes as "Who is the Anti-Christ?" "Papal

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\(^{1}\text{Two banners on the magazine's cover succinctly summed up its raison d'etre. They read, "Advocating Primitive Christianity" and "Protesting against Apostasy." Protestant I:1 [1909], p. 2; July, 1915, p. 327.}

\(^{2}\text{Protestant I:1 [1909], p. 2.}

\(^{3}\text{Ibid.}
Infallibility, and "The Centrality of Scripture." A number of articles dealt with the history of Luther and the basic principles of the Reformation, while a special section in each issue presented notes and press clippings on the activities of the Catholic church in America as well as developments in Rome.

After 1910 the Catholic church seemed to become even more prominent in public affairs. Contacts between government officials and the hierarchy of the church caused widespread concern among Protestants throughout the nation and alarmed Adventist church leaders. Negative sentiment against the Catholic church increased markedly. With these developments, Prescott's editorials began to comment more frequently on specific people and events. For example, protests against the United States president attending Catholic services in his official capacity figured prominently. Full-page glossy photographs of the meetings of the various officials, of Catholic leaders in clerical garb, and of Catholic churches and residences served as very effective illustrations.

After President Woodrow Wilson appointed a Roman Catholic as his private secretary in 1914, criticism began to be voiced around the country that mail dealing with the Catholic question was being kept from the president. Prescott wrote to Wilson directly and received a personal reply. He published the exchange of letters in the Protestant. Later an exclusive interview with Governor Sulzer of New York concerning the involvement of the Catholic church

\[\text{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}}}A. G. Daniells to K. C. Russell, June 12, 1910, RG 11: Bx 65 Lb 46, GACr. RH, February 5, 1914, p. 2.\]
hierocracy in New York politics provided another scoop for Prescott.¹ Both stories were picked up by the national news service and reported across the country. Such reporting brought the Protestant and its editor to national attention.²

Reaction--Pro and Con

Generally the tone of the paper was dignified and careful. In the opinion of the Wesleyan Methodist, the Protestant was "probably the most ably edited anti-Catholic publication in this country. ... Its utterances are fair, its quotations authoritative, and its deductions convincing." The Presbyterian Standard added that Prescott dealt with Romanism "in a dignified and scholarly way." E. R. Palmer later reported that a leading Catholic authority referred to the magazine as their "respectable opponent."³ On occasion, however, it appears that articles tended toward the sensational, reflecting the style of journalism Prescott was accustomed to in his editorial years in Biddeford and Montpelier. One such article was the four-part series, "A Convent Tragedy," telling the

¹W. W. Prescott, "Governor Sulzer, Tammany Hall, and The Roman Catholic Church," Protestant, June 1914, pp. 252-263. The interview dealt with the impeachment of the New York governor at the instigation of Boss Murphy, Tammany Hall, and the Catholic church. The issue was highly controversial.

²According to the American Citizen of March 6, 1915, the widely read Harper's Weekly carried two articles of Prescott's on "The Pro-Papal Program." It was consequently threatened with a boycott by some Catholic societies. See PC 21: PMRF Fld "Press Notices," GCAr.

story of a young girl concealed from her parents in a convent. The lengthy extracts from the official court records, published by Prescott, told of immoral priests and the involvement of a lesbian nun with the teenager.\(^1\) A similar article was Prescott's challenge to a Catholic priest, Monsignor W. T. Russell, pastor of St. Patrick's church in Washington, D.C., to furnish a wafer from the eucharist after it had been consecrated that it might be submitted to a chemical test. The object of the test was to determine if transubstantiation had actually occurred. The challenge was lauded by Protestant papers, but severely criticized by Catholic editors as "outrageous and blasphemous."\(^2\)

As well as receiving widespread notice in the public press, Prescott found himself carrying a heavy correspondence with readers of the magazine. His correspondence files from the period reveal a wide variety of correspondents. Many of his readers were patriotic Americans who saw the Catholic movement as a threat to the American way of life. They wrote encouraging letters of support. Others were hostile and regarded Prescott as a narrow-minded bigot. His replies, though, even to his detractors, uniformly exhibit respect and courtesy. To one hostile correspondent, Prescott replied simply, "A

\(^1\) Prescott added very little editorial comment to the court's transcript of the parent's lawsuit against the convent. The case in which the parents were awarded $23,000 in damages attracted considerable attention. W. W. Prescott, "A Convent Tragedy," Protestant, March 1913, pp. 102-111; April 1913, pp. 150-163; May 1913, pp. 203-217; June 1913, pp. 258-264.

\(^2\) See National Protestant, November 18, 1914; The Menace, October 10, 1914; The Monitor (San Francisco), September 19, 1914. Clippings from these papers can be found in PC 21: PMRF Fld "Press Comments." GCAR.
gentleman would not write such a letter as yours, . . . and you cannot properly expect that a gentleman would make any reply to it."

Prescott's forthright, frank, yet dignified magazine was the epitome of propriety, however, when compared to the style and tone of other anti-Catholic newspapers and magazines in the field. One "yellow sheet," The Menace, claiming "two million constant readers," was particularly vitriolic and offensive, but there were numerous others. The multiplication of these papers brought a response from the Catholics. In 1911, the Federation of Catholic Societies began to work towards securing legislation that would exclude anti-Catholic publications "which contain scurrilous and slanderous attacks upon our faith" from the U.S. mail. By the beginning of 1915, the federation was successful to the extent that two bills providing for these restrictions were presented to Congress. The boldness of this move brought a vigorous reaction from Protestants and protest petitions were drawn up around the country. Playing a significant role in the protest was Prescott's sixteen-page "Free Press Extra." Interest in the issue was so keen that the circulation of this "Extra" reached 250,000, a record for the Review and Herald up to that time.

Although the work of editing the magazine and caring for the


2 Truth in its August 15 issue listed more than twenty. See PC 21: PMRF Fld "Press Notices," GCAr.


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correspondence connected with it occupied a great deal of Prescott's
time each month, he was not forgetful that preaching was also part
of his task. It seems the increasing notice accorded to the
Protestant made it easier for the professor to draw an audience.
During these years he joined tent efforts for brief periods or
conducted short series of evangelistic meetings on his own in the
large, east coast cities. The growing power and influence of Rome
and its relationship to prophecy constituted his usual introductory
meetings and these were followed by presentations on the gospel.
According to newspaper reports, large crowds attended his meetings.
His topics were relevant, and evidently his resonant voice and
impressive delivery had lost none of their power.

An incident at the 1913 General Conference session in Wash-
ington, D.C., illustrates his continuing appeal as a platform
speaker. H. M. S. Richards, who attended the session which was held
in a large tent, recalls that when large audiences were in attend-
ance, conditions in the tent had to be just right for the speaker to
be heard adequately. At one meeting a not very forceful speaker was
occupying the pulpit when a heavy shower of rain made it next to

1Prescott was still partially employed by the General Con-
ference and the North American Division who paid half his salary.
He was thus still needed for "general and institute work." GCC Min,
June 17, 1913.

2RH, April 10, 1913, p. 24. W. W. Prescott to H. I. Pettis,
June 25, 1914, PC 21: PMRF Flid "Suggestions," GCAR. Prescott's
evangelistic sermon titles included "Rome and the War," "Why We Are
Protestants," "Rome in Prophecy and History." Reports of the sermons
may be found in the Washington Star, March 13, 27, 1915; Washington
Post, August 31, 1915; Washington Times, March 22, 1915. A col-
lection of press clippings and advertising handbills can be found in
PC 21: PMRF Flid "Personal," GCAR.
impossible for him to be heard. As the speaker vainly tried to continue, strong voices from the audience began to cry out, "Prescott, Prescott, Prescott." With a minimum of interruption Prescott was quickly located in the audience, joined the speaker on the platform and with his "mighty voice" assisted the speaker as "a sort of translator." "As long as the rain continued," recalls Richards, "we had the pleasure of listening to a man who not only could be heard, but who knew how to use the English language. . . ."

Circulation Problems

Although special issues of the Protestant such as the 'Convent Tragedy' issues and the Tammany Hall Expose issue achieved high circulation totals, generally the magazine struggled to build up a secure list of stable subscribers. Anxious about the low circulation figures, Prescott observed to W. C. White in early 1912 that "those [editors] most persistent in appropriating the use of denominational agencies" seemed to be the ones who achieved the greatest success. W. C. White stated that he and his mother were very supportive of the work the professor was doing and encouraged him in it. As 1912 progressed the professor began to work up an enthusiastic campaign. Advertisements began to appear regularly in the

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2. "Highest circulation for any one issue was 80,000. W. W. Prescott, "Circular," April 27, 1914, EGWRC-DC.

3. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, January 2, 1912; W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, July 18, August 15, 1912, EGWRC-DC. White noted that even though Adventists were a small denomination they could have a very large influence. He cited the efforts of Adventists in California in preventing the passage of Sunday legislation even though the church constituted only half of 1 percent of the state's population.
Review and other church papers. Extensive efforts also were made to promote the magazine at campmeetings and at workers' meetings. Slowly the circulation began to improve. Regular circulation in 1911 was approximately 9,000, and by the end of 1912 had climbed to almost 12,000. As colporteurs found the magazine a good seller, the total monthly circulation averaged about 40,000.\footnote{W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, July 24, 1912, EGWRC-DC.}

Although by March 1915 the number of regular subscribers had climbed to 23,000, the magazine was still not able to pay its way. (Sold at ten cents a copy, it was discounted heavily for annual subscribers.) That it was losing money bothered Prescott and the management of the publishing house. Thus, study was given to ways of increasing the circulation. (Apparently using non-church distributing agencies was unacceptable to the brethren.) In the energetic subscription drive that followed this study, Prescott even resorted to writing a personal appeal in the journal explaining the difficulties and asking for help. Several full-page advertisements in the Review were also used, but the attainment of what Spicer called "a living circulation" proved elusive.\footnote{W. W. Prescott, "A Personal Appeal," Protestant, June 1915, p. 273; April 1915, p. 3. RH, June 17, 1915, p. 2; June 24, 1915, p. 3; September 26, 1915, p. 22. W. A. Spicer to Charles Thompson, December 21, 1915, RG 21: 8x 91 Lb 64, GCAR. W. W. Prescott, "Circular," March 2, 1915, EGWRC-DC. Apparently circulation manager, A. J. S. Bourdeau, was transferred to other work because he endeavored to push the magazine through other distributors. W. A. Colcord to F. E. Belden, April 23, 1915, PC 17: M. L. Andreason Fid "Colcord Belden, etc.," GCAR.}

Lethargy or lack of interest was apparently not the basic

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problem. Other factors within the church helped make the task of increasing the subscription list difficult. Prescott's basic approach in the Protestant was to contrast the papacy and its doctrine of the Mass with the "continual" mediation of Christ and justification by faith. He understood the Adventist church to have been raised up to "restore" the essential truths of Protestantism. The "daily" was therefore part of the basic theological rationale of the journal. This was perceived clearly by Prescott's critics, although he did not address the problem of Dan 8 directly. J. S. Washburn, in particular, was intensely antagonistic toward Prescott over the matter of "the daily" and apparently conducted a bitter personal "campaign" against both the professor and the magazine. His agitation, which was divisive and had a negative impact, resulted in a move by the General Conference to summon him to Washington to give an account of himself. The "inquisition," as Washburn termed it, never eventuated, however, and he seems to have continued his campaign.1

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 severely complicated the situation. Official contacts between the papacy and the American government increased tensions between Catholics and Protestants. Emotions reached such a peak in some places that riots broke out, and a prominent southern official was murdered.2 A conference between

1 J. S. Washburn to C. E. Holmes, April 18, 1920, "The Startling Omega and Its True Genealogy," AUHR.

2 W. W. Prescott, "A Proposed Conference between Protestants and Roman Catholics," Protestant, April 1915, pp. 171-175. I. A. Ford, "Review and Herald Constituency Meeting," RH, February 3, 1916, p. 17. An added reason was that the war had temporarily distracted church members' attention. While Liberty and the Protestant
leaders of the two religious groups was proposed to try to ameliorate the problem. In this atmosphere it seemed to some Adventist church leaders that further confrontation through the Protestant would be counter productive to the Adventist cause. At the General Conference Council in October 1915, Prescott was called to a new position, and in December 1915 publication of the paper was suspended.

The Review and Herald trustees noted in their action to discontinue the magazine that "some responsible men in the field" entertained the view that the publication of a magazine "devoted especially to the Roman question" might cause "an embarrassment" to the church, "and possibly precipitate a crisis before it is due."

The action also noted that the suspension was only temporary and that publication might be resumed at a later time. "Library, clipping file and the files of publications" were to be kept intact for future use.¹

"That the larger factor involved in the discontinuance of the magazine related to conflicts within the church seems to be indicated by the vigorous protest over the action of the publishing house made by Charles Thompson, president of the Northern Union Conference. He struggled to maintain their circulation, magazines like the Watchman and Signs of the Times, which ran sensational stories on the war, increased their circulation significantly. See also RHPA Bd Min, November 30, 1915, and W. W. Prescott to A. F. Harrison, May 1, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--H, GCAR.

¹ RHPA Bd Min, November 30, 1915. Prescott was elected pro tem chairman of the trustees in the absence of the regular chairman and thus presided over the action to suspend publication of his magazine. He evidently supported the action. Five days later at the next meeting of the board, the matter was considered again and the previous action was ratified. The general feeling seemed to be that it was the best thing to do under the circumstances. RHPA Bd Min, December 5, 1915.
pointedly complained to Spicer, associate editor of the Protestant and General Conference secretary, that in his opinion the field wanted the magazine. It had put Adventists in favorable standing with the Protestant churches and had met in a "true and dignified way" the issues of Catholicism. He asked why "the field" had not been consulted. Spicer tactfully tried to explain that while many favored the Protestant, "many of our workers have not, and some have felt very decidedly that we ought not to publish anything distinctively on the Catholic issue." To Prescott, who had gone on a trip to South America shortly after the board meetings, Spicer remarked: "The Protestant Magazine had a good many more friends than we appreciated, I think." He enclosed several letters with the light-hearted comment, "I am sure the ex-editor . . . will enjoy hearing his friends fight for the journal."¹

Agitation over the magazine continued through 1916. In October, the Review and Herald board considered a petition from the Lake Union Conference to renew the publication of the paper. The Lake Union was not alone. The board expressed appreciation for "this and other similar requests." It preferred, however, to refer the request to the Autumn Council of the General and North American Division Conferences. The Lake Union Conference was assured, though, that the board would act in harmony with the recommendations of the Autumn Council. That assurance proved difficult to honor.²

¹Charles Thompson to W. A. Spicer, December 10, 1915, RG 21: Domestic Fld 1915-T; W. A. Spicer to Charles Thompson, December 21, 1915; W. A. Spicer to W. W. Prescott, December 28, 1915, January 6, 1916, RG 21: 3x 31 Lb 64, GCAr.

²RHPA Bd Min, October 5, 1916.
Two weeks later, the board considered the matter again. In
the interim, the North American Division Council had approved the
request to republish the magazine, but it was evidently a disputed
matter. The board reported that in the Autumn Council discussion,
a "strong difference of opinion" was evident. While the final vote
was two to one in favor of the proposal to republish, the board con-
sidered it "certain" that "several members of the committee who did
not vote against the measures" had "serious misgivings concerning
it." It was noted that it was "this condition in the field" that
had led to the original suspension of the paper. The board therefore
expressed themselves that they did not "deem it advisable to under-
take so delicate and important a work . . . without the assurance of
united support from the field." United support was obviously non-
extistent. Thus, the magazine died.\(^1\)

The Legacy of Protestant Magazine

Although the Adventist church's polemic against Rome embodied
in the Protestant contributed to some tensions and alienation in the
curch, it nevertheless had positive values. Howard Week's study
reveals that sociologically the decade 1910-1920, dominated by
Roman Catholic developments and World War I, provided a good basis

\(^1\)RHPA Bd Min, October 17, 1916. The dispute over the
Protestant indicates how polarized the church had become over the
matter of "the daily." Relationships between the Columbia Union
Conference (which seems to have been where a large part of the
animosity against the Protestant was localized) and the General Con-
ference continued to deteriorate. See Haloviak, "In the Shadow of
the Daily." Washburn regarded the collapse of the magazine as a
major victory. J. S. Washburn to A. S. Daniells, "An Open Letter,
May 1, 1922, AUHR.
for a successful period of evangelistic endeavor. But as well as fostering increasing evangelistic success, the focused attention on Catholicism prompted the writers and preachers of the church to be more careful and accurate in their presentations and arguments. This latter concern was highlighted by an embarrassing incident the church confronted in 1908.

Through the newspaper a Catholic priest in New York state publicly challenged local Adventists to provide documentation for a claim made about the papacy on an Adventist chart that had come into his hands. Local church officials, unable to document the claim, asked the General Conference for help. Prescott was commissioned to pursue the study. Search was made in the Library of Congress and in the Library of the Catholic University in Washington. Prescott even solicited the help of some of the Catholic professors, but was unable to find any evidence at all to support the claim. Church leaders were embarrassed at this public disclosure of what the priest claimed to be gross misrepresentation. A number of similar incidents occurred in later years. Spicer related to W. C. White in early 1911 that Adventist claims about the papacy increasingly were being taken up and challenged in Catholic magazines, some of which he reported were resolved to "smash our literature."²

Prescott, with his conscientious scholarly concern for thoroughness, truthfulness, and accuracy, was very sensitive to the

¹. Weeks, Adventist Evangelism in the Twentieth Century, p. 100.
². A. G. Daniels to C. C. Crisler, March 18, 1908, RG 11: Lb 43, SCAr. W. A. Spicer to W. C. White, February 17, 1911, WASCc Vol 1, Fid 1, AUHR. GC Bulletin, May 28, 1913, p. 176. The challenge related to statements made concerning the change of the Sabbath.
problem. Expressing his concern to R. A. Underwood in 1908, he stated, "I desire . . . that all the literature which we put out should be so prepared that it will stand the test of the criticism which it is sure to meet."\(^1\) According to editorial colleague, W. A. Colcord, Prescott exercised great care in his editorial work. He related that it was his practice to seek advice and criticism from others before going into print, frequently reading his editorials for the Protestant aloud to an associate, "footnotes and all." "He wished it criticized before being published rather than afterwards."\(^2\)

The professor was not only careful himself; he also endeavored to educate his ministerial colleagues to exercise similar caution. Through the Review in 1911, he appealed to ministers to be more careful in their "dealings with Rome." Again at the 1913 General Conference session he labored the point. According to the Bulletin editor, in one meeting "he laid bare many facts touching the use of certain quotations by our workers and writers 'purporting' to be authentic. . . . A very animated discussion followed and those present strongly endorsed the chairman's [Prescott] position on the timely topic."\(^3\)

As previously noted in connection with Prescott's work on the book committee in the 1890s, Prescott could at times be hypercritical

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\(^1\)W. W. Prescott to R. A. Underwood, August 2, 1908, RG 11: Fld 1908-P. Prescott had just written a critique of Underwood's pamphlet on the two covenants.

\(^2\)W. A. Colcord to A. G. Daniells, February 13, 1911, RG 11: Fld 1911-C, GCAr.

over matters of accuracy. In Colcord's opinion, he could offer such severe criticisms "as to virtually kill a good book." Generally, however, his carefulness was a valuable and relevant concern.¹ Roy Allen Anderson, a colleague of Prescott's in his later years, remarked that the professor's thoroughness and conscientiousness profoundly impressed him. Prescott's care for detail served as a model for his own editorial work.²

Prescott's work on the Protestant proved of lasting value to the church in another way. While checking the accuracy of many of the quotations used in the church's polemic against Rome, the professor was able to bring to light many helpful authoritative statements on the claims of the papacy. These he printed regularly in the Protestant. Recognizing the value of this research, the General Conference in 1913 passed a resolution calling for Prescott to publish his collection of statements in some permanent form. This he did. In the months following the General Conference session, he began supervising the revision of Facts for These Times and included much of the new material he had prepared.³ The work of revising the volume, a compilation of statistics and authoritative statements for ministers and Bible workers, proceeded with difficulty. Interrupted repeatedly, the project was eventually completed with the issuing of

¹W. A. Colcord to L. A. Smith, July 31, 1911, RG ii: Fld 1911-C, GCAr. While Colcord acknowledged that Prescott's criticism could sometimes be severe, he stressed the need to correct the errors pointed out.


³E. R. Palmer to W. A. Spicer, August 1, 1913, RG 21: Domestic Fld 1913-P, GCAr.
a completely new volume, *Source Book for Bible Students in 1919*. Prescott did a great deal of the work on the book.

Resident Historian

Prescott's personal education had not stopped with his graduation from Dartmouth College in 1877. In the intervening years he had continued to read and study particularly in the areas of theology, Biblical exegesis, and prophetic interpretation. His college work in the classical languages and ancient history had given him a good grounding in history and because of his keen interest in prophetic interpretation, he also continued to study in this area. His years as editor of the *Protestant* afforded him ready opportunity for this. In 1915 his editorial friend on the *Signs of the Times*, A. O. Tait, could write, "Certainly Prof. Prescott is one of the best educated men there is among us. He is also a good writer, ... clear thinker and profound student."¹

Mrs. White's editorial staff recognized and valued the professor's erudition. When C. C. Crisler was compiling a series of Mrs. White's articles on Ezra in late 1907, he had urged Prescott to spend some time with them at Elmshaven because of Prescott's familiarity with the history of the period. Crisler was aware that many points of the history of Ezra were uncertain and, although the editors were using "the best authorities" available, they realized

¹Prescott developed a "Theological Reference File" in which he collected materials for use in his work on the *Protestant*. Clippings and extracts contained in the files indicate that the professor read widely in theology and church history. PC 21: W. W. Prescott Theological Reference Files; A. O. Tait to T. E. Bowen, September 3, 1915, RG 21: Domestic Fld 1915-T, GCAr.
keenly their "inability to see many points that should be clearly
scrutinized," hence they felt the need of Prescott's "critical help." 
Crisler stated that the Elmshaven staff would also appreciate his
help in planning further E. G. White articles on the latter part of
Old Testament history as well as in preparing answers to some of the
criticisms recently leveled against Mrs. White's work. Prescott
responded favorably and spent time with them. They were deeply
grateful for his scholarly help.1

Again in early 1910, W. C. White called on Prescott for
scholarly help in revising Mrs. White's Great Controversy. Visiting
him in his Washington home during Sarah's last illness and just a few
weeks prior to her death, White requested Prescott to go through
Great Controversy and write out any criticisms he might have.
According to W. C. White, Prescott was heavily pressed with work and
was reluctant to undertake the project. At White's urging, however,
he "consented to write out his suggestions." White later wrote

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1The articles were being published in the Review. On his own
initiative, Prescott had edited some passages where he knew that the
articles disagreed with standard histories. He had then written to
W. C. White explaining what he had done asking at the same time
"Whether it is proper to settle these historical matters of con­
troversy by a statement in your mother's article. Unless she has had
special light on these historical matters, I am somewhat at a loss to
know how these historical controversies can thus be settled." He
explained that "With the controversy now on hand concerning the ques­
tion of the authority of your mother's writings" he had acted to
protect them "from unfriendly criticism and attack" (W. W. Prescott
to W. C. White, December 1, 1907). Crisler replied asking Prescott
to continue "to eliminate any portions that you fear may do more
harm than good in the remaining articles" (C. C. Crisler to W. W.
Prescott, December 14, 1907, EGWRC-DC). C. C. Crisler to W. W.
Prescott, December 27, 1907, RG 11: Fid 1907-G, GCAr.

According to Crisler, C. E. Stewart's "A Response to an
Urgent Testimony . . ." had put them in "a strait place." He labored
hard to persuade Prescott of his need to go to their assistance.
Daniells asking him to encourage Prescott "to be free in his suggestions to Crisler and me." On April 26, 1910, the professor sent off to White a thirty-nine-page letter containing 105 suggestions where he thought revisions or refinements should be made. Prescott had done the work in haste and he acknowledged that his critique was by no means exhaustive. His labor was nonetheless appreciated by the Elmsnaven staff. At about the same time, Prescott sent to J. Edson White, who was revising The Coming King, a large amount of what W. C. White considered "very valuable material" on the darkening of the sun and the falling of the stars. On request, the material was sent also to W. C. White who found it helpful in revising the chapters that dealt with those events. White stated that he was very thankful for Prescott's efforts. He reported that he had said "very

Prescott's reluctance seems not to have been because of his particular view of inspiration, as A. L. White suggests, but because of the use his critics might make of it if they found out that he was suggesting changes. They were already angered by his suggested reinterpretation of "the daily" statement in Early Writings. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, April 20, 1910, EGWRC-OC. See A. L. White, "W. W. Prescott and the 1911 Edition of Great Controversy," February 3, 1981, p. 3, EGWRC-DC.

While A. L. White's analysis of Prescott's 105 suggestions and the changes in Great Controversy that resulted from them is helpful, his general treatment seems to convey the impression that Prescott's suggestions were not really welcome or at least largely unnecessary. W. A. Spicer, on the other hand, felt that the editors had been "a little hard to deal with in accepting suggestions." He stated to Conradi: "A comparison of the new and old edition... will show many things changed, although some things should surely have been corrected further" (W. A. Spicer to L. R. Conradi, November 30, 1914).

W. C. White found the source matter that Prescott sent very helpful. He planned to introduce a few of Prescott's paragraphs to replace passages where incorrect credits had been given. W. C. White to J. E. White, May 27, June 17, July 3, 1910; W. C. White to D. E. Robinson, April 4, 1910, EGWRC-DC. Colcord and Spicer were others who also suggested changes. W. A. Colcord to C. C. Crisler, February 21, 1911, RG 11: Fld 1911-C; W. A. Spicer to C. C. Crisler, February 17, 1911, WASCC, Vol 1, Fld 1, AUHR.

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little as to who had pointed out the passages," treating Prescott's work confidentially, "as we thought you would wish us to do." At the 1919 Bible Conference, the topic was openly discussed and J. E. Robinson stated publicly that "Mrs. White appreciated the work of Brother Prescott and others" in calling attention to some of the "slight inaccuracies in the historical work."1

The heightened sensitivity to the need for more care in the statements and claims made in the literature of the church resulting from Catholic aggressiveness, the general need to update statistics and facts, and the need to replace printing plates necessitated other

1W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, August 12, 1910, EGWRC-DC. Robinson also stated that many changes were not made on the supposition that the Roman Catholics had destroyed many of the sources. "1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 10, 1919, AUHR.

The task of revising Great Controversy was a very delicate one because of the atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust that had been engendered by the controversy over "the daily." Mrs. White apparently learned of the project some time after W. C. White had asked Prescott to write out his suggestions, not before as A. L. White suggests. "W. W. Prescott and the 1911 Edition of Great Controversy," p. 3. She was apparently not informed as to whom the suggestion had come from if indeed she knew of them at all. As previously noted, during this period, Mrs. White was not of robust health but experienced periods of depression. She had been "in great weakness" in early 1910, "not strong" during the summer and, according to C. H. Jones, in early 1911 W. C. White was trying to prevent her from "being perplexed by details" which might remind her of former occasions and "start her off on some line" (W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, May 30, June 5, August 12, 1910, EGWRC-DC; C. H. Jones to W. A. Spicer, January 27, 1911, RG 21: Domestic Fld 1911-J, GCAr). W. C. White hoped that he could get much of the work done so that he could show it to her when much of it was already complete and thus ease her mind of anxiety over the project (W. C. White to C. C. Crisler, August 1, 1910, EGWRC-DC). In June, 1910, part of the work was shown to her which she approved on general principles. Most of the work involved giving credits and substituting one quotation for another. She instructed her staff to proceed with the whole lot "without asking her to examine them one by one." Not until the whole of the work had been completed was W. C. White able to inform Haskell about it. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, January 31, 1911, JLMcCC, Sx 1 Fld 1, AUHR.
book revisions being made at this time. Smith's *Daniel and The Revelation* and the widely sold *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* were two prominent works also revised. Prescott assisted in this as a member of the Review and Herald book committee. His counsel was coveted. From time to time in later years he continued to send W. C. White information on points for revision. For example, in 1914, he discovered some evidence that the "Crush the Wretch" cry of the French Revolution was not dealt with correctly in *Great Controversy*. He sent it to White who replied thanking him "most heartily" for the information. White took the opportunity to renew his request that as Prescott "found things of this character" he should be sure to pass on the "benefit" of his "investigation and study."¹

A Lonely Scholar

Prescott's suggestion of the need of correction in Mrs. White's writings was in no way an indication of his lack of faith in her work. To the contrary, Prescott was most concerned to prevent Mrs. White from being discredited. Repeatedly he had exercised great care and gone to considerable lengths to help try to protect her from the attacks of her critics. For example, in 1906, in one sensitive matter, he refused to publish an article in the Review "because it would give aid and comfort to those who are looking for opportunities to discredit Sister White and her work."² He had also spent

¹W. A. Colcord to W. A. Spicer, August 30, 1910, RG 21: Domestic Fold 1910-C, GCAR. W. C. White to J. E. White, November 23, 24, 1910; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, November 30, 1914; W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, December 16, 1914, DF 84, EGWRC-DC.

²W. W. Prescott to F. M. Wilcox, March 2, 1906, EGWRC-DC. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, May 17, 1906, RG 11: Lb 38, GCAR.
much time helping to develop replies to the criticisms of A. T.
Jones and C. E. Stewart. In 1912 he even protested that W. C. White
was inadvertently demeaning his mother's work by putting too much
stress on the commercial aspects. In particular, the Elmshaven
letter-head which described Mrs. White in bold letters as "author and
publisher" with her son as "business agent" and another as "accoun-
tant" seemed quite objectionable to Prescott because it put "the
whole thing on the same basis as any commercial organization." He
explained to White that it offended his "sense of the propriety of
things in view of the position which your mother has occupied in this
work from its commencement, and in view of the peculiar character of
her writings."¹ And to those at the 1919 Bible Conference who were
tempted to doubt his confidence in Ellen White's work, he said:
"Just come with me and look at my books, that is all. If you think
they do not help me, come and see how I have marked them."²

That Prescott had to make such a statement at all indicated
that there were those who felt that he had no confidence in Mrs.
White's work. This impression had been actively fostered and nour-
ished by those who differed with him on "the daily." For example,
Washburn's campaign against the professor and the Protestant Magazine
in 1914 was motivated in large part by Washburn's conviction that
Prescott had no confidence in the Spirit of Prophecy. These sharp

¹W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, August 23, September 15,
1912, EGWRC-DC. White explained that the letterheads had been
intended for use with non-Adventists but had been inadvertently
used for church correspondence. For a sample see W. C. White to
A. G. Daniells, August 15, 1912, RG 11: F1d 1912-W, GCAr.

²"1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 14, 1919, AUHR.
personal attacks by Wasburn, F. C. Gilbert, Haskell, and others
were made on the basis of personal interviews the men had allegedly
had with Mrs. White. Yet Mrs. White had apparently said none of
these things to Prescott himself. Such use of Mrs. White seemed
unjust to the professor and the detrimental effect the reports were
having both on his reputation and the circulation of Protestant
Magazine troubled him greatly. Cut to the quick, he apparently
talked at length about the matter with W. C. White in early 1915.¹

In March of that year, White wrote a letter of encouragement

¹Mrs. White had long been perplexed about the misuse of
statements she made in personal interviews. In 1889 in the midst of
theological controversy, she related how people would come to her for
counsel. She would express an opinion about some brother's actions
and then the enquirer would go and report the matter as they them­
selves wanted it to be understood. Mrs. White would then receive
letters from the persons who had been misrepresented asking how she
could say such things about them. Often she could not recall even
having said anything about the individuals concerned. Such episodes
greatly embarrassed Mrs. White and she concluded that it was not her
duty to have private interviews with individuals who had trials and
difficulties to bring to her. See E. G. White, "Diary," December
13, 1889, MS 24, 1889, EGWRC-DC.

Prescott had raised this same matter with Mrs. White herself
when J. A. Burden had used something Mrs. White had said at a meeting
to try to force his brethren and the General Conference committee
to press ahead with the development of a medical school at Loma
Linda. Other men who heard exactly the same remarks understood them
in a quite different way. There was a disagreement as to the exact
wording of the transcript and the exact wording was crucial to the
point Burden was pushing. This misuse of Mrs. White's supposed
statements as "a club" by some to force other people's convictions
distressed the professor. "Such a course as this does more to dis­
credit the Spirit of Prophecy, and to bring us into trial concerning
it, than anything the Battle Creek people can say." Both Mrs. White
and W. C. White agreed that such things were wrong. W. C. White was
particularly glad of the way Prescott had been able to express the
difficulty so that the issues could be clearly understood. (Ear­
lier in 1908 Prescott had apparently talked at length with him about
the problem.) W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, March 10, 1908,
EGWRC-DC. W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, March 22, 1908, RG 11:
F1d 1908-W (1); W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, March 24, RG 11: F1d
1908-W (2), GCAr.
to Prescott informing him that he had not found recent opportunity to unfold to his mother "the perplexities" which he added so much to the professor's "burden and sadness." He assured Prescott, though, that his mother "always had a very high regard" for him and that during the last few years she had manifested a "mother's love and tenderness" for him. "I truly wish," he wrote, "that there was something I could say or do to cheer your heart, and help you take that hopeful, and trustful, and joyous view of your life work ... with which your brethren have regarded it." Later White commented that he had no sympathy for the "harsh and misguided men" who were "ploughing up and down" on the professor's back simply because he was not doing or saying the things they wanted him to say and do." He went on, "Not until the judgement will it be known how earnestly I have endeavored to persuade these men to drop their burden."

The "harsh and misguided" men who were so severely criticizing Prescott had apparently become concerned not only because Prescott had advocated the 'new view' of "the daily" in the Protestant Magazine but also because his historical research on the papacy had led him to the conclusion that the prophecy of Dan 7 concerning the 1,260 years traditionally dated by Adventists as extending from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798 would be more accurate if it were dated A.D. 533 to A.D. 1793. Rather than arguing for the new...
dates in an either/or fashion, Prescott suggested that both sets of dates were relevant. This idea he had cautiously introduced in the Protestant Magazine and had suggested as a revision in Great Controversy.¹ His critics, once again convinced that he was moving the "landmarks" and undermining the Spirit of Prophecy because it had spoken only of the old dates, found this to be added evidence for their case.

Prescott felt that a great deal of the criticism he was receiving would be avoided if the church had a clearer understanding of the nature and role of Mrs. White's authority. His own acquaintance with the way Mrs. White’s books and articles had been prepared and his own involvement in that process as a guide and an authority on historical and some doctrinal matters had brought home clearly to him a broader view of Mrs. White's work. The view which held that if she said anything on a position that automatically made the position rigid and fixed, he knew to be not in accordance with the facts.² But the task of educating the church in a broader

¹W. W. Prescott, "The Papacy in Prophecy," Protestant II:2, 1910, pp. 24-26. The article is a careful, scholarly presentation. It argues that history consists in trends and developments and that absolute punctiliar dates were often misused and conveyed wrong impressions. Prescott's approach seems to have become the generally accepted view. See "Additional Note on Chapter 7," F. D. Nichol, ed., Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1955), 4:834-838. While Washburn vigorously objected to the idea, both Spicer and W. C. White defended the professor, although White acknowledged that he wished Prescott had expressed his view a little more cautiously in places. W. A. Spicer to J. S. Washburn, February 6, 1910; W. A. Spicer to J. E. White, May 3, 1910, RG 21: LB 53; W. C. White to J. S. Washburn, October 27, 1910, RG 58: LEF Fld(1): "The Daily" (3), GCAR.

²Spicer shared Prescott's understanding. To Conradi he wrote: "It is firmly settled that phrases and historical statements..."
understanding of her role without destroying confidence in her work completely was so difficult and delicate that no one was apparently willing to risk undertaking it.\(^1\) He was distressed that there appeared to be such a reluctance in the church to keep abreast of truth. "It seems to me that a large responsibility rests upon those of us who know that there are serious errors in our authorised [sic] books and yet make no special effort to correct them." He thought it was wrong to allow ministers and church members to go on using these books with errors in them—thinking them to be reliable.\(^2\) "It seems to me that we are betraying our trust and deceiving the ministers and the people. It appears to me that there is much more anxiety to

\(^1\)Spicer claimed that he had asked for an explanatory statement on the question to be made in the new edition of Great Controversy, "but it has not been made." He also felt that misconceptions about the nature of Mrs. White's authority were creating difficulties in the church (Ibid.). It was apparently this "earnest request" that Prescott was alluding to at the 1919 Bible Conference. "1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 30, 1919 (Spectrum 10:1, May, 1979), p. 38. W. C. White stated that when he attempted to make some explanations at the 1913 General Conference session to broaden the church's understanding of Mrs. White's work, he was misunderstood. This made him very cautious. W. C. White to W. W. Prescott, May 7, 1915, EGWRC-DC.

\(^2\)Prescott was probably thinking specifically of Josiah Litch's prediction about the fall of Turkey on August 11, 1840. A few months prior to his writing of this letter he had made a lengthy presentation at the Annual Council in 1914 demonstrating more than adequately, so he thought, that both the date and the event were wrong. He argued that Turkey had never lost its independence (it had since declared war on several other nations quite on its own initiative) and that the chronological reckoning involved in arriving at the 1840 date was mistaken because it had ignored an important change in the calendar. See W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, November 23, 1916, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--T, GCAr. His approach has only recently been publicly conceded. See R. W. Olsen, One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and on Ellen White (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981), p. 50.
prevent a possible shock to some trustful people than to correct error." Prescott's scholarly aptitude, his sensitivity to truth, flexibility, and willingness to change made his lot a lonely one at times. Grappling with new evidence arising from his study, misunderstood, and suspected when he suggested adjustments to old positions, he became frustrated and depressed.

His discouragement was compounded in early 1915 by the death of his aged father. The bereavement apparently brought home to him with a jolt the vast mission that still lay before the church before the consummation of its advent hope would be realized. Prescott, with many other church leaders, had placed great stock on an interpretation of the biblical expression, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," that suggested that the last generation on earth would be the one that had witnessed all of the celestial signs that had marked the rise of Adventism. In 1915, Prescott's father was one of the few surviving believers who had personally witnessed the falling of the stars in 1833. His death set

1W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, April 6, 1915, OF 110, EGWRC-DC. In August 1910, Mrs. White had written to Daniells warning him about becoming too involved in the work of book revision. She felt that revising books would distract him from the work of evangelism and that it would create doubt and uncertainty. In the letter Prescott is also warned about being caught up with book revisions. There is no indication that Prescott ever saw the letter. He was in New England at the time. W. C. White, however, continued to send the page proofs of the new edition of Great Controversy to Daniells for review. E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, August 11, 1910; W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, October 6, 1910, EGWRC-DC.

The concerns raised by Prescott in his 1915 letter seem to have been taken up by the Review and Herald board and the General Conference committee shortly after he wrote his letter. E. R. Palmer to T. E. Bowen, July 11, 1915, RG 21: Fld 1915-P, GCAr. RHPA Bd Min, May 28, 1915.
the professor to thinking whether he himself would live to see the
consummation.

In his April 6, 1915, confidential letter to W. C. White, he
bared his soul and gave vent to his deep frustrations. Alluding to
his hard experiences at the hands of his critics since the discussion
of "the daily" first broke out in 1908, he lamented: "After giving
the best of my life to this movement I have little peace and satis-
faction in connection with it, and I am driven to the conclusion that
the only thing for me to do is to do quietly what I can do conscien-
tiously and leave the others to go on without me." Although this
would be far from a happy ending to his life's work, he thought it
was the best adjustment he could make.

On the matter of the wrong views of the nature of Mrs.
White's work which he felt were at the bottom of the criticisms made
against him by Washburn and others, he spoke rather frankly. "The
way your mother's writings have been handled and the false impres-
sion concerning them which is still fostered among the people have
brought great perplexity and trial to me." He stated that although he
had talked with W. C. White about the matter for years no change
seemed forthcoming. "No serious effort has been made to disabuse the
minds of the people of what was known to be their wrong view concern-
ing her writings." He stated furthermore: "It seems to me that what
amounts to deception, thought probably not intentional, has been

\footnote{Ibid. W. W. Prescott, "The Time and the Work," RH, April
21, 1903, pp. 3, 4; "This Generation," RH, January 19, 1905, p. 3;
"One of 'This Generation,'" RH, July 20, 1905, p. 18; "This genera-
tion is now more than three score and ten years old." RH, October 26,
1905, p. 24.}
practised in making some of her books." This worried him for he sensed that the neglect of properly educating the people would eventually bring about a reaction. "I think . . . that we are drifting toward a crisis which will come sooner or later and perhaps sooner." 1

The problem of the misunderstanding of Mrs. White's work did not reach crisis proportions as quickly as Prescott had anticipated, but it did continue to fester. 2 As it festered, men who held a "narrow fanatical" view of Mrs. White continued to attack the professor. In 1917 an employee of the Review and Herald obtained from the General Conference vault, by misrepresentation and deceit, copies of private letters from Mrs. White to Prescott and Daniels. These were used to slander and blacken the reputation of both men with extracts being circulated widely in pamphlet form. 3 At the 1919 Bible and

1 W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, April 6, 1915, OF 100, EGWRC-DC. Prescott typed the letter himself as he did "not wish to dictate it to anyone." A. L. White in his explanation of this letter, "The Prescott Letter to W. C. White April 6, 1915," January 18, 1981 (revised June 15, 1981), EGWRC-DC, has not fully understood the specific issues behind Prescott's complaints. It is therefore rather inadequate. White's major thesis is that the major difficulty behind Prescott's letter was Prescott's defective view of inspiration. In fact, Prescott's concern was over an unwarranted authority being attributed to Mrs. White's writings—an authority that made it difficult to acknowledge the fact of historical errors in the writings. See our critique of his paper, "A Response to Two Explanations of W. W. Prescott's 1915 Letter," June 1981, AUHR.

2 Sixteen years later in 1930, L. E. Froom echoed Prescott's prediction about a possible crisis over Mrs. White's work. "It is my conviction . . . that one of the greatest crises that confront this movement is before us ere we come to a sound, rational, scriptural and historical understanding . . . of the Spirit of Prophecy. . . ." (L. E. Froom to W. C. White, September 28, 1930, cited in R. W. Olsen, One Hundred and One Questions, pp. 34, 85).

3 GCC Min, February 16, 18, 1917. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniels, February 25, 1917. RG 17: Fld 1916-17--D, GCAR. Claude
-istory Teachers' Conference, the two leaders, both of whom were thoroughly acquainted with the nature of Mrs. White's work, sought to correct misconceptions, but again they were misunderstood by many. The problem seemed too difficult to resolve.

Washburn and his colleagues congratulated themselves on the death of the Protestant Magazine and thought that Prescott's influence within the church had thereby been terminated. The professor himself, wilting under their criticism, was inclined to agree and anticipated retiring from the work. Both, however, were mistaken. Prescott still had friends and supporters in high places. Before 1915 had ended, the General Conference committee had arranged for the professor to assume new responsibilities. These new duties provided opportunities where Prescott's many talents continued to be of service to the church and extended his influence beyond America. As a religious educator, Prescott's work was not yet done.

Holmes was suspended from his employment at the Review and Herald as a result of the incident. He became very bitter toward Prescott who had the responsibility of dealing with the matter in Daniells' absence. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 17, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--Unfiled, GCAr. See C. E. Holmes to A. G. Daniells, May 1, 1922, EGWRC-DC.
CHAPTER XVIII

UP FROM THE PIT OF DESPAIR

The years 1909 to 1915 were generally dark years for Prescott. The end of 1915, however, opened up new horizons. While some vocal dissidents in the field would have preferred that the professor be consigned to spend the rest of his days in some inconspicuous corner of the church where his influence would be minimal, there were others who still valued the man's large gifts. Towards the end of 1915, as it became evident that the battle to keep the Protestant afloat was not going to be worth the necessary effort, Prescott's close colleagues suggested alternative work. They were sure there were other ways in which he could very ably serve the church. In the first years of his General Conference presidency, Daniells had greatly appreciated the professor as a counsellor and as his deputy in helping to foster the mission work of the church. Now, more than a decade later, he felt that Prescott's help in these areas would be valuable again.

In 1910, Mrs. White had been exceedingly anxious over the low priority the church was giving to evangelism. Worried that Daniells and Prescott would be distracted from that work and become too absorbed in the task of revising books, she had suggested that it would not be best for the two men to continue their very close
Consequently, though the two men obviously remained friends and at times teamed up in their work, each had pursued his respective responsibilities. Their days of virtual partnership when Prescott was editor of *The Review* seemed to be over.

In the meantime the church had successfully focused much more intensely on the work of evangelism, the overseas mission work had grown extensively, and circumstances had changed considerably. Daniells found he was increasingly unable to encompass adequately the enlarged demands being made of him.

In 1914 Daniells had undergone a major operation just prior to leaving on an extensive mission tour through the Far East. The strenuous work schedule he adopted during his more than twelve months of traveling soon nullified the effects of the operation. Returning to California in poor health just three days prior to Mrs. White's death, July 16, 1915, he continued with the press of duties involved with Mrs. White's funeral and his campmeeting appointments. It soon became evident to the brethren, however, that their president was over-extending himself.

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1. E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, August 11, 1910, EGWRC-DC. Whether Prescott saw this letter is not known.

2. It was Daniells' initiative that brought Prescott into the Religious Liberty Department as secretary in 1912. Even though they served together on the General Conference committee and attended Union sessions together, Prescott's work on the Protestant kept him occupied while Daniells was overseas quite a large portion of the time.

3. A. G. Daniells to J. W. Westphal and F. W. Spies, October 17, 1915, RG 11: Fld 1915-W, GCAr. Further surgery had almost been necessary while Daniells was visiting India. Because he had promised church leaders in South America that he would visit their field in 1916, he was willing to postpone his hospitalization until he had fulfilled his promise. In this his brethren thought he was being unwise.
At the Annual Council held at Loma Linda in November 1915 action was taken to provide him with more associates to help him keep abreast of the rapidly expanding mission program. The Council created a new office—the General Conference "Field Secretary." On Daniells' personal recommendation, Prescott was appointed to the new position. He was "to assist the President in his work." Daniells was delighted. "I want to assure you of the pleasure it gives me," he wrote to the professor, "to have you as a very close associate and co-worker."^1

Apparently reluctant to accept the new responsibility, Prescott finally demurred. The "experiences" of the previous six years had caused him to have some "misgivings."^2 Daniells, however, encouraged him and the professor accepted. Prescott related to him later: "Your words of encouragement and the hopefulness which you expressed have done much to inspire the feeling that I may be again useful in the interest of the mission work." He assured his friend, "I shall certainly do my best and I hope you may have no reason to regret the recommendation which you made that I shall join you in bearing these responsibilities." Recalling former years he added:

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1 GC Bulletin, 1918, p. 2. GCC Min, November 21, 1915. J. L. Shaw was appointed as an assistant to W. A. Spicer at the same time. A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, December 9, 1915, RG 11: Fld 1915-P, GCAR.

2 The reasons for Prescott's reluctance are unclear. His reference to his experiences during 1909-1915 may indicate that he was concerned about the criticism he might receive from those who understood Mrs. White's 1909 counsel rigidly and who felt he ought not be given General Conference work. Daniells seems to have felt that changed circumstances required changed plans. Whether there was any significance to the fact that this new move occurred only a few months after Mrs. White's death is not known. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, December 20, 1915, RG 11: Fld 1915-P, GCAR.
Prescott was needed immediately to act as deputy for Daniells who was previously committed to visit the South American field. In addition, the committee had voted to organize the South American field into a division of the General Conference. It was to be an important journey. As in 1901, Daniells again had great confidence in the judgment of his colleague and entrusted him with broad responsibilities.

Now, Brother Prescott, I want you to exercise the greatest freedom in your work. You are acting for the President of the General Conference in the fullest and truest sense. You will study the situation carefully in every field you visit . . . . You will counsel with the men on the ground the same as you would were you the president. I want you to do this freely.

Daniells urged him to become acquainted with the workers "and the efficiency of their work," to inspect mission stations, buildings and facilities, and to secure definite information so that "wrongs" might be "corrected" and "stronger movements" launched in the field. He assured Prescott that his reports would be of great value to the central committee in Washington.²

Under South American Skies

Prescott and his wife left New York on December 11, 1915, in company with General Conference publishing secretary, N. Z. Town, and

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¹Ibid.

²A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, December 9, 1915, RG 11: Fld 1915-P, GCAR.
the president-elect of the South American Division, J. Montgomery. The voyage south was made on the **S. S. Verdi**. For Daisy, it was a first. The onset of winter initially made for rough seas, the **Verdi** was not the best of vessels, and Daisy was not the best of sailors. Not until the group had been en route for a week and had entered the calmer seas and warmer climes of the tropics was Daisy able to venture near the ship's dining room. The professor, now well accustomed to ocean travel, boasted that he had not missed a meal.¹

The sixteen-day voyage took the party to Rio de Janeiro. From there a day-long train journey took them to São Paulo where they were to meet their first appointments in connection with the Brazil Union Conference session. A workers' institute with evangelistic meetings for the public scheduled each evening, had been planned to run two weeks before the session.

As usual the professor seems to have carried the burden of the instruction. His theme was familiar—one that had been refined and buttressed during the Protestant years. He later explained to readers of the **Review** that the "general purpose" of the studies "was to show that the whole Bible is a revelation of Christ and his gospel, and that the third angel's message is the final presentation of that gospel before the setting up of the everlasting kingdom of God." Emphasis was on Christ as "an all-sufficient Saviour . . . Mediator . . . and High Priest," and the setting was the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Prescott had reason to believe that his

instruction was "a real help to the workers" and he was impressed
with how relevant this emphasis was to the mission of the South
American Division, whose population was overwhelmingly Roman
Catholic.1

Following the Brazilian Union Conference session at the end
of January, Prescott and his companions sailed further south to
Montevideo, across to Buenos Aires, and thence to La Plata,
Argentina, where the South American Union session had been scheduled.
Here they again participated in a workers' institute. A few days
later, on February 6, 1916, with Prescott officiating as temporary
president, the South American Division, with a membership of approxi-
mately 6,000 was inaugurated. A rewarding feature of the meeting for
Prescott was seeing many former students of his college presidency
days serving as leaders in the work force of the church.2

Campmeetings and general church gatherings followed during
the next month in Uruguay, Paraguay, and Southern Brazil before the
travelers made their way by cog railway over the Andes to a confer-
ence session at Concepcion in Chile. A week's journey by rail and
coastal steamer brought the Prescott's north to meetings at La Paz,
Bolivia, and from there to Lima, Peru. It was on the high plateaus
of Peru that he was able to visit the newly opened Indian work at
Lake Titicaca--another highlight of his visit to South America. The

11, 1916, p. 15.

2N. Z. Town, "Organization of the South American Division
Conference," RH, May 18, 1916, p. 11. W. W. Prescott to A. W. Kelly,
August 1, 1916, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--K, GCAr.
day-long ride on horseback for the last part of the journey was rather trying for the sixty-year-old professor, but he enjoyed the almost royal welcome accorded him by the mission's recent converts. How well his sermons were received after they had been translated twice—first into Spanish and then into the Indian dialect—he was not sure, but he was impressed by the response of the people to the work that local superintendent, F. A. Stahl, was doing. He spent several days visiting church groups and meeting with local government people.¹

Having visited and inspected the church's work right around the South American continent, Prescott returned to Buenos Aires in May for the first important committee meetings of the new organization. Plans were laid for strengthening and enlarging the work. That completed, he sailed for New York in late June, taking with him a great burden for the work in South America. He was encouraged by the opportunities for rapidly expanding the work. The voyage home, however, reminded him of the sober reality of the continuing war and the difficulties for mission work that it presented. The vessel on which he was sailing was trailed for some time by a German submarine. He was thankful no hostilities occurred.²

An extensive campmeeting itinerary had been planned for him on his return to Washington in August. In the months that followed,  


he reported on the missions he had just visited and sought diligently for workers who might be sent to alleviate the desperate shortages and to fill the many calls to open missions in new areas. His correspondence indicates that he had developed warm friendships with the missionaries in South America. He felt strongly obligated to recruit the best workers available to assist them in their work. Much of the remainder of 1916 was spent on this task along with committee work at the Annual Council and a visit to the Cuban mission field in late December.¹

More Literary Work

Although administrative duties were once again Prescott's major concern, he still maintained a keen interest in scholarship and the Washington publishing house continued to seek the benefit of it. Less than a month after the professor returned from his tour of South America, E. R. Palmer, then the manager of the Review and Herald, wrote of his reluctance to give Prescott up "entirely to the General Conference." He explained that there was "work developing all the time on which we need your criticism and help." Palmer expressed the hope that he might get Prescott back to the Review and Herald office again even if only on part-time basis with the professor sitting "like the Dutchman, with one leg on both sides of the fence." Within a year Palmer achieved his objective.²

In the meantime, Prescott continued to serve as an informal resident theologian. Repeatedly he received requests for help: to explain a passage of Scripture, to give his reasons for his view of "the daily" or the 1,260 year prophecy of Dan 7, to verify some historical statement or some claim made in church literature, or to express his opinion on a book to be used as a text for denominational schools. Editors of the church papers also continued to ask him to write articles on the papacy. He still carried a burden for truthfulness and accuracy in the publications and continued to be distressed when writers made exaggerated or inaccurate statements in their articles or advocated interpretations of prophecy that were not correct. Informally, he appointed himself as a watchdog to ensure that the editors of the church did not relax on the matter.\(^1\)

For example, in May 1917 he wrote his friend Oscar Tait, editor of the Signs of the Times, about an article he considered particularly misleading. "I presume," he began, "you would thank me more for keeping still than for writing. But I occasionally feel it would be a relief to express myself concerning some of the statements that appeared in the church papers." \(^1\)

\(^1\)W. W. Prescott to W. E. Howell, May 6, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--H; W. W. Prescott to W. W. Straw, August 2, 1916; W. W. Prescott to H. A. Swank, August 7, 1916, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--S; W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, November 23; A. O. Tait to W. W. Prescott, December 1, 1916, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--T, GCAr. A particularly sore point for Prescott was the continued references in the church papers to Josiah Litch's prediction about the downfall of Turkey on August 11, 1840. Prescott had done a great deal of research on the question and had presented his findings to the General Conference committee. A committee with very good "conservative" credentials had apparently worked with him and arrived at the same conclusions. Prescott felt that he had more than adequately demonstrated both the date and the event to be incorrect. It was Mrs. White's apparent endorsement of the prophecy that made some reluctant to yield the point even in the face of seemingly overwhelming evidence.
made by your contributors. . . ." After explaining why he thought the article was so disturbing he concluded: "It is exceedingly annoying to me to have our publications allow such unhistorical statements, and such a perversion of facts, to appear in them. . . ." He earnestly solicited Tait's help in preventing the appearance of such articles.  

1 Somewhat chagrined, Tait replied that he thought it was almost hopeless for individuals to try to change the general trend of denominational statements. What was needed was some opportunity for general study of the questions by all the leading men of the church. 

A little later the professor wrote in a more cordial vein to C. B. Haynes, who had published an article in the Watchman on the papacy. "I know that you desire to state the facts as they are and I am writing this letter by way of suggestion." Again he asserted that it was not right to speak of the Pope attaining any special prominence in A.D. 538, but that that year was a rather humiliating one for him. Haynes thanked the professor for the helpful corrective and asked that he continue to write when he noticed other matters of the kind. Prescott's correspondence with a non-Adventist university professor offering a suggestion for a correction in the professor's newly published book was likewise received cordially and with

1 W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, May 6, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--T, GCAr. On this occasion, Prescott protested against a writer stating that the Papacy changed the Sabbath in the fourth century, while not rising to power and greatness until the middle of the sixth century. He asserted that the events of 538 actually marked "a most humiliating stage in the history of the papacy." He argued that the article should have been much more careful.

2 A. O. Tait to W. W. Prescott, May 28, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--T, GCAr.
Alexander Flick, a professor of history at Syracuse University, New York, had unknowingly used a spurious church document in one of his arguments in his book entitled, *The Rise of the Medieval Church*. He was grateful for Prescott's suggestion and the evidence he supplied.

Others were not so impressed by Prescott's efforts. For example, in 1920 Prescott wrote to A. W. Spaulding then editor of *The Watchman Magazine* expressing surprise that Spaulding would publish an article advocating the "old view" that Turkey was the "King of the North" of Dan 11. His half-satirical letter apparently stung Spaulding who appealed to Magan of Loma Linda to come to his defense, sending the latter a copy of his own reply to Prescott. Magan, not fully persuaded on the merits of either view thought nonetheless that Spaulding's reply to "the great Professor" was a masterpiece and was amused at Spaulding's boldness in addressing "the Educational Dean Emeritus of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination" so frankly. He congratulated him on the way he had "done up the great authority on Theology." Apparently Prescott's aristocratic manner sometimes limited his effectiveness.


2. In his letter to Magan, Spaulding quoted some lines from Tennyson to express his feelings about Prescott.

"Who shall call me ungentle, unfair;
I longed so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,"
Prescott obviously enjoyed his new work which provided him with a pleasing variety of responsibilities. There was the occasional dark spot though. While he was in South America, his long time friend Homer Salisbury died. It was possibly because of Salisbury's scholarly aptitudes and the fact that he shared Prescott's point of view on many matters that Prescott received the news of his death with great dismay. While studying at Battle Creek College in the early 1890s, Salisbury had been a stenographer for Prescott. After teaching in South Africa for three years, he had studied Hebrew for a year in London and had subsequently served as head of some church colleges. He had supported Prescott in the controversy on "the daily" and worked on the revisions of Great Controversy. The two had been kindred spirits. Prescott later told Salisbury's wife that her husband had "seemed like a son" to him. He stated that it was most difficult to reconcile himself to the loss.1

By March 1917, the professor was quite heavily loaded with

And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare."

The interpretation of Dan 11 that Prescott favored became the accepted one in the church. Prescott seems to have been oblivious to the fact that his manner was perceived as "lordly" or "British." This style apparently made it difficult for some to relate warmly to him—particularly for the Irish P. T. Magan. W. W. Prescott to A. W. Spaulding, November 18, 1920; A. W. Spaulding to W. W. Prescott, November 22, 1920; A. W. Spaulding to P. T. Magan, November 23, 1920; P. T. Magan to A. W. Spaulding, November 29, 1920; P. T. Magan Papers, Loma Linda University Library Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loma Linda, California.

1W. W. Prescott to Mrs. Salisbury, June 1, 1916, RG 17: Fld 1916-17-Unfiled, GCAr. Salisbury had drowned when the Persia, the ship on which he was traveling to India, was torpedoed in the Mediterranean. "Memorial Service for H. R. Salisbury," RH, February 17, 1916, p. 15.
literary work. His writing included completing work on a series of Sabbath School lessons, developing a series of articles for the *Signs of the Times*, and preparing manuscript for a book of his own. In May the General Conference committee released him to the Review and Herald during the summer to enable him to finish the work of revising *Facts for the Times* and *Helps to Bible Study*. Although the professor anticipated that the work would take him six to twelve months, his schedule was interrupted in mid-course when an urgent call came from the Asiatic Division of the church for help in providing in-service training for ministerial workers. Prescott, as an educator and field secretary of the General Conference, seemed a logical choice. The General Conference committee recommended that he respond positively to the request.  

CHAPTER XIX

"INSTITUTING"--AT HOME AND ABROAD

When Prescott served as the educational secretary in the 1890s, the training of the ministry for the church had been one of his major concerns. As previously noted, his leadership in developing the winter Bible schools and regular college Bible classes at Battle Creek College was motivated by a conviction that the ministry needed to be more adequately prepared. Of particular concern to the professor at that time was the need for ministers who could present Christ as the center of their preaching. In the intervening years, although his labors had been devoted primarily to editorial and administrative work, he had not lost this burden.

During his visit to South America in 1916 he was impressed anew with the need for a more adequately prepared ministry. He observed that in his meetings with the ministers and in his private conversations with them he had learned that while they were able clearly to present and defend the doctrines of the church, they were not able "so to present these subjects as actually to convert the unsaved." He felt that their training should have prepared them to present the doctrines of the church "as the saving gospel for this time that those who hear the message, even though they hear but one

\[\text{\footnotesize See p. 123 above.}\]

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discourse, shall yet hear a message of salvation which will both warn and save." In Prescott's view, true Christocentric, salvific preaching was still sadly lacking in the ministry. In his presentations at the workers' meetings he had attempted to correct this lack by helping the workers develop a new approach in their evangelism. He felt he had been successful at least with some.¹

Still feeling "quite strongly" about the matter on his return to Washington, he expressed himself at length in a letter to Frederick Griggs, General Conference educational secretary. After presenting the problem as he saw it, he suggested two plans of study whereby prospective ministers could be taught Bible so that they would be thoroughly familiarized with the doctrines of the church and at the same time be taught how to present each of the distinctive beliefs as a revelation of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."²

In a further effort to remedy the lack, Prescott began to prepare a book manuscript that would set out his ideas in more detail. Published in tentative form in 1919 at the request of the Bible and History conference of that year, his Doctrine of Christ was designed to serve in a more permanent form as a textbook for Bible classes in colleges and seminaries. It was republished in 1920.³

¹W. W. Prescott to F. Griggs, July 26, 1916, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--G, GCAr.

²Ibid. The nine-page letter was circulated by Griggs around the Bible departments of the various training schools. See A. J. Johnson to H. C. Lacey, July 1, 1917; O. A. Johnson to W. W. Prescott, July 1, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--10, GCAr.

Prescott also discussed the matter at the closing exercises of the Washington Missionary College in mid-1917. In the annual commencement address, he quite pointedly raised the question as to whether the educational work was carrying out the plan for which it was first established. In the light of his continuing burden over the matter, it seemed quite natural for the General Conference committee to turn to him for help when in May 1917 the church leaders in the Asiatic Division asked for assistance in providing in-service education for its ministry. Besides, he was already somewhat acquainted with that field having spent some time there in 1907.¹

Months earlier, in 1916, as Daniells himself was en route to China for a visit, he had expressed serious misgivings about the present leadership in that field and lamented that the brethren had not given more serious attention to Prescott's reports and recommendations after his previous visit to the field.² He suggested that

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¹W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, May 17, 1917; W. W. Prescott to O. Montgomery, September 2, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-7--Unfiled, GCAR. GCC Min, June 29, 1917. The Asiatic Division at the time included the Australasian territories as well as the Far Eastern territory. Its membership was 10,000 and its 1,500 strong worker force included 500 ministers. Many of the Chinese ministers, because of circumstances, had received very little ministerial training. See A. G. Daniells, "An Impressive Farewell," RH, October 4, 1917, p. 2; I. H. Evans, "The South China Union Conference," RH, March 6, 1919, p. 7.

²Daniells was apparently alluding to Prescott's extensive analysis of the situation in the Far Eastern field in 1907. He remarked that the Lord had given Prescott "a clear insight into conditions and a feasible plan for the upbuilding of the cause" (A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, November 12, 1916, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--D. SCAR).
perhaps the brethren would have been wiser had they appointed Prescott to take charge of the field. "I am convinced that you are blessed with a large executive ability. ... I feel that the interests of the cause are safe in your hands. ..." Daniell thought that perhaps Prescott could have "given more time and thought" to this aspect of the church work. Now opportunity was provided for that. Daniell intended Prescott to give counsel and guidance to the Asiatic Division leadership as well as conduct training sessions. Prescott agreed to work in the division for a two-year period.¹

On September 19, 1917, at a campmeeting in Takoma Park, the professor and his wife were given an "impressive" public farewell, and on September 27 they sailed from Vancouver. En route they visited Japan, where Prescott expected to conduct his first institute, but apparently this was postponed. By November 1 he was in China participating in Division committee meetings and giving his first lectures. The program outlined for him ensured that he would be busy. A dozen or more institutes were scheduled for 1918 with a number of Union Conference sessions as well. By the end of March, the sixty-two-year-old professor was already feeling the pressure. He had given an average of forty studies at each two-week program.²

Later institutes took him to Manchuria, Korea, Japan, Shanghai, Canton, Hankow, and Singapore. Besides these institutes

¹Far Eastern (Asiatic) Division Committee Minutes, September 2, 1917, Series A, 1917-18, GCAr.

and conference sessions, he was to spend three months during the summer developing literature for the denominational presses. In addition, in order to "further the development of strong evangelists and other workers," six weeks were set aside for him to give special instruction to the ministerial classes at the China Mission Training school. According to C. C. Crisler, the division secretary, by the time the tour of duty was over, nearly every evangelist and Bible worker in China, both native and foreign, would have sat at the professor's feet.

It was not easy work. A great deal of the traveling involved in meeting his appointments was in somewhat primitive conveyances. Furthermore, conditions at times were quite dangerous. Most of the time Prescott was in China, a civil war in the interior between the north and the south was causing havoc. Thieves and bandits were a frequent threat. Also causing concern and making conditions difficult was an outbreak of pneumonic plague. I. H. Evans commented to a friend, "It was a bit hard for him and he put up with many privations but he did it courageously and was always most happy and content with his conditions."

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1Far Eastern (Asiatic) Division Committee Minutes, February 11, July 31, 1918, Series A, 1817-18, GCAr. Prescott asserted that he was so busy he had no time to write articles for the Review and found it difficult to keep up any correspondence apart from the letters he wrote to Daniells. W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, March 21, 1918, RG 21: General Files: Fld 1918--Prescott, GCAr. Unfortunately, the presidential correspondence for this period is not extant.


The greatest need that Prescott perceived in the field was a spiritual rejuvenation of the foreign work force. He felt that administratively "a tremendous machine" had been created which required the time and effort of many to keep it running and consequently evangelism was relegated to secondary importance. He endeavored to encourage more aggressive evangelistic effort and stressed the need for Christocentric preaching. He pointed out that with a Christocentric focus the Adventist "message" was much more relevant to the people of China. Prescott was apparently quite sensitive to the needs of the hearers in these large new mission fields that confronted the church. He realized that "the gospel" must be the essence of the proclamation of the church to these non-Christian masses.

According to D. E. Rebok, a missionary to China who had preceded Prescott by just a few months, the foreign workers greatly appreciated the professor's teaching, but for numbers of the national workers his instruction was "too deep." He apparently found it difficult to tailor his teaching to the comprehension level of the local people, and the translators struggled to find language to keep up with him. The more able Chinese workers, however, "fully appreciated

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1 W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, March 21, 1918, RG 21: General Files: F1d 1918--Prescott, GCAr. Concurring with Daniells' judgment he noted particularly that generally the administration lacked experience.

2 At the 1919 Bible Conference he reflected on his experience in China and asserted that non-Christian people could not be converted by proving to them such things as the Seventh-day Sabbath and mortal man. They needed to be converted to Christ. "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 3, 1919, AUHR.
The War Claims a Son

Prescott's presence in the Far East during 1918 meant that he was unable to attend the General Conference session held at San Francisco. It was the first he had missed in thirty years. He learned that he was re-appointed as field secretary of the General Conference, but he was hungry for news of what really went on behind the scenes. As a seasoned veteran he wrote to J. L. Shaw: "You know that what does not get into print is often the most interesting and sometimes the most significant." He hoped that Shaw would be able to give him the "inside information."  

The information that Shaw had to offer about the General Conference session was very meager and must have disappointed Prescott. What distressed him much more, however, was the news that Shaw had to bear concerning the professor's son, Lewis. In mid-1917 the United States had entered the war against Germany and a general draft for military service had been enacted by the government. Among the large numbers of Adventist young men that were called up were A. G. Daniels' son, Grosvenor, and several stenographers from the General Conference office. Lewis Prescott, who had graduated from the engineering course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in June 1915 was also eligible for military service. According to his

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2 W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, March 21, 1918, RG 21: General File: Fld 1918--Prescott, GCAR.
Father, he feared the draft and had no basis for exemption or discharge. He preferred, therefore, to choose his line of service rather than to take a chance on being sent to the trenches. On July 1, 1917, he had enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps of Canada and was in training camp in Toronto when his father left for the Far East. Sometime early in 1918 he was transferred to active duty in France.\(^1\)

In May, Shaw informed Prescott that Lewis had been listed in the Washington papers as missing in action. It was not known whether he had been taken as a prisoner of war or had been killed in action. For months Prescott lived with uncertainty, hearing nothing further about his son's whereabouts. Eventually, he began to give up hope of ever seeing him again. He related to Shaw that the news had been "a hard blow" and that at times he had found it "quite difficult" to go on with his work. Although he had feared such news from the time Lewis first enlisted, it made it no easier when the bad news actually came.\(^2\)

Apparently Prescott received no further word of his son's fate. The family gravestone in the Rock Creek cemetery in Washington, D.C., lists him as "Missing in France April 18, 1918." No specific

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\(^1\) J. L. Shaw to W. W. Prescott, May 9, 1918, RG 21: General File: Fld 1918--Prescott; W. W. Prescott to H. L. Moore, April 19, 1915, PC 21: PMRF Fld 1909-16--Personal; W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, Montgomery, September 2, 1917, RG 17: Fld 1916-17--Unfiled, GCAr.

\(^2\) It seems that Lewis had not remained an Adventist. According to the Washington Times, May 2, 1917, pp. 1, 7, he had a reputation in Takoma Park "on account of his daring and speed with a large Roadster which he drove." Prescott was distressed at Lewis' abrupt decision to enlist. He was also apparently burdened by the thought that his son might not have been spiritually ready to meet his untimely death. See W. A. Spicer to W. W. Prescott, June 25, 1918; W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, August 5, 1918, RG 21: General Files Fld 1918--Prescott, GCAr.
date of death is given. Once more death had broken what remained of
the professor's family circle. He felt the blow keenly. Added to
his sorrows of previous years it apparently tested his faith. At the
1919 Bible Conference in a candid moment, during a sermon on the
Christian life, he reflected on the experience. "I want to tell you
frankly my brethren . . . that I have had a tremendous struggle over
this matter [of surrender to the will of God] in the last year . . .
to submit to what has come to me. I know what it means. . . . But I
am thankful for the peace that does come. . . ." He added that the
loss of his son was still not easy to accept. "It is a struggle for
a man to die to self every day in the face of temptations and diffi­
culties and all that." But he was "thankful for the assurance of
victory." 2

The 1919 Bible Conference

After conducting his last institute at Singapore in March,
Prescott returned to the United States, arriving in Vancouver on
April 1, 1919. He had been in the Orient for eighteen months. 2 His
arrival in Washington on April 14 gave him very little time to get
settled at home before a busy round of meetings commenced. Two days
after his return an important educational convention began. This was

1 "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 11, 1919, AUHR.

2 Prescott appears to have curtailed his travels in the Far
East by some months because he wanted to be back in Washington for a
series of important meetings. He had originally planned to spend
some time in Australia on his way home. J. L. Shaw to W. W. Pres­
cott, March 23, 1919, RG 21: General Files: Fid 1919--Prescott, GCAr.
The last committee meeting he attended was on March 19. Far Eastern
(Asiatic) Division Committee Minutes, February 6, March 19, GCAr.
RH, March 27, 1919, p. 32; April 3, 1919, p. 32; April 24, 1919,
p. 32.

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followed by the important Spring Council of the General Conference in May--the first major administrative meeting after the cessation of the hostilities of World War I. Although the peace accords had not yet been signed, there were many important issues to be discussed.¹

The year 1919, it seems, was distinguished by conventions.² Following on the heels of the Spring Council came an evangelists' convention. This was followed by the first editorial convention the church had held (see fig. 19). At this latter meeting Prescott took a leading role and associated with Daniells in presiding over the discussions. Again, a number of the important issues that had arisen during Prescott's Protestant years were discussed and great emphasis was laid on the need for accuracy and carefulness in the church publications.³

Probably the most significant meetings of 1919, however, were the Bible Conference and the associated Bible and Teachers' Council. The meetings were held jointly,⁴ and Prescott played a prominent part in both. They are of particular interest because a verbatim transcript of most of the presentations and discussions affords an insight into the kind of themes the professor had been preaching and

¹ "The Spring Council," RH, May 1, 1919, p. 2; RH, May 3, 1919, p. 32.

² A "bookmens' convention" had also been held prior to the educational convention making a total of six such meetings at headquarters that year besides the spring and autumn councils.


⁴ The Bible and History Teachers' Council was held in the evenings during the Bible Conference and for twelve-days after the Bible Conference closed.
Fig. 19. Editorial Convention 1919. Picture shows many of Prescott's colleagues. Prescott is at left in front row.
WORKERS PRESENT AT THE FIRST EDITORIAL CONVENTION


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teaching in South America and in the Far East. They also throw
light on Prescott as a scholar and theologian and on an important
period in the theological development of the church.¹

For some time, church leaders in various quarters had felt
the need for a council of the Bible teachers, editors, and adminis­
trators. For a number of reasons (particularly the war situation),
the time had not seemed propitious. Steps had been taken to organize
a meeting in 1918, but these plans had been abandoned shortly before
the Council convened. Three weeks after Prescott's return from
China, the Spring Council decided to schedule the long-postponed
conference "at an early date." It also appointed Prescott to a com­
mittee (apparently as chairman) to plan for the topics to be dis­
cussed, the men to lead out, and the date of the conference.
Remembering Prescott's epoch-making educational convention in 1891
at Petoskey, Michigan, the committee suggested the same site again.
This plan proved unworkable and eventually the meetings were held
in Washington so the participants could have ready access to refer­
ence and library materials.²

The conference, with about sixty-five participants began July
1. The two main themes around which the topics were clustered were
Christology and prophetic interpretation. Generally mornings were

¹The 1,300-plus-page manuscript was discovered in the General
Conference Archives in 1974. See R. W. Olsen, "The 1919 Bible Con-
ference and Bible and History Teachers' Council," 1979, OF 2245a.
EGWRC-OC. Olsen's paper provides a very helpful and informative
introductory analysis of the meetings. Bert Haloviak also provides
excellent background on the conference in his paper, "In the Shadow
of the 'Daily': Background and Aftermath of the 1919 Bible and
History Teachers' Conference," 1979, GCAr.

²GCC Min, May 1, 4, 5, 23, 1919.

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devoted to presentations while discussion periods related to the presentations were scheduled for the afternoons. A number of leading writers and teachers had been selected to present papers, but Prescott was the most prominent speaker. He seems to have led out in twenty-four of the sixty-nine presentations or discussions and contributed largely in many other discussion periods.

The majority of Prescott's twenty-four presentations were on the person and work of Christ. They were apparently based on the manuscript he developed in 1917 and had used in the Far East. In order for the denomination to make its message truly Christocentric, Prescott argued, it first had to have a correct understanding of the Person of Christ. He insisted that Christ was truly God. Because Deity could not be conceived without eternity, Christ was therefore co-eternal with the Father. To say (as many Adventists did) that he had a beginning was to make him a dependent being and therefore not equal with the Father.

In suggesting that the denomination ought to be done with Arianism and adopt a more thorough scriptural trinitarian view of the Godhead, he received considerable criticism. Some wanted to maintain a punctiliar beginning for Christ and cited the subordination type texts of John in their defense. Although Prescott argued authoritatively from the Greek text citing arguments from grammar and


2"The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 6, 14, 1919, AUHR.
syntax, he had difficulty convincing some in his audience. Part of the problem was Prescott's difficulty in making absolutely clear what he meant on certain points. At times H. Camden Lacey was able to rephrase Prescott's thought to make the point more clearly. (Prescott struggled to effectively communicate his "deep" ideas to those who were not on his "wave length.) This seemed to be more so in technical theological discussions than in his devotional talks.\(^1\)

Apparently, anti-trinitarian sentiment among the leading thinkers of the church was still quite strong and the discussions produced considerable tension, even though pro-trinitarian ideas had been advocated in the church since 1896. The professor complicated matters by asking the rather sensitive question as to why the church should continue to circulate Smith's book *Daniel and The Revelation* when it taught Arianism. Prescott's plain speaking evidently created emotional barriers. At one point, Daniells had to interject and come to Prescott's defense. He suggested that the delegates not become "uneasy" because the subject they were studying was one that they could not fully comprehend. He asked that the stenographers discontinue transcribing the discussion temporarily. Endeavoring to lighten the tension he urged: Let's not get a bit nervous or scared. . . . Don't let the conservatives think that something is going to happen and the progressives get alarmed for fear it won't happen."\(^2\)

Prescott was not interested in correct doctrine for its own

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\(^1\) ibid. See pp.

\(^2\) "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 2, 6, 1919, AUHR.
sake. He viewed it as important because of its implications for the life and success of the church.

My purpose . . . will not be to present a theory about the Person of Christ but to come to a knowledge of him. . . . The centre of Christianity is not a doctrine but a Person. . . . The preaching of the Gospel is not to persuade people to agree with me in my theological views. The preaching of the gospel so far as I am concerned is to bring people into personal association with that person with whom I have fellowship.

A personal acquaintance with this Christ, therefore, was vital. In the ministry's study of Scripture and in its preaching, Christ should always be the focal point. Citing 1 Cor 15:1 and Rev 14, he asserted that "the Gospel," which equaled "the good news of his [God's] Son," was "the primary thing. Out of that will come all doctrines, all experiences." ¹

Illustrating his point further he commented on the experience of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch:

Suppose I were to fall in with a man and he says, "What does this mean?" and I try to find some outline of a sermon I preached last year on this subject, to explain it to him? No, that would not do. . . . It says [referring to Acts 8:35] beginning with that same scripture he preached unto him Jesus. Now that requires a life of study and prayer and living with the Book, and with the Person.

He hoped that this ideal would have "influence upon our method of Bible teaching in our schools." ²

The same emphasis characterized his seven presentations and discussions on the priesthood of Christ. In these sessions he particularly emphasized the practical and stressed that Christians

¹ "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 2, 10, 1919, AUHR.
² "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 3, 8, 1919, AUHR.
could have assurance. Victory over sin was possible as Christ ministered himself and the benefits of his atonement to the believer. Christ's gracious work of intercession was, in fact, the professor's major emphasis—an emphasis that contrasted somewhat with the usual Adventist stress on the judgment aspect of Christ's heavenly ministry. In making these points, Prescott often became passionate and his presentations tended to become sermons. Rich in Scripture quoted from memory, his preaching frequently moved his audience which responded repeatedly with united "amens."\(^2\)

Some, however, felt uncomfortable with Prescott's Christocentric emphasis and his stress on the indwelling of Christ. They felt it sounded too much like J. H. Kellogg's teaching. The suggestion that he was advocating "pantheistic" ideas rather upset the professor and provoked him to a rather emotional response. He was distressed that what he considered a vital distinction—the very Christocentric emphasis itself—should be so misunderstood. Many of the delegates, however, enjoyed Prescott's studies. At the conclusion of the conference, they voted a statement of appreciation "for

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\(^1\) "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 14, 1919. Prescott strongly emphasized the subjective side of Christian experience and the importance of the indwelling Christ. He saw Christ's mediatorial ministry as important in this regard. When discussing the experience of the last generation of believers living on earth at the time of the second advent, however, Prescott avoided the later Brinsmeadian understanding of sinless perfection by noting the continuing sinful nature of man and the primacy of justification. July 15, 1919, AUHR.

\(^2\) "The 1919 Bible Conference Transcript," July 3, 1919, AUHR. The passages of Scripture which Prescott quoted so readily were not the usual doctrinal proof texts but the rich Christological passages of the Pauline letters such as Phil 1:15-18, Eph 3:9-12, and 1 Cor 1:23-24. Prescott began his series on the priesthood of Christ on July 13.
the strong positive lessons on the character and ministry of Christ."

A recommendation that Prescott's materials be published in book form was also voted and shortly afterwards it appeared in print in two volumes. In its eighteen major sections, the *Doctrine of Christ* presented Adventist doctrines from a Christocentric viewpoint. But the emphasis was on Christ. Thirteen chapters dealt with His Person and His work. The doctrines were treated as an outgrowth of that. The two volumes represented the distillation of an approach Prescott had been refining since the momentous events following the 1888 General Conference. This was the approach he had first experimented with in his public meetings in the Opera House in Battle Creek twenty-four years earlier and then shortly afterwards in Australia where it had thrilled Mrs. White. It had become his life-long burden.¹

Prescott's purpose was clear. Christ was the unifying figure of Scripture. He formed the central core and provided the continuity of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Prescott, therefore, simply wanted students "to lay hold upon the truth as it is in Jesus."²

According to L. E. Froom, who worked as an editor in China when Prescott visited that country, some teachers thought that Prescott's "lofty concept" was like "a great breath of fresh air." Others, however, "did not grasp his goal or sense his objectives." Many who felt his book was getting away from the traditional emphasis


²Prescott, *Doctrine of Christ*, passim.

³Ibid., p. 3.
objected to it. These even questioned the need to revise and revamp the church's presentation of its teachings. To do so would be to meddle with what the pioneers had established.¹

Prescott's approach, "misunderstood," "derided," and "strongly opposed" by quite a number, failed to "sweep the field." In Froom's view, the "underlying principles" of the 1888 controversy were still struggling for acceptance. Prescott was obviously "ahead of his time--many years ahead." Nevertheless, there were those who began to grasp "his great objective." Among others, Daniells and E. D. Dick, later to become a president of the Theological Seminary, caught his vision. The professor's endeavor was therefore not in vain. The seeds were sown and would bear harvest later--though Prescott would not live to see it.²

Prescott also made four presentations on prophetic interpretation: two studies on Matt 24, in which he suggested the idea of double and repeated fulfillment, and two presentations on the interpretation of Dan 11. In addition he contributed extensively to the discussion of papers on prophecy presented by others. His emphasis in this area was his long-time concern that the church writers avoid bending and misrepresenting the facts of history in order to fit a pre-determined interpretation of a prophecy.


²Froom suggests that because the book adopted the "Mediation-of-Christ view of the 'Daily'" it was dismissed by many. He also suggests that the debate over "the daily" which continued to polarize the church during this period did so along the same lines as the 1888 controversy. The importance which Froom attached to the book is indicated by the fact that he devotes ten pages to a close analysis of its contents. Ibid., pp. 348, 377, 380-91.
Consideration of the context of the biblical passage, he argued, would avoid many of the problems, as would a realization that even in the prophetic passages the central theme of Scripture was Christ and his kingdom. Such an approach would avoid such misleading interpretation as making Nahum's chariots apply to modern railway engines.

At the Bible and History Teachers' Council that continued after the Bible Conference, Prescott gave two presentations on the teaching of history in denominational schools and participated rather fully in two lengthy discussions on "The Use of the Spirit of Prophecy in Our Teaching of Bible and History" and the "Inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy as Related to the Inspiration of the Bible." In these discussions Prescott contributed by helping to focus the point under discussion by referring to particular experiences of his own or by citing specific cases in point. For example, when the issue of corrections in Mrs. White's writings was being discussed, he cited the example of a significant change in Great Controversy—the adding of the world "alone" which changed the interpretation of "Babylon" from excluding the Roman church to

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1 Along with Lacey, M. C. Wilcox, F. W. Field, and Daniells, Prescott acknowledged the principle that prophecies may have repeated fulfillments. For example, Antiochus Epiphanes could be seen as a fulfillment of Dan 7 as "a wheel within a wheel" (1919 Bible Conference transcript, July 2, 3, 1919, AUHR). On Dan 11, Prescott favored the "new view" which saw the King of the North as the papacy rather than Turkey. See W. W. Prescott to L. E. Froom [October 1922], PC 21: LEF(1), Notebook A, p. 127, GCAr.

2 The two discussions are published in Spectrum 10:1, May 1979, pp. 25-57. The subject of the Spirit of Prophecy was also discussed extensively at an earlier meeting on July 16, 1919.
meaning that church "largely and primarily."  

While vigorously asserting his personal confidence in Mrs. White's gift, he stressed that her writings were to be placed "under" the authority of Scripture and that they were not verbally inspired by which he seems to have meant inerrant. Questions from other delegates at the meeting indicated that several were rather uncomfortable with this view, which M. E. Kern labeled as "liberal." However, Daniells supported Prescott's position as being true to the facts and urged the delegates not to misrepresent the professor.  

1 Ibid.  

2 Prescott indicated that he believed in the "verbal inspiration of Scripture but not the "verbal inspiration" of Mrs. White. The term "verbal inspiration" seems to be a misleading one. Some erroneously understood the term to mean a process of mechanical dictation. Prescott seems to have meant simply that inspiration safeguarded the words of Scripture. One word or expression may be changed for another and grammatical changes may be made but the words as finally given had been safeguarded by the Holy Spirit. Therefore inspiration was verbal. (That is, "verbal inspiration" referred not to the process but the result--God gave Scripture in words, not mathematical symbols, paintings, or music.) Because inspiration safeguarded the words, Scripture was therefore without error. In affirming "verbal inspiration," Prescott was really just affirming the "inerrancy" of Scripture. In this he seemed to be in the mainstream of Adventist teaching. 

Since its earliest days Adventist teaching seems to have adopted the view that Scripture was inerrant in its autographs. This was the approach of both Moses Hull and D. M. Canright in their widely read The Bible from Heaven. Canright's version (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press, 1878) is a plagiarized version of Moses Hull's book of the same title published in 1863. F. M. Wilcox, longtime editor of the Review, asserted that "verbal inspiration" was the historic view of the church. "In my judgment, the historical teaching of the denomination is in favor of verbal inspiration of the Testimonies. This is the position I have always taken myself with reference to the subject. Indeed, I hold to verbal inspiration of the Bible." Only in this way, asserted Wilcox, could the "thoughts" be safeguarded. F. M. Wilcox to L. E. Froom, August 5, 1928, RG 38: LEF(1) Fld "Tests of Fellowship," GCAR. Haskell likewise affirmed that he had believed in "Verbal Inspiration" of Scripture and Mrs. White all his ministry. S. N. Haskell to I. H. Evans, September 29, 1915, RG 11: Fld 1906-H, GCAR. Those who have asserted that the
It was probably the sensitive nature of the discussions on the Spirit of Prophecy and the emotion-laden "Eastern question" that persuaded Daniells to keep the transcript of the meeting in the General Conference vault. Originally it had been intended that the transcript be published as a formal record of the meeting and as an education tool--a practice that had been followed with the series of educational conventions and had proved successful in bringing some uniformity of thought among the denominational educators. For this reason, apparently, Prescott favored the publication of the transcript. Others favored a limited circulation but Daniells' suggestion prevailed.

Reactions to the Bible Conference were varied. F. M. Wilcox has never officially taught "Verbal Inspiration" have misunderstood the term to mean mechanical dictation.

Just a few weeks prior to the 1919 Bible Conference, an interdenominational "Conference of Christian Fundamentals" had been held at Philadelphia. The meeting was featured prominently in the Review. F. M. Wilcox reported favorably on the positions taken at this meeting, and C. P. Bollman wrote an article that appeared in the Review during the Adventists' own Bible Conference asserting the Adventist church's support of the "most important" position or "fundamental" affirmed by the Philadelphia meeting--a position that declared that Scripture was "inerrant" "as originally given" (F. M. Wilcox, "A Conference On Christian Fundamentals," RH, June 19, 1919, p. 2; C. P. Bollman, "Christian Fundamentals," RH, July 3, 1919, p. 5). L. A. Smith noted approvingly the following year that a second meeting of the "Conference of Fundamentals" had again affirmed its position on "verbal inspiration" ("The Chicago Conference of Christian Fundamentals," RH, July 15, 1920, p. 2).

Because of this strong position on "inerrancy," the church had difficulty acknowledging that Mrs. White could make mistakes, not just in poor choice of words or in expression but in thoughts--as Prescott had pointed out with regard to the revisions in Great Controversy. For further discussion of the matter see G. M. Valentine, "A Response to Two Explanations of W. W. Prescott's 1915 Letter," AUHR. The whole subject of the history of the theory of inspiration in the Adventist church warrants a major study.

thought that the major accomplishment of the meeting was simply that it provided opportunity for the brethren to exchange views in a spirit of openness. He wrote to W. C. White that a "good brotherly feeling" prevailed even though each delegate was probably just as persuaded of his own views afterward as before, and "while the brethren differed, they differed kindly." N. J. Waldorf, perceiving himself as part of a conservative minority, worried that too much had been conceded to the progressives. He felt that the advocates of the new views had generally prevailed. According to him, many of the delegates had decided to stop teaching the old view on such issues as "the daily," the "144,000," the "Last Generation," "the King of the North," "The Seven Trumpets," and "the Lamb-like Beast." Yet Waldorf himself was resolved "to stand by the old landmarks, sink or swim." He claimed that along with F. M. Wilcox and B. G. Wilkinson, he had "dissented from the Prescott-Lacey theology" and was glad of the opportunity to defend the "fundamental pillars of prophetical landmarks."

J. S. Washburn, who did not attend the conference, conceived it as a "Council of Darkness," a "Diet of Doubts," and a fulfillment of Mrs. White's prophecy concerning the Omega of Apostasy. At the General Conference session in 1922, he circulated a pamphlet containing a vitriolic attack on Daniells and blamed him for supporting Prescott and his "new theology" that shifted prophetic dates and undermined the Spirit of Prophecy. The 1919 conference over which

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Daniells presided was, in Washburn's opinion, the "crowning act in
the program of doubt and darkness and criticism" that had been
"enveloping Washington." Quite a number in the church apparently
gave credence to Washburn's charges. His pamphlet, and another in
similar vein by C. E. Holmes, created great difficulties and embar­
rassment for Daniells at the 1922 General Conference session at San
Francisco. The highly politicized elections that resulted marred the
conference and gave rise to some sensational reports in local news­
papers.

In a special "executive" session from which all non-delegates
were excluded, Washburn's and Holmes' pamphlets were labelled as
"unChristian propaganda," and the two brethren and their supporters
were rebuked. Their efforts "to undermine the influence and destroy
the good reputation of honored officials" in the church were offici­
ally repudiated. Although Daniells was replaced as General
Conference president by W. A. Spicer, his character and his loyalty
to the church were vindicated. He was appointed as General Confer­
ence secretary and Prescott was reappointed as field secretary.²

The winds of the political tempest at San Francisco scarcely
touched Prescott. At the time he was thousands of miles away in
Australia safely serving as president of Avondale College and

¹ J. S. Washburn to A. G. Daniells, May 1, 1922 (An Open
Letter), AUHR.

² C. E. Holmes to A. G. Daniells, May 1, 1922, AUHR. GC
Bulletin, May 23, 1922, p. 224; May 24, 1922, pp. 228, 240; May 25,
1922, pp. 247, 248.
conducting workers' institutes in the field. Australia conveniently provided him refuge as it had done twenty-six years earlier.\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}GCC Min, April 11, 1921.
PART FIVE

1919-1944
CHAPTER XX

STOP-GAP PRESIDENT

In the months that followed the 1919 Bible Conference, Prescott continued his program of field visitation, campmeetings, Union Conference sessions, college weeks of prayer, ministerial institutes in North America, and committee work at headquarters. Not given to leaving blank spaces in his timetable, he also found time for writing, taking opportunity between meetings to revise his Doctrines of Christ—a second edition of which was published as one volume late in 1920. Other literary work during this period involved the completing of a fifty-two week series of adult Sabbath School lessons the professor had been asked to prepare for 1921. The task provided him opportunity to continue to promote his all-absorbing theme, this time with the growing membership of the world church as his students. The lessons were on the person and the work of Christ.

As Prescott passed his sixty-fifth birthday—a time when most other men were considering the attractiveness of retirement—he continued to labor. His capacity for strenuous work was apparently

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1 GCC Min, March 1, April 26, 1902. RH, April 29, 1920, p. 7; January 1, 1920, p. 32; October 28, 1920, p. 75.

2 The lessons were used during the four quarters of 1921. Eight years earlier Prescott had written a twenty-six-week series on the Mediation of Christ.
undiminished, although he found that his advancing years made him more susceptible to its strains and stresses. For example, he found it a "hard pull" to keep up with the demanding preaching schedule, committee work, and the many hours of personal interviews expected of him at campmeetings in Canada during the summer of 1920. He found the challenge and the stimulation of this field work enjoyable, particularly if he could balance it with periods of less strenuous labor such as writing and editing at headquarters. In January 1921, the Review and Herald board sought his services for editorial work. The General Conference committee concurred and it was planned that he should "devote a large portion" of the year to "literary work." 

If the advancing years had predisposed the professor to become weary a little more quickly, they had not diminished his intellectual vigor or his keen judgment. These with his wide experience in church affairs meant that he had a continuing contribution to make in leadership roles in the church. Prescott's colleagues recognized this, for in his sixty-fifth year they asked him to serve again in educational leadership. Thus 1921 saw him return to the college campus to serve as a stop-gap college president and Bible teacher. During the next thirteen years, three of the institutions he had been intimately associated with more than a quarter

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1 Prescott often preached two and three times a day. Addressing campmeeting congregations of 500 or 1,000 and more, without a public address system, required robust health and considerable energy. W. W. Prescott to W. A. Spicer, June 14, 18, July 1, 14, 1920, RG 21: General Files: Fld 1920--Prescott, GCAr.

2 GCC Min, January 26, 1921.
of a century earlier benefitted from his labor.\footnote{Seven of the thirteen years were spent on college campuses. These included one at Cooranbong, four at Lincoln, and two at Berrien Springs.}

In Australia Again

One of the explicit purposes that brought C. H. Watson, the president of the Australasian Union Conference, to the 1921 Spring meeting of the General Conference committee in Washington was the need to secure help for the ailing educational work in Australia. According to the Australasian Record, he came with a request for the "strongest available leadership." His quest was not in vain. Although five days earlier Prescott had been asked to take the presidency of Oakwood College as an emergency measure, on April 11 the General Conference committee reversed this action and recommended instead that Prescott go to Australia for two years. He was to take the principalship of the Australasian Missionary College and to help strengthen the general educational program. The Record was enthusiastic about Watson's success. It introduced the professor to the Australian church membership as one who "stands amongst the foremost educational leaders within our ranks," and who had had "many years of broad experience in the education of youth."\footnote{Record, June 27, 1921, p. 8. GCC Min, April 6, 11, 1921.}
Again in 1919, the Union Conference felt it necessary to take action to dismiss "the management of those departments through which commercialism was creeping into the College." Frequent changes in the principalship of the school had heightened the difficulties.\footnote{Record, February 21, 1921, p. 6. By the time Prescott arrived in 1921, Avondale, during its twenty-four-year existence had been served by ten principals. D. E. Neufeld, ed., Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia s.v. "Avondale College."}

Apparently, there was a lack of experienced leadership in the Australasian Union to whom the brethren felt they could entrust the institution. H. Kirk, who was asked to serve as principal in 1921, was a man of integrity and very conscientious, but he had had very little teaching experience and was not much older than a good many of his students. He found it difficult therefore to impose discipline. According to one of the students at the time, there was considerable "rowdiness" in the dormitories.\footnote{Interview with Mrs. E. A. Reye, November 20, 1981. According to Kirk's daughter, Mrs. Dorothy J. Robson, Kirk had had only canvassing experience before being called to teach at Avondale a few years prior to 1921. Mrs. Dorothy J. Robson to G. M. Valentine, April 21, 1981.}

An economic depression in Australia further complicated the situation. Tuition fees had been raised for the 1921 school year in order to offset an increasing operating deficit, and new financial arrangements and enrollment regulations had been established. Apparently, regular students were not to be remunerated for the twelve hours per week of manual labor they were expected to perform, and a limit was set on the number of students who could earn their fees by working extra hours. Consequently, enrollment dropped by...
about one-third during 1921 and the school year ended with a large deficit (£2,156).  

Prescott and his wife left Vancouver in early August and arrived in Sydney three weeks later. They were accompanied by William's sister, Belle, and her minister husband, A. J. Bristol. For Prescott, work started almost immediately. The very afternoon of his arrival he was drawn into committee meetings at headquarters. The next day he visited the Avondale campus where he addressed the student body. He was impressed by the "marked transformation" that had taken place on the estate in the twenty-six years since he had first visited. "Only Dora Creek looks the same," he reported to W. C. White, who had accompanied him on that first occasion in 1895. He was also delighted to meet folk who had heard him preach on his first visit. But there was little time for nostalgia.

In only a matter of days after his arrival, he was appointed by the Union committee as education secretary of the Union Conference. One of his first suggestions was to hold a teachers' convention during the summer vacation. The program was his to organize.

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1 J. E. Fulton to J. L. Shaw, December 11, 1922, RG 31: Fld 19230-Aust. Union Conf.," GCAR. Record, July 26, 1920, p. 5; December 27, 1920, p. 5; March 21, 1921, p. 3; April 4, 1921, p. 3. AMC 3d Min, December 22, 1921, February 22, 1923. In 1920, the school's enrollment was 247. In 1921 it dropped to approximately 140.

2 Prescott's mother died in March 1920. His sister, who had cared for her, was now free to travel abroad. Furthermore, her husband had suffered a nervous breakdown. They planned that their stay in Australia would enable him to convalesce. Record, August 21, 1922, p. 3.

3 Prescott's first meeting with the college board was on September 4, 1921. W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, December 19, 1921, EGWRC-DC.
He was also expected at the Queensland and South New South Wales campmeetings in September and October. Graduation at the college followed in November. It was a busy end of year. By the beginning of the new school year he was quite familiar with his new responsibilities.¹

In the twenty-six years since he had last served as college president, Prescott's views on education had not altered much. Neither had his style materially changed. He still saw education as the handmaiden of religious reform. The purpose of the education system of the church was primarily to provide it with workers who could proclaim its message of restoration and reform. The educational preparation of workers, therefore, needed above all to be Christocentric.²

He still considered the daily chapel period as the president's domain, and he utilized it to inculcate Christian principles in his students. A special feature of chapel that students enjoyed was "a fifteen minute summary of important world events and their bearing on our allotted task." Prescott kept himself informed (he had the Springfield Republican sent to him from America) and he intended to keep his students informed as well.³

Facilities at the college received Prescott's early attention. Remembering his earlier experiences with Avondale's flies,}

¹Record, December 26, 1921, p. 4; W. W. Prescott to W. C. White, December 19, 1921, EGWRC-DC.

²Record, December 26, 1921, p. 4.

³Record, June 26, 1922, p. 5; W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, December 18, 1922, RG 31: Fld 1923--P, GCAr.
He saw to it that his own house was fitted with fly screens. Further renovations to provide accommodation for his extended family were also necessary. New furniture and floor coverings for the principal's office and the chapel were a must, and facilities for teaching cooking, sewing, and hydrotherapy were essential. The board complied. What concerned Prescott most, however, was the college's need for a new kitchen and a new sewerage system. The professor was particularly distressed at the traditional Australian non-flushing toilets. Requests for both were approved by the board and a request was made to the Union committee for funds. Apparently the proposals were quite ambitious and although Prescott argued his case strongly, the Union committee informed the board that no money was available. The professor did not give up, however, and before he left Australia two years later, both projects had been completed.

Operating the institution economically presented the principal with serious difficulty. Some reductions in faculty helped, but the major problem appeared to be the non-profitability of the college industries. While the college boarding department was making a profit, the farm, poultry business, and bakery were piling up sizeable losses. The farm was the worst. According to Prescott, it was barely meeting running expenses during the season when returns were coming in. He was unhappy with the generally unsatisfactory way

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1 These measures were approved shortly after his arrival. AMC Bd Min undated but between September 4 and November 9, 1921.

2 AMC Bd Min, December 22, 1921; January 3, February 1, 1922.

3 Total losses for the three industries for 1921 were £1,423. AMC 3d Min, February 22, 1922.
the farm work was being attended. In March 1922 the farm manager was fired. To reduce further losses, Prescott asked the Union Conference to hire his teachers during the vacation.¹

Prescott evidently found the constant financial struggle frustrating. J. E. Fulton noted that the professor had "felt the strain a good deal" but that he had done "good strong work." The professor himself reported to J. L. Shaw that it was "a year of hard work." As a result of his efforts, though, the tone of the school improved markedly. Students quickly "measured up to Prescott's expectations" and the future began to look hopeful once more.²

Almost a decade later, Lynn Wood recalled that when Prescott turned the college over to his successor "he left behind him a real spirit of consecration and earnest devotion to the Scripture."³

It was not many months into 1922 when Prescott realized that he was no longer able to stand the pressures of principalship for any extended period. He was not as young as he used to be and his health would not warrant it. More importantly, he felt that a permanent head of the school ought to be secured as soon as possible so that permanent policies could be implemented and "further

¹AMC 3d Min, December 22, 1921; March 29, September 20, 1922. Besides having very little money the board seems to have had very little authority. Many actions apparently had to be approved by the Union committee—even such things as a typewriter needed for the secretarial department.


³L. H. Wood to F. Griggs, September 12, 1932, Reel 6#3, ABYAU.
disastrous changes avoided." New policies needed to be adopted to upgrade the institution, and it would take four or five years to implement the improvements. In March, therefore, he urged the brethren to appoint a permanent principal and urged that they call Lynn H. Wood. Prescott had been personally acquainted with Wood's work in America, and he assured the committee that Wood was determined "to follow fully the instruction given in the Spirit of Prophecy." The General Conference brethren saw wisdom in the suggestion and Wood was appointed to the Australasian college at the General Conference session in April. He arrived at Cooranbong to relieve Prescott of his duties in October, just prior to the end of the 1922 school year.  

Although freed from the immediate responsibility of administering the college, Prescott did not lose interest in the institution. He continued to serve on the board and strongly supported the initiatives Wood tried to introduce. In September 1923 the two men joined in a major effort to upgrade the school and have the church leadership commit itself to some long-term planning. After discussing the philosophy and objectives of the school, Wood introduced a three-year plan designed to achieve the objectives. He had three actions in mind. First, he wanted to call strong departmental heads to the school to "strengthen the college faculty" and to "advance the general tone of the educational work." Second, he argued that there was an "earnest need of a large increase in

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facilities.' Third, there was a great need for more students. The recommendations involved an outlay of some means—an outlay the brethren were apparently loathe to make. The plans were passed through a series of committees and eventually resulted in a decision to launch a recruitment drive for students. Even with Prescott's strong support the wheels of progress turned slowly.¹

Prescott's labors in Australia were not confined to the college, even while he still served as principal. His duties as educational secretary alone kept him busy enough. He reported that the schools were scattered and "in sore need of careful supervision and further development." Besides this, in July 1922 the Union Conference requested him to lead out in a series of six training institutes for ministers in the various conferences. The brethren wanted the ministry as a whole to benefit from the professor's "long years of experience." A minister was temporarily appointed as his substitute to care for his Bible classes at the college, and Prescott commenced his institutes in September. This work took him to New Zealand, West Australia, and every conference in between.²

Those who heard him in Perth in mid-1923 appreciated the "new viewpoint of the everlasting gospel" that he was able to give. It was his familiar theme. He asserted that the experience of Pentecost was lost because Jesus, the greatest light, was lost. "The Christ of the Roman Church, the Christ of apostate Protestantism, is not the Christ of Scripture." The advent movement had been called

¹AMC Bd Min, September 25, 27, 1923.
to do a work like John the Baptist—"to exalt Christ" and to "lead
the people to believe on the Jesus of the Scriptures."¹

His preaching at campmeetings was also effective. For
example, it was reported that at the Queensland campmeeting, his
Bible studies were "a most helpful feature of the work." His preach­
ing "was with power, and definite conversions were the result. About
thirty were baptized."²

According to C. K. Meyers, the Australian church leadership
would have liked Prescott to stay on in Australia. They felt that
he had made "a distinct contribution to the upbuilding of the work
... in several lines" and regretted that they could not retain
his services longer. But at the end of his two years of service,
Prescott felt the need to return to the United States.

Allowing for a stopover in Hawaii to conduct an institute
for the ministers, the professor planned to land in San Francisco
in late November 1923. A week or two were to be spent meeting
appointments in California before traveling across the continent to
visit his relatives in New England during the Christmas period. He
hoped to be ready for work again in early 1924. As it turned out,
his return was timely. Within weeks after his visit in Maine with
his younger brother Charles, he received the news of Charles' death.³

¹Record, November 14, 1921, p. 7.
²Record, August 27, 1923, p. 8; October 22, 1923, p. 1;
November 14, 1921, p. 7.
³C. K. Meyers to W. W. Prescott, July 23, 1923; W. W. Pres­
cott to C. K. Meyers, May 3, 1923, RG 21: General Files: Fld 1923--
P; J. E. Fulton to J. L. Shaw, February 21, 1924, RG 31: General
Files: J. L. Shaw Fld 1924--A, GCAr.
Australia was not the only part of the church having problems with its educational institutions in the 1920s. The American midwest had its share as well. According to J. L. Shaw, Union College had been having "hard sledding" for a number of years prior to 1924. As Everett Dick observed, church leaders had not yet learned that a college could not operate on tuition alone. While they reluctantly paid the operating deficits after they were incurred, they could not bring themselves to allocate an operating grant before the deficits were incurred. Declining enrollment and a financial recession worsened Union's problems. By the end of the 1923-24 school year, the total deficit of the college reached $110,000.1

In desperation the trustees had placed the college on the market in 1923 hoping that they might sell it and start the college again somewhere out in the country. No buyers appeared. Five months later, in October, at the start of the new school year, a special faculty meeting was called by the board chairman, S. E. Wight, and economy measures were discussed.2 January 1924 saw C. W. Irwin from the General Conference education department spending a week on campus, by request, studying the situation. He recommended further economy measures—reduce the teaching force, dormitory heating, and the dairy herd—but still the situation deteriorated. In March, an


2UC Bd Min, May 23; UC Fac Min, October 1, 1923. The Central Union Conference treasurer presided over a similar meeting in November. As a result a campaign was launched for 100 new students. UC Fac Min, November 18, 1923.
emergency four-day session of the board was called and stringent reductions were made in the budget. At the end of the marathon session, Otto M. Johns, the college president, resigned. He felt unable to carry out the program outlined by the board.¹

First the board turned to C. S. Longacre to fill the presidency vacated by Johns, but Longacre declined. The nominating committee had trouble finding candidates and the situation became desperate. Finally the General Conference committee recommended that the board appoint Prescott. The faculty were informed and their cooperation solicited. A week later—on April 17—at another special meeting of the board, the professor was formally appointed to the presidency. He arrived on campus in July, just prior to the summer-school session, to take up responsibilities he had laid aside thirty-one years earlier. The professor was becoming a regular troubleshooter. Union had not faced a graver crisis in its entire history.²

The challenges that presented themselves to the new president were large. The trustees hoped he could bring the college "back up to its old time strength." According to General Conference treasurer, ¹

¹The board toyed with the idea of closing the school but felt that it was worth keeping open because it was the only one that enjoyed state recognition as a standard college. It was a "keystone in the arch." They felt that at least one accredited college should be maintained. Furthermore, the stability of elementary and secondary schools in the region depended on it. UC Bd Min, March 4-6, 1924.

²UC Fac Min, April 10, 1924. P. L. Thompson from Pacific Union College was asked to serve as principal under Prescott who wanted to reestablish the arrangement he had followed in 1891-93. Thompson, however, declined the appointment. UC Bd Min, April 17, May 7, 1924. Educational Messenger, June 1924, p. 39; July 1924, pp. 26, 28.
J. L. Shaw, business matters at Lincoln had been "sadly neglected for years." He thought Prescott would have to give them special attention. Furthermore, according to former student G. E. Hutches, the general feeling in the field was that the tone of the school had been deteriorating since 1922 when the charismatic H. A. Morrison had resigned as president. Some felt that regulations had become too lax—that the institution needed another strong charismatic leader to rejuvenate it. Prescott addressed the problems with vigor. In chairman Wight's opinion, he "took hold of the school in a masterly way."^2

In an effort to control the financial situation, Prescott also was appointed business manager. Hard decisions had to be made and Prescott felt he needed the authority. Retrenchments were soon effected in the staff, the dairy herd was sold, and other economies were implemented. A loan of $10,000 was secured from the bank, the General Conference made an $8,000 grant to help the college keep operating, and a strong student recruitment program was initiated.3


^2Dick reports that Morrison resigned over accreditation problems. He felt that the board's reluctance to act on accreditation proposals was a vote of no confidence in him. A number of other faculty left shortly afterwards, somewhat demoralizing the school. Union: College of the Golden Cords, pp. 158, 159. Interview with G. E. Hutches, February 11, 1981. Hutches' view is corroborated by S. E. Wight, then chairman of the board. See E. K. Vande Vere interview with S. E. Wight, April 7, 1957, cited in E. K. Vande Vere, "William Warren Prescott: Administrator," p. 26, AUHR. S. E. Wight to J. L. Shaw, April 25, 1924, RG 31: General File: J. L. Shaw Fld 1924--Central Union, GCAr.

^3UC Bd Min, May 8, September 7, November 2, 11, 12, 1924; W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, August 6, 1924, RG 31: General File:
Prescott also planned to expand the college industries to enable more students to work their way through school.

In addition, a special $15,000 grant from the General Conference enabled the school to catch up on neglected maintenance. The boys’ dormitory received a new roof, new flooring, new bathrooms, winterising for the third floor, and a complete paint job. In the meantime, however, normal operating expenses continued to exceed income. In January 1925 the board attempted once more to put the college on the market. They thought this was the only way to liquidate the institution's massive debt. Again there were no buyers.

Shaw, who was glad Prescott was at Union to "hold the line," worried Prescott with his unrealistic expectations. The treasurer had stated to the new president, "I know you will go to the full limit of holding the institution strictly within its income." Prescott felt this to be unfair inasmuch as the board, with General Conference advice, had already budgeted for a $25,000 deficit before he had even taken over the presidency. He replied to Shaw that the simple fact was that a situation had been created at the college which made it impossible for the school to operate on its income and it would continue until they could "make some adjustment." He explained further with an illustration: "You know that when an automobile is going downgrade at full speed, and attempts to turn a corner at such a rate, it goes into a ditch. That is the situation


here.' Then he added, "I want to turn the corner as fast as possible, but I do not want to ditch the car." Although he thought he could hardly remedy the situation in one year he would do his best.¹

As well as addressing the financial problems, Prescott quickly turned to the task of rebuilding student morale and restoring neglected standards. In the dining room he insisted on students being seated at pre-assigned tables, and although he did not resume his Battle Creek College pattern of eating in the dining room with the students, he did appear in the dining room "to set before the students the standards of dining like ladies and gentlemen."² It was his "enduring burden" that a Christian school should teach its students culture and refinement.³

At Battle Creek, Prescott had ensured that chapel periods became a focal point of the school program. He did the same at Union. At a faculty meetings at the beginning of the year, he explained his plan. Faculty members would be required to attend along with the students, attendance record would be taken, and he would give the talk. Punctuality was a must, for the doors were closed promptly at 9:30. Attention was demanded from all. One former student, L. H. Lonergan, recalled that chapels became more formal. Another remembered that to further enhance the meaningfulness of the service, the new president and his wife donated a new

¹J. L. Shaw to W. W. Prescott, August 20, 1924; W. W. Prescott to J. L. Shaw, August 25, 1924, RG 31: General File: J. L. Shaw Fld 1924--PQ, GCAr.
²Everett Dick to G. M. Valentine, January 22, 1981.
organ for the chapel. Students generally remembered his chapels as "very positive and forceful" and "highly spiritual."¹

One student recalled: "In Chapel Prescott would sit straight in his chair and throw his shoulders back as if to say, 'put your books away, sit up, and pay attention' and without a word the students were in order for the service. . . . He was the epitome of dignity. His bearing, his manner demanded respect."² Students who dared to study in chapel or whisper to a friend were rebuked with a stern look from the president or in a personal interview after the service. The professor was even known to go around the chapel room as the students were assembling and put all the window shades at the same height. Everything had to be just right.³ Irving Mohr, a student who passed through the era, explained that Prescott believed he could "put a real spiritual, cultural, and educational mold on the student body" through the chapel periods. He added: "It is my recollection after more than fifty years have passed, that he was completely correct."⁴

Friday evening vespers was another time Prescott used to shape the character of his students. On these occasions he often delivered his sermons seated in an armchair on the rostrum. As he emphasized his points, his large jowels would shake and his heavy


⁴E. Irving Mohr to G. M. Valentine, March 9, 1981.

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tones would resound through the chapel. The sight and the sound were
indelibly impressed on students' minds. Years later they recalled
the texts or the acrostics which he had used to summarize his
theme.1

If Prescott expected much of his students, he also expected
the same of his faculty. One teacher who worked with him remembered
the moment when it was time for the first faculty meeting of the
new year to begin. The new president quietly walked to the door and
turned the key. "Needless to say, everyone was on time for the
beginning of the next faculty meeting." Faculty members, however,
appreciated "his definite plans for programs and appointments.
Everyone knew just what was expected of him." European church
leader J. H. Schilling reported after a visit to the campus: "They
all like Professor Prescott and seem to have great confidence in
him."2

Academic standards were also a matter of great concern for
Prescott. In his own classes he held the standard high. Although
students found it hard to achieve an A grade, they were nonetheless
stimulated to work diligently by Prescott's own contagious enthusi­
asm. As president, he strongly emphasized the ideals for which he
had fought so hard at Battle Creek College in the 1890s. Every
student should be required to take one class in Bible every year,

1 Interview with G. E. Hutches, February 11, 1981. A fre­
quently used acrostic was Forsaking All I Take Him.

2 JC Fac Min, September 5, 1924. For example, Prescott
carefully defined the division of responsibility between himself
and his dean. Rochelle P. Kilgore to G. M. Valentine, March 18,
1981; J. H. Schilling to J. L. Shaw, October 29, 1924, RG 31:
General File: Fld European Division-1924, GCAr.
History courses should be revised so as to better integrate the prophetic understanding of history, and teachers should make the Bible the basis of all their instruction. The greatest difficulty to the accomplishment of the latter, he believed, would be the teachers' own lack of knowledge of Scripture. Furthermore, he personally led a committee of inspection through the library holdings and removed sixty books from the shelves that were thereafter available only to the teachers. It was evident that the professor's views on curriculum had not changed since his reforming days in Battle Creek.¹

Neither had his understanding of the fundamental purpose of the denominational schools changed. He held that the only task of the college was to train workers for the church. Thus, although he preferred formality in the dining room and dignity in worship, he had no time for the clamor for formal graduation ceremonies with caps and gowns and class activities. He tried to discourage this trend. Later when he was teaching at Emmanuel Missionary College he had not changed. W. C. G. Murdoch recalls him reacting vigorously to the idea of robes by saying: "You'll not get me in one of those." As president, the professor's convictions about correct propriety at closing exercises were strong. Howard Welch recalls that he and a fellow student representing the senior class approached Prescott with a request for a certain speaker for the commencement services. Prescott's response was decided. "Young gentlemen, you seem to be laboring under the misapprehension, you are not graduating the

¹JC Fac Min, September 4, 5, 1924.
Prescott's educational philosophy also meant that he was not in sympathy with the move of Union College to seek accreditation with the regional accreditation bodies. In January 1925, when the North Central Association threatened to drop Union from their list of accredited schools because the school lacked an endowment, Prescott was halfway glad. "Some of us here are not particularly anxious to retain this accrediting," he wrote to Meyers. He looked forward to the time when denominational schools "would be entirely free from all outside entanglement." They could then give themselves directly to the work for which they were "first established." The majority of his board thought otherwise, though, and Prescott dutifully complied with their request that he appear in person before the authorities to plead their case. His representations were apparently successful and the college continued to be accredited as a junior college on a year-by-year basis.²

Upon his arrival on Union's campus in July 1924, Prescott threw himself with vigor into his various administrative duties. They were many and Prescott soon found himself with a heavy workload—heavier than was good for his health. At first he decided that as business manager he should sign all checks. Later, as the


pressure of work increased, he delegated the responsibility to an assistant business manager. By November he was ready to entrust the major business management of the institution to his assistant and he formally resigned from the position. The details of academic administration he delegated to his presidential predecessor who stayed on at the school as academic dean. Nonetheless, even with these arrangements, the sixty-nine-year-old professor felt the strain. Quite early in his presidency he gave thought to a possible successor, realizing, as he had done in Australia, that for permanent stability, a strong leader needed to be appointed on a long-term basis.

In early January 1925, Prescott was sick for two weeks. His indisposition seems to have propelled him to urge the board to seriously consider his replacement. Consequently, on January 26, the board appointed Leo Thiel to the presidency—an appointment that was to take effect at the commencement of the new school year. The board, however, was exceedingly reluctant to lose Prescott and chairman Wight appealed to the General Conference to urge him to stay.

According to General Conference Associate Secretary C. K. Meyers, reports had come from "many quarters" expressing appreciation for the professor's "straightforward... christian leadership." "It seems to have brought a new spirit into the experience of the school, and a new day as far as its possibilities are concerned." Meyers

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1 UC Bd Min, May 8, September 7, November 2, 11, 12, 1924.
2 Educational Messenger, January 1925, p. 17; February 1925, p. 15. UC Bd Min, January 26, 1925.
indicated to the professor that the General Conference men viewed with favor the idea of his remaining at the school even if he carried only light classwork. Wight was also sure that Prescott's "influence would count for much" and that his presence on campus would help retain the "confidence of the constituency in making Union College stronger." The professor had apparently enjoyed the stimulation and challenges of his Bible class and, to the board's delight, he agreed to stay. For the next two years he served as chairman of the theology department.¹

¹C. K. Meyers to W. W. Prescott, March 1, 1925, RG 21: Correspondence Fld 1925--P, GCAr. Prescott also continued to hold his position on the board.
CHAPTER XXI

IN THE CLASSROOM

Prescott’s first introduction to Bible teaching had been at the ministers’ winter Bible school that he had organized in Battle Creek in 1839 when he was educational secretary for the General Conference. At that time the professor carried numerous other administrative responsibilities. The classes that he taught (on the book of Galatians and other topics), therefore, were not full-fledged college courses. They were a short series of studies, no less appreciated for their brevity.

Most of Prescott’s classroom Bible teaching was of this informal nature, usually done at educational or ministerial institutes in America, Australia, England, South America, or China. However, it was not until he went to Australia in 1921 that he began his short career in formal college Bible teaching with the responsibility of conducting year-long classes. This career lasted six years: one in Australia, three at Union College, and two at Emmanuel Missionary College.

Bible Teacher Par Excellence

As a college Bible teacher in his later years, Prescott deeply impressed his students. His thorough familiarity with Scripture and his ability to quote passages exactly from memory,
often from both the King James Version and the Revised Version, inspired his classes. The oft-repeated texts remained in students' memories years afterwards. Some who sat in his classes remembered that he lectured from carefully prepared notes--outlines of which he distributed to the class--but that he was not tied to them. There was little class discussion. He had the ability to stimulate thought without it. As in his preaching, so in his teaching--Christ was the focal point. E. G. Sauer recalled, "I have never heard anyone present the Gospel message of salvation so clearly and penetratingly as he. The center, the hub, of all his teaching was Jesus Christ."\(^1\)

To numbers of his students the venerable educator seemed to have an aura and a dignity about him that made him seem a little austere and unapproachable. Without trying or even being conscious of it, he could be rather intimidating.\(^2\) To the more timid he seemed quite "stern" and "forbidding."\(^3\) Apparently it was an effort for him to socialize in an informal, personal way. Small talk seemed a waste of time. This sometimes gave the impression that he lived and moved in another world. For example, A. F. J. Kranz, a recently graduated teacher in 1923, recalled that in that year he travelled by ship from Australia to New Zealand to take up a new appointment. Prescott was also on the ship travelling to a campmeeting in New Zealand. Each day the professor took his exercise walking around the

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\(^3\)Jesse S. Cowdrick to G. M. Valentine, February 27, 1981.
deck arm in arm with his wife. Though the journey lasted three days and the young worker and Prescott sighted each other often, the professor apparently "took not the slightest notice" of the young Australian teacher who was too shy to speak first to one whom he considered his superior. Kranz reflected: "The fact that he never spoke to me the three days . . . or at any time during our attendance at the camp made me feel he lived in a different world."  

To others who were able to bridge the gulf, the professor seemed quite congenial and friendly. They found their Bible teacher to be understanding, kindly, and sympathetic as a counselor. He seems to have tried to make time for his students and made it a practice to invite students home occasionally. One who asked a question after class about the meaning of Heb 4 related, "He invited me down to his house for an afternoon where he made this chapter very plain." Another student who visited the professor's home quite often in his years at Emmanuel Missionary College recalled that "He commanded respect and you felt awed and very humble in his presence. . . . There were no light jokes 'cracked' around him and yet he would tell something amusing and laugh with us."  

Another former Union student recalled being invited with some friends to the professor's home one evening to enjoy his new radio. At that time, crystal sets were the order of the day for most people--if they were lucky, but the Bible teacher had bought his

2 G. M. Matthews to G. M. Valentine, March 1, 1981.
3 Alice Perrine to G. M. Valentine, February 22, 1981.
wife a cabinet radio. Broadcasting was still a young art and there was more static than music, but the student felt greatly honored to have been the professor's guest.1 Others occasionally enjoyed a meal and came away educated in the art of dining graciously. Prescott would not come to the table without his suit coat and tie (even in his later years). Alice Perrine recalled that he showed his sense of values "in the way he wiped dishes and silverware. He always got out a clean dish towel to lay the silverware on so it would not get unnecessarily scratched. He was meticulous."2

A genuine, warm "kindliness," however, seemed to be the professor's predominant characteristic which tended to offset his imposing and seemingly austere exterior. Students felt attracted to him. George Hutches recalled that just to see the cultured gentleman walk along the path on business or strolling arm in arm with his wife around the campus, as he did regularly at noon-day, was to be "inspired and challenged."3

At Avondale and at College View, during his first year, Prescott carried his Bible classes in addition to his presidential duties. There was, therefore, not much time for major course revision. But when at seventy years of age he assumed the leadership of Union's Bible department in 1925, things were different. He was not content simply, quietly to teach Bible classes. He was an innovator and still had a heavy burden for correctly training the

1 Pearl Gaitens to G. M. Valentine, March 3, 1981.
2 Alice Perrine to G. M. Valentine, February 1, 1980.
ministers of the church. Even while president he had suggested changes in the department, petitioning and receiving permission from the General Conference committee to redesign the whole ministerial curriculum. With his associates he promptly set to work seeking new teachers to strengthen the department and inaugurating his old Battle Creek idea--a special three- or four-month winter course "adapted to the needs of younger workers already in the field" to equip them "for effective service in the field." 

At last in the new "Department of Theology" organized in 1926 with a curriculum designed for practical and theoretical training, Prescott had the opportunity to implement ideas he had been mulling over for years. His "stamp" on the coursework became evident. The new "Analytic Bible" courses were clearly structured around the professor's textbook *Doctrine of Christ*. The Bulletin read:

> An examination of the course of study offered in this department will make it clear that the dominant place has been given to the study of the English Bible; and that the distinctive aim is to present a comprehensive view of the everlasting gospel, while at the same time focusing all the instruction upon the special message for the last generation.

The innovations meant added work, but this was accepted as a challenge. Prescott found himself teaching nine hours per week as well as writing the lessons for two of the new classes that had been introduced. He reported to Froom that his spare moments were very

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1UC Fac Min, April 11, 1925; UC Bd Min, April 1925. Prescott tried hard to secure the services of H. M. S. Richards--a young worker in Canada--as a Bible teacher. He was disappointed when Richards turned the call down. H. M. S. Richards to G. M. Valentine, May 21, 1981. Annual Calendar of Union College, Second Quarter, 1925, p. 45.

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few.\textsuperscript{1} His associates in the department seemed to be impressed. Homer Saxton wrote some years later: "Professor Prescott is a man without a peer among our Bible men." Saxton marvelled at the professor's great knowledge of the Bible as a whole, and he was convinced that Prescott was going in the right direction with his restructuring of the ministerial curriculum. He agreed that the whole scheme needed to be Christ-centered and cross-centered.\textsuperscript{2}

Besides offering the regular four-year degree program, Prescott developed a shorter two-year course for those who wanted to train as Gospel workers. He actively encouraged young men already serving in the field to return for a short time that they might catch a new evangelistic vision. It was his hope that Union would set an example in providing the denomination with strongly motivated Christ-centered evangelists.

In January 1927, Prescott enthusiastically grasped a then novel opportunity to conduct a one-hour religious program each Sunday evening over the local Lincoln radio station, KFAN 319, which claimed a listening audience of one million. The college music department provided quartets, choral, and orchestral works, while Prescott did the preaching--a twenty-minute segment. The program's high quality impressed listeners and appreciative letters were received from many parts of the United States. In 1928, 250 resumes

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}Union College Catalogue 1926-27, pp. 89, 93. W. W. Prescott to L. E. Froom, October 14, 1926, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Jehovah." GCAR.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{2}F. F. Saxton to L. H. Wood, August 28, 1932. Reel 6=3. ABVAU. Saxton had taught at Union College for a number of years, but had had to withdraw because of ill-health. Wood wanted him to teach at Emmanuel Missionary College.}
of Prescott's sermons were being mailed weekly. The program continued to be aired for sixteen months until April 1928. Then Catholics becoming offended at Prescott's presentations of the Sabbath and some related anti-Catholic remarks, put such strong pressure on the station that, much to the professor's dismay, it was forced to cancel the program. Prescott had either not read his audience well enough or did not feel able to soften his rhetoric.

Other more serious matters at Lincoln had already been distressing Prescott. At the end of the 1926-27 school year, he decided after "long consideration" that he ought to give up his class work at the college. In revamping the ministerial course he felt he had achieved a major goal, but now "the grind of regular classwork and especially the writing of the lessons" was wearing on him "quite seriously." However, what seemed to be more distressing to the professor was the way the college was administered. "It annoys me constantly," he wrote to Spicer. "It is hard for me to see the ideals which I tried to establish, so easily ignored, and to see the downward tendency in the management of affairs." The relaxation of the social standards under Thiel, and Thiel's inefficient management and apparent lack of thorough commitment to what Prescott understood to be the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy on education seemed to be the basic problem. Spicer concurred with

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1Golden Cords, 1928 (College View, Ne.: published by the Students of Union College, 1928), pp. 78, 79. W. W. Prescott to W. A. Spicer, April 27, 1927, RG 11: Fld 1927--P; April 22, 1928, RG: Fld 1928--P, GCAr. A budget for the radio program was set at $2,000.
Prescott. He thought it was a pity that "when the need is so great ... a brother with good gifts does not seem to have the idea of organization and system and cooperation." 1

In spite of the tensions, Prescott stayed another year. Although not teaching a regular Bible class, he remained as an advisor to the faculty, giving two chapel talks a week, organizing his Sunday broadcast, and providing moral support for the school. The respite from teaching provided him with a long-postponed opportunity to give his attention to some literary work. Several series of articles for church papers came from his pen as well as some important pamphlets for the ministerial association. 2 He also was able to publish in popular form what had been the burden of his ministry for years. His 128-page book The Saviour of the World eventually came from the press in 1929. 3

By the end of the 1927-28 school year, even staying on the campus had become a burden to the professor and he moved back to Washington, D.C. He went with a heavy heart. He felt he could contribute nothing more to the educational work in the Central Union

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1 W. W. Prescott to W. A. Spicer, April 27, 1927; W. A. Spicer to W. W. Prescott, May 1, 1927, RG 11: Fld 1927--P, GCAr. Prescott continued to meet with the faculty to share his burden. "Professor Prescott brought to our attention the need of a Christo-centric education in our college. He read statements from the Testimonies to the effect that our system needs a leadership that knows its Bible better than any other book, and that the cross of Christ should be the center of all our education. . . . As no one seemed to have any definite plan in mind, as to how this could be best brought about, it was decided to lay this matter on the table for one week" (UC Fac Min, January 1927).

2 See pp. 570, 571 below.

3 Dartmouth College Alumni Magazine, May 1929.
Conference. "I greatly regret that under the present administration this college has gone back to the old conditions, and even worse than when I came here so that my work seems largely to have been lost." Prescott's age seemed to be catching up with him. He found it difficult to adjust to the ways of younger men. Relaxation of the rigid social standards he was accustomed to seemed to him to be a drift downwards. His was not a lone voice. Others apparently shared his view and at the end of the year President Thiel was replaced by P. L. Thompson from Pacific Union College. Prescott was hopeful that things would improve with the new man.

1 W. W. Prescott to W. A. Spicer, April 22, 1928, RG 11: Fld 1928--P, GCAr.

2 The politics of Thiel's removal from the presidency, according to G. E. Hutches, constituted a major incident in the history of the Central Union Conference. At the session that was held in February 1928, a number of local conference presidents banded together to effect the removal of S. E. Wight as Union Conference president. The nominating committee nominated M. L. Rice, president of Colorado Conference, as Wight's replacement. At Friday noon, the session approved the report by a vote of approximately 2 to 1. Rice offended a number of the delegates, however, by moving to take over the office immediately, instead of at the end of the session as had been the tradition. After a troubled Sabbath, Prescott, as the senior General Conference representative, called a special session for Saturday night. After much discussion, another vote on the nominating committee's report was called. It was approximately 91 to 55 in favor of the report. Prescott, in a highly irregular ruling that has been discussed ever since, declared that the minority was "too big a minority to ignore." (Perhaps he recalled his own experience in the termination of Protestant Magazine.) The nominating committee was sent out again but refused to change its report. A new nominating committee was then appointed, but after several days deliberation could not agree on a new president. Eventually, Wight was returned for a six-week period during which time the Union Executive committee was to appoint a new president. In the six-week interim, before J. J. Nethery the newly appointed president arrived, Wight, as chairman of the Union College board, effected the removal of Leo Thiel--some thought because Thiel had supported the group that tried to remove Wight. Apparently, however, there was some long-standing dissatisfaction with Thiel's administration. E. N. Dick to G. M. Valentine, January 22, 1981; interview with G. E. Hutches, February 11, 1981.
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An Oracle at Emmanuel Missionary College

It was clear that Prescott thought that his short career in the classroom was finished when he left Union College in 1923. He was mistaken. Four years later, in 1932, he was again teaching Bible and serving as head of a college theology department. This time it was at the successor to his old Battle Creek College, now Emmanuel Missionary College. Two years were thus spent.

Lynn Wood, president of Emmanuel Missionary College and long-time friend of Prescott, first approached the professor about helping out at Berrien Springs in February 1931. One of the Bible teachers, H. S. Prenier, had resigned and the college needed a replacement. Furthermore, the institution needed a man with a graduate degree to ensure that it would not be impeded in its progress toward accreditation as a senior college. (Prescott seems to have reconciled himself to the inevitability of accreditation.)1

The prospect of facing twelve hours of classes each week, however, did not appeal to the aging professor, whose health had not been good. In addition, the fact that a one-year appointment would not provide opportunity for any "special building program" in the Bible department persuaded him not to accept the invitation. His colleagues at the General Conference concurred.2

1In the 1930s, Prescott, along with other church leaders was greatly concerned at the prospect of greater numbers of Adventist youth attending secular universities. Gradually it was seen that unless the denomination's schools were accredited the trend would continue. This apparently helped Prescott to adjust to the inevitability of accreditation. GCO Min, September 25, 1934.

2GCO Min, February 22, 1931. W. W. Prescott to L. H. Wood, February 26, 1931, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#1. ABVAU.
Eighteen months later, with an apparent dearth of good Bible teachers in the denomination, Emmanuel Missionary College was still having difficulty securing someone to serve as Bible teacher and head of the department. Making the situation more urgent was the deadline set for the college by the North Central Association of Colleges. It was to attain senior college status by 1934 or its junior college rating would be cancelled. Regulations for accreditation as a senior college required that the institution had to have teachers with doctorates—or with at least masters' degrees—in charge of its departments.¹ Wood brought his problem to the General Conference officers and explained his desire to build up a strong Bible department by "developing real Biblical Scholarship." Several men had been approached without success. In the emergency, the officers recommended that Prescott should connect with the school.² He would not be required to do "full work," but he was given a

¹GCO Min, February 20, 1931.

²In L. E. Froom's view, the "Bible teaching situation" was "none too bright" in the movement. In his opinion, many of the teachers were dull and lethargic so far as any "vision and forward look" was concerned. They were of "a very mechanical and doctrinaire type of mind." He was anxious about others who were regarded as "orthodox," but who in fact leaned "backward." These, he felt, constituted a perplexity to the leadership "and to the body of reverent scholarship in the movement." In his view, Prescott was an exception.

Wood had tried to call six men: L. E. Froom, B. L. House, J. G. Wilkinson, W. R. French, T. G. Bunch, and H. C. Lacey. For various reasons none wanted to move. After considering the proposition, Lacey declined because he apparently could not face "the constant small criticism" that came from the field "on some minor point of the Truth," usually started by some "student who did not understand his viewpoint." He preferred to remain in pastoral work. L. E. Froom to L. H. Wood, May 11, June 7, 1931; L. H. Wood to C. W. Irwin, May 25, 1931; L. H. Wood to L. E. Froom, June 3, 1931. Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#1, ABVAU.
specific objective. His task would be "to work out a policy that will build for permanency in the teaching of the scriptures." College authorities, pressed hard by the depression, were doubly glad because the new Bible teacher came free of charge! Prescott, still field secretary of the General Conference, was paid by the Washington office.¹

The professor was seventy-seven years old when he bravely returned to Berrien Springs and its severe Michigan winters. In spite of the fact that he was not meant to carry "full work," he was soon caught up in the busy round of college activity. He served on the discipline committee and the library committee and exercised a patriarchal role in faculty meetings, leading out frequently in prayer and in proposing various actions. According to Wood, Prescott stood the strain very well. Although he tended to be very intense in his thinking and was "a bit inclined to carry the load of the school and worry because things do not move as fast as they ought to," Wood appreciated "his presence and counsel very much."²

When difficulties arose he had a wealth of experience on which to base the counsel he offered. For example, when the problem of football and organized sports arose in faculty meeting and someone read an Ellen White testimony to Battle Creek College on sports,

¹GCO Min, August 8, 9, 1932. The financial crisis was so serious that the faculty voted a 10 percent salary reduction shortly after Prescott arrived on campus. It was the third such reduction. EMC Fac Min, December 12, 1932; L. H. Wood to F. Griggs, January 29, 1933, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, ABVAU.

²EMC Fac Min, March 19, April 1, 1933; L. H. Wood to H. F. Saxton, November 29, 1933, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, ABVAU.
Prescott was able to give a first hand account of the context. Subsequently, he was asked to make a formal presentation on games and sports. According to one of his colleagues, "He was like having an oracle on campus."\(^1\)

By the end of his first year, Prescott was priding himself on not having missed a class. Some of his correspondence remained unanswered in his drawer for longer periods than usual, however, while he tried to keep up with the extra-curricular activity. He was glad that his health had remained steady although the busy schedule made him quite weary at times. He enjoyed having students come to his house for Bible study and apparently made special efforts to work for some of the older, more mature students, encouraging them in turn to help lift the spirituality of the school. His impact on both students and staff was apparently quite positive. According to W. H. Holden, chairman of the college board, the professor was "greatly loved and respected" in the community.\(^2\)

As Prescott advanced in years his close relatives became fewer in number. His sister had died in 1924 and his older brother in 1929. He alone remained of the family and, at times, he felt quite lonely. He had not been visited by any of his few nephews or nieces in many years so colleagues and friends in the church became

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1. EMC Fac Min, November 5, 12, 1933. Yande Vere, "William Warren Prescott: Administrator," p. 28, AUHR.

very important to him and he enjoyed being among young people. Prescott also clearly enjoyed his teaching. Thus, when in 1933, the board (still unable to attract a Bible teacher) asked him to continue on at the school another year, he happily accepted the invitation.¹

Under a Cloud

The early 1930s were years of considerable tension for the church leaders. They were also uneasy years for Bible teachers. In March 1932 Lake Union president, W. H. Holden, perplexed over the difficulties of attracting a Bible teacher to Berrien Springs, complained to M. E. Kern about the atmosphere of distrust in the church. "This lack of confidence in men is a terrible thing and unless it is in some way corrected, I fear for the future of our work." He was "alarmed" and noted that each year it was becoming worse.²

L. E. Froom, an associate in the General Conference Ministerial Association and editor of Ministry Magazine, was more outspoken about the situation. He was anxious about the effect of the atmosphere of suspicion upon the well-being of the denomination. He felt that the economic depression combined with the recent notable defections of W. W. Fletcher and L. R. Conradi had frightened church leaders. This had resulted in difficulties for Bible teachers. "A move of reactionism has swept over our movement in the last year. . . . We are in an era of fear of men who think [sic] no matter how


²W. H. Holden to M. E. Kern, March 6, 1932, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, ABVAU.
reverently and loyal." He noted that "not a few of our leaders prefer the hard dogmatism of the Wilkinson school." Lamenting the fact that so many of the church administrators feared research and investigation, Froom continued: "Positions which have to be protected by ecclesiastical legislation and popular sentiment and prejudice are weak indeed, and such policy is unworthy this remnant movement." The "policy of evasion of fundamental questions" that had "characterised the attitude of some of the leaders" would not suffice.

According to Froom, the "primaries" were agreed upon. It was only on the "inconsequentials," "the secondaries," that troubles had arisen in the denomination. Nevertheless, "we must beware lest we codify and credalize and become rigid and static as the other reform movements before us." Part of the difficulty he alleged was failure on the part of the denomination frankly to acknowledge its "past mistakes in details such as the Shut Door position." The ideal Bible teacher would teach his students "how to think safely and soundly." Truth would be strengthened and buttressed by investigation. He felt that unfortunately the suspicion and fear in the church prevented this.  

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1. G. Wilkinson, a reactionary Bible teacher at Washington Missionary College, held that the King James Version of the Bible was the only reliable version. He shared the views and attitudes of J. S. Washburn. See pp. 573ff below.  

2. Froom asserted that much of the damage had arisen by "denials of the facts by such men as J. N. Loughborough who knew better or ought to have known" (L. E. Froom to L. H. Wood, July 31, 1932, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3). See also L. H. Wood to L. E. Froom, August 5, 1932, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#1, ABVAU.  

Wood agreed with Froom that students should be taught "a conception of truth that is progressive, that will reach out for the greater things that God has for us." Froom desired him to
Because of this climate in the denomination, Prescott's second year at Emmanuel Missionary College did not end as happily as it began. Before the year was out Prescott felt the bite of the chilly atmosphere. At a campmeeting during the summer of 1933, the professor had what he thought was a confidential talk about theology with fellow General Conference committee member, W. H. Branson. In the course of the discussion, according to Branson, Prescott apparently remarked: "I have waited for years for someone to make an adequate answer to Ballenger, Fletcher, and others on their positions re [sic] the sanctuary but I have not yet seen it or heard it." 

The particular issue that disturbed Branson was Prescott's idea that Christ served as a priest in the heavenly sanctuary before he came to earth. Branson had apparently not read Prescott's article published by Froom in *The Ministry* in 1928 which advocated much the same idea. Somehow Branson thought the professor was also astray on the Trinity. A little later at the Autumn Council in Battle Creek in 1933, Prescott spoke similarly to I. H. Evans. He apparently assured both men that he did not discuss questions of this nature in class, but talked confidentially "only to leading men." This apparently included Lynn Wood, who, Branson feared, was sympathetic to Prescott's views. When the men returned to Washington, a report

write this up as an article for *The Ministry*. L. E. Froom to L. H. Wood, August 12, 1932, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, ABVAU.

The remarks are recorded in an undated handwritten note. The note appears to be a record of what Branson related to the officers about the discussions with Prescott. RG 21: Special Files Fld "W. W. Prescott," GCAr. Prescott himself had been one of the church's leading spokesmen in attempting to answer Ballenger and Fletcher. A fuller discussion of Prescott's views are given in chapter 22.
was made to the officer group at the General Conference about Prescott's variant views.¹

Already sensitive about the teachings and activities of Conradi and Fletcher, Branson, who had the primary responsibility for the North American field, urged action.² He felt the school needed a change of president anyway. (Wood had had difficulty with the finances of the school during the early depression and seemed to some to be too stern. He was replaced by Thomas Steen.)³ One value of his being moved would be that it would break up his association with Prescott and would prevent him from "imbibing" the professor's ideas. But in Branson's view, Prescott needed to be recalled as well. In late December he talked with three or four of

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¹I. H. Evans to C. H. Watson, November 21, 1933, RG 11: Vice Pres.: I. H. Evans Fld 1933--C. H. Watson, GCAr. GC O Min, October 26, 1933, GCAr. The Ministry, April 1928, pp. 19-21. The brethren seemed to be suspicious of the implications regarding the traditional church position associated with this idea.

²Fletcher had withdrawn from the ministry in 1930 over differences concerning the sanctuary doctrine. Conradi had done the same in 1931.

³Wood clashed with Branson and other General Conference officers over the matter of accreditation. Branson was not at all comfortable with the recent General Conference action at its session in Omaha, allowing the colleges of the denomination to seek accreditation. He insisted on a rigid interpretation of the guidelines that had been set up for the colleges—an approach that tended to be somewhat obstructionistic. In his effort to meet the accreditation board's ultimatum, Wood apparently unintentionally crossed swords with Branson, who seemed not to have been fully familiar with the great difficulties Wood was having in finding staff. Relationships had become strained. W. H. Branson to L. H. Wood, February 29, 1932; M. E. Kern to W. H. Holden, March 3, 1932, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, ABVAU.

Evans seemed to have been somewhat fearful of Branson's handling of affairs. He would have preferred the situation to rest. I. H. Evans to C. H. Watson, November 21, 1933, RG 11: Vice Pres. Fld 1933--Watson, GCAr.
the college board members and urged them not to continue Prescott at the school the following year. Board chairman Holden, however, was reluctant to take the initiative and felt that the General Conference ought to make a formal recommendation first. Consequently, at a meeting of the officers in Washington on January 24, the matter was discussed again. This time action was taken to write to Prescott recommending that he withdraw himself from the college at the end of the year because "we understand he is not in full harmony with the denominational beliefs."¹

The letter, jointly signed by Branson and Evans on behalf of the officers, was sent on January 29. It stated that the brethren had "gathered" that Prescott was "somewhat out of harmony with the established faith of the denomination on certain vital points, especially the doctrine of the sanctuary." They stated that it would be "inconsistent" for him to continue as a Bible teacher. If he desired, they would be happy to interview him in Washington about the matter. The letter expressed the hope that the officers' action would appeal to him as "fair and proper." Prescott, whose reaction was one of shock, considered it to be neither.²

According to Branson, both Wood and Prescott were "quite stirred" over the letter. Prescott particularly was disturbed at what he regarded as gross injustice and violation of Christian


principle. Deeply "wounded," he protested vigorously. He objected
to the fact that he should be condemned without a hearing, that
Branson had talked to others--particularly the board members--without
talking to Prescott himself, and that all that was offered him was
the opportunity to "confer" with the brethren in Washington if he
wished. "It is axiomatic in a court of justice," he argued, "that
an accused person should have the opportunity of facing his accusers
in court, and be given a fair chance of disproving the charges
against him." Then he asked "are the accusers the proper jury to
consider the case?" Moreover, if he was not fit to teach the
following year, why was he fit to continue teaching for the remainder
of the present year? To Prescott, it all seemed unethical. Holden,
after a visit with Prescott, also felt that the professor had perhaps
not been dealt with fairly and he feared the reaction from the rest
of the school. There had been no complaints from his classes or
his associates. Edward Heppenstall, a student who sat in Prescott's
Bible class, reported that the professor assiduously avoided con­
troversial matters of any kind in his classes. His great concern was
the spiritual welfare of the student. 1

1 W. W. Prescott to W. H. Branson and I. H. Evans, February
2, 1934, RG 21: Special Files Fld "Prescott"; W. H. Holden to W. H.
Branson, February 12, 1934, RG NA II: W. H. Branson Fld 1934--
Prescott consistently maintained that he had not discussed his
variant views in class and that neither did they clash with what he
had to present in class. This was a point of honor with him. In
1931, when counselling with Wood about securing H. Camden Lacey as
a Bible teacher, he remarked that Lacey was both a "Christian
gentleman and a scholar" but that sometimes he had been "unwise" in
dealing "with controverted questions of theology and of policy in the
presence of his classes." He would need to be talked with about
this. Prescott himself seems to have conscientiously avoided doing

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A week later, having learned further of what he considered unethical proceedings, Prescott wrote again asking that charges against him be put in writing. Intimating that he was quite prepared to defend himself, he asked, "Do you claim that I do not believe in the work of Christ as our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary, or that I do not believe that he is doing his closing work corresponding to the work of the typical high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary, or just what is your charge. . . ." Three times Prescott asked his colleagues to put their charges in writing. "It is no light thing to tell a worker who has held a good record for about fifty years that he is unfitted to go on because he does not believe certain 'vital points' of our message. . . . Will you put your charge against me in plain language?" The Washington men declined to do so, preferring just to "talk" with the professor about the matter.1

On March 2 through 4, Prescott visited Washington to meet with a group of the officers. His colleagues expressed their desire that the church "should be saved from drifting into theories like Ballenger's" and their conviction that as a Bible teacher it was not proper for him to hold differing views even if he did not teach them to his students. But the professor refused to discuss any theology this. Thus his shock at having his integrity questioned. W. W. Prescott to L. H. Wood, March 9, 1931, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, ABVAU.

with them. According to Evans, he felt that he would be "misunderstood, misquoted, or otherwise misinterpreted."\(^1\) His concern was what he considered to be the total injustice of the procedure. He cited other cases of teachers who were not penalized for holding variant views (possibly referring to Taylor G. Bunch, Bible teacher at Loma Linda, who was suggesting the idea that there was no veil in the sanctuary in heaven and that the term "phases" ought to be used instead of "apartments") and suggested that there seemed to be a "personal element involved" in his case.\(^2\) This was of course denied by the officers who nevertheless asked his forgiveness for "the method in which the matter had been allowed to develop." The procedure, they acknowledged, was "unusual," but they continued to affirm that they did not feel that "one who differs on the sanctuary question" should "head up" a college Bible department. According to the professor, the officers finally consented not to push their recommendation further only when he insisted that he would otherwise appeal to the larger General Conference committee for a formal hearing.\(^3\)

Aware that the professor's sensibilities had been deeply

\(^1\)GC Min, March 2, 4, 1934. Seven officers were present including Prescott. [Brethren] to W. W. Prescott, March 5, 1934, RG 11: Vice Pres.: I. H. Evans Fld 1934--Prescott, GCAR. This letter appears not to have been sent to Prescott. It seems to have been written by Evans recording the officers' reaction to the two interviews.

\(^2\)J. E. Fulton to T. G. Bunch, August 8, 1932, JLMcCC, Bx 2 Fld 2, AUHR. GC Min, March 2, 4, 1934.

\(^3\)W. W. Prescott, "Statement Made to the Officers of the General Conference," September 14, 1934, RG 11: Correspondence Fld 1934-36--P, GCAR.
hurt, I. H. Evans, in the days that followed the meeting, apparently tried to persuade his colleagues to withdraw the offending letter of January 29. Some of the other officers also felt "he had cause for grievance." Branson, however, who had had to leave the Washington area early seemed particularly unwilling to soften his position, and it was difficult for his colleagues to explain things to him in letters. His problem was that he did not know how he would explain his reversal to the board members to whom he had talked. 1

In the meantime, Prescott's position as Bible teacher came up at the Emmanuel Missionary College board meeting. Word of his difficulties with Washington had apparently not reached the majority of the board, and they were distressed at the professor's voluntarily declining to continue at the college. It was evident that if the professor had his problems in Washington, he was not short of backers at Berrien Springs. On April 15 he formally presented his resignation to the board. His health and his morale had deteriorated significantly and he did not feel he could go on. The board, however, were not ready to let the professor go. Their action read: "It would be one of the worst things that could happen to have him leave at this juncture." He was urged by the board to stay. Even if he did not teach classes, but simply stayed to "exert his influence with the young people and have his name at the head of the Bible

department, it was felt that it would mean everything to the school.”¹

Prescott was not persuaded. Although he could not well convey his feelings to the board, he felt profoundly hurt and simply did not feel able to carry the burden any further. On the basis of his deteriorating health he stood his ground. On May 17 the board reluctantly accepted his resignation. Prescott returned to his home in Washington to what seemed like a dark future. At seventy-nine, he ended his days of college Bible teaching with an exceedingly heavy heart.²

Happily the future did not remain dark. On May 9, Evans wrote a rather contrite letter to Prescott. He was anxious to make things right and apologized for some of the expressions used in the January 29 letter. “Let me hereby withdraw every objectionable word... I cannot withdraw the letter, as others are involved; but if you can accept my withdrawal I shall be content.” Evans heartily affirmed the idea of having teachers of Bible in full accord with the teachings of the denomination, but he added: "I know of no man whom I would trust more than you or in whom I have fuller confidence as not teaching in the classroom what is undenominational." Asking forgiveness for his mistakes which had hurt Prescott so badly, he stated, “I have always held you up as a model Christian, unselfish, ... and a man of high ideals. I still have the same feelings toward you that I have held for you through many long years.”³

¹EMC Bd Min, March 15, April 15, 1934.
²EMC Bd Min, May 17, 1934.
³I. H. Evans to W. W. Prescott, May 9, 1934, RG 11: Vice Pres.: I. H. Evans Fld 1934--Prescott, GCAr.
Tensions apparently continued, however, with the other church officers. Thus Prescott sought further clarification later in the year. Since he had returned from Berrien Springs in June, he had not felt free to participate again in committee meetings at headquarters because he was still feeling badly over the shadow cast upon his standing in the church by the officers' actions. On September 14 he appeared before the group to read a statement recounting the experience and to state his reasons for not being able to join his colleagues in their officers' councils. He was concerned that the group had not withdrawn their formal action "expressing their lack of confidence in me as a worker." Asserting that although both "the question involved and the way of handling it" were a great "surprise" to him, he stated that he had not given the opposers of the movement "any opportunity to make capital out of it." Nevertheless, although he had not talked to anyone on the matter, Prescott knew that the church "grapevine" was working. Word was apparently getting around. He felt the proper time had come for an impartial review "that I may know definitely what standing I have in this denomination."

Prescott's patience and stubborn persistence eventually paid off. Four days later, on September 18, the officers wrote an apology to him and formally asked forgiveness for the way they had proceeded. While affirming once more their conviction that Bible teachers should be "in the fullest accord with our leading denominational points of faith," they nevertheless acknowledged that they had

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acted wrongly and asserted that they were now "of one mind" to withdraw the January 29 letter. Prescott, feeling he had been vindicated at last, expressed appreciation and suggested that henceforth both sides drop the matter entirely. Fellowship was restored. Two months later, by special invitation, the professor preached a devotional sermon at the Autumn Council in Battle Creek. Soon afterwards he was busy again at the task he had never really laid aside. The task of educating the brethren.\footnote{I. H. Evans and W. H. Branson to W. W. Prescott, September 18, 1934, RG 11: Vice Pres.: I. H. Evans Fld 1934--Prescott, GCAR. GCO Min, September 14, 18, 1934.}
CHAPTER XXII

WRITING INTO RETIREMENT

After Prescott concluded his Bible teaching at Union College in 1927, he continued to serve for another decade as field secretary of the General Conference. In fact, it was not until he was eighty-two years of age that he retired from active ministry. As already noted, two of these years were spent at Emmanuel Missionary College. The remainder of the decade was spent in a wide variety of activities which included field visitation, an overseas trip, editorial work, counselling with church leaders who were experiencing doctrinal difficulties, and a good deal of writing.

Just as Prescott's basic approach to his work in the earlier part of his life had been that of an educator, so it was in this last period of his career. He continued to carry a burden for a better educated ministry. He also continued to have a deep concern for accuracy and for correcting some aspects of the teachings of the church. But in what seems to have been a rather reactionary climate in the church during the 1930s, this burden of the professor's was not always appreciated. His forthright attempts to "educate" his colleagues in church leadership on some of these matters met with some resistance. Consequently, in the years just before his retirement, relationships between the officers at the General Conference and the aging professor appear to have become strained. This
chapter surveys Prescott's activities during his last decade of active ministry, noting in particular some of his more prominent concerns.

Writing for the Ministry

The 1926 General Conference session at Milwaukee was the first that Prescott had attended since 1913. His preaching ability, however, had not been forgotten. At the session he delivered three of the major sermons. His theme was the everlasting gospel. Even when addressing the problem of creation and evolution, his main theme was Christ. According to the professor, the chief error of evolution was its denial of a need for atonement and therefore the need for the mediation of Christ. The 1926 General Conference session was a significant one for the church because for the first time the recently formed Ministerial Association conducted its own meetings in the session. Prescott figured prominently as a preacher at these meetings.

Organized in 1922, the Ministerial Association which was headed by Daniells seems to have been highly appreciated by the church's ministry. In its first four years its program developed quite rapidly resulting in the appointment of L. E. Froom as an associate to Daniells in early 1926. Both men were enthusiastic about "righteousness by faith" and vigorously promoted it in their

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work. In this they were strongly supported by Prescott, their mutual friend.¹

Prior to the 1925 General Conference session, Prescott had written a pamphlet that was circulated by the Ministerial Association. According to Daniells, it had been "markedly commended by hundreds of our workers the world around." Seeing in the Association an opportunity to educate a wider group than just his classes at Union College, Prescott continued throughout 1927 to write materials for distribution. Froom was enthusiastic and informed Daniells: "I have seen some of his studies such as he has followed there at the College and if our men could be encouraged in systematic Bible study such as he has given to his advanced students there, it would do them a world of good." He continued, "It would lead them in channels of thinking that would revolutionize their presentations of the message . . . I am confident."²

Froom's correspondence with Daniells reveals that a cordial relationship had developed between Froom and Prescott. The professor frequently visited with Froom, and they discussed their common burden for a more effective ministry and a more thorough

¹According to Froom it was Prescott's preaching that sparked Daniells' renewed interest in righteousness by faith. After his release from the General Conference presidency in 1922, Daniells strongly emphasized this theme and eventually wrote on it in Christ Our Righteousness (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1926); Movement of Destiny, p. 377.

²GC Bulletin, June 4, 1926, p. 9. Later in 1927, Prescott wrote another pamphlet, "To Preach and to Testify." According to Froom, this was also highly acclaimed in the field. L. E. Froom to A. J. Daniells, May 16, 1927, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Correspondence with AGD," GCAR.
Christocentric presentation of Adventist beliefs. In 1927 Prescott pressed Froom to join him at Union College to conduct his work from there, but Froom declined the proposal. He feared that getting away from headquarters would diminish the Association's influence. Prescott's desire to help in elevating the standard of the ministry was not entirely thwarted, however. It seems clear that Froom was considerably influenced both in his theology and method by the professor. When Prescott commended him on an article he had published on the covenants, Froom reported to Daniells, "It is my opinion that that which appeals to him [Prescott] is surely of some worth. He is scholarly and critical in the right and friendly sense, and with his personal spiritual vision, I have great confidence in his judgment." Daniells affirmed his confidence. Several years later Froom wrote to Lynn Wood, "One of the reasons why I always love to hear Professor Prescott address us is because of the impressive instructional feature of his sermons. They are food for thought. The content is worthwhile and is presented in a systematic way so as to help us very, very materially."

2 Another burden that they both shared was Daniells' discouragement and his difficulties with the new administration. Daniells apparently felt somewhat alienated and abandoned by the new administration and spent most of his time in California conducting revival meetings on righteousness by faith. His off-the-cuff comments about the 'machinery' in Washington and his insinuations that the leadership in Washington was preoccupied with 'turning the crank' instead of with spiritual matters, worried church officials. Froom remarked that the leaders had "expressed their grief over the changed relationships" (L. E. Froom to A. G. Daniells, March 9, July 13, 1927, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Correspondence with AGD," GCAr).  

2 L. E. Froom to A. G. Daniells, August 18, 1927; A. G. Daniells to L. E. Froom, September 1, 1927, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Correspondence with AGD," GCAr. L. E. Froom to L. H. Wood, May 11, 1931, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6=1, ABVAU.
One of Daniells’ dreams as Ministerial Association secretary was to develop a magazine specifically as a means of direct communication with the ministry. The proposal was at first rejected by money-conscious administrators. But the idea persisted. According to Froom, “It was a battle royal.” Prescott, notable above others, lent his support to the idea. He felt that a “sixteen page monthly” would be very desirable and urged the brethren to launch the project. In 1928 their agitation bore fruit. The first issue of the new digest-size, thirty-two-page monthly appeared in January of that year. Prescott was a prominent contributor from the start, writing lengthy series of studies for the section entitled “Delving into the Word.” Some of the topics he discussed included “The Everlasting Gospel,” “The Heart of the Gospel,” “Jehovah-Jesus,” and “The Gospel Message in the Books of Daniel and Revelation.” Later articles considered modernism, the ecumenical movement, archeology and Scripture, and Roman Catholicism. His final contribution in 1939 well illustrated an aspect of the professor’s character. It was a short article correcting a statement he had made in an article three years earlier. He had misread a Latin commentary on Rev 20. His meticulous concern for accuracy meant that it was important for him to set the record straight. Sometimes, though, setting the record straight created problems. Such was the case in the discussion over Bible versions.

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1. L. E. Froom to A. G. Daniells, January 7, August 18, 1927, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Correspondence with AGD," GCAr.

2. See for example, The Ministry, January 1928, pp. 19-22; February 1928, pp. 21-23; April 1928, pp. 18-21; August 1939, p. 4.
The Versions Controversy

Three or four months after Prescott returned to Washington from Union College in late 1928, B. G. Wilkinson, dean and Bible teacher at Washington Missionary College, launched a vigorous attack on the American Revised Version of the Bible in a series of public lectures in Washington. Widely circulated advertisements billed him authoritatively as having just returned "from a summer of travel and research in the great libraries of Europe." Attendance was heavy. Headlines in the *Washington Post* the next day announced "Dean of Washington College attacks the American Bible." In his presentation, Wilkinson charged that the A.R.V. originated with the Jesuits and that it purposely attacked the incarnation, the deity of Christ, the Sabbath, the Law of God, miracles, and atonement by blood. It was the product of higher critical scholarship and was designed to undermine the distinctive "message" of the Adventist church as well as the "fundamentals" of Christianity.¹

Prescott, who attended the first lecture, was "ashamed for him and the denomination." He considered the lecture "a display of arrant ignorance" which was not really an attack on any particular version but on the reliability of Scripture as a whole. So "stirred up" was Prescott that the next day he protested to the General Conference officers. He received no encouragement, however, and no attempt was made to restrain Wilkinson. When a second lot of "sensational" advertising was distributed for the next lecture,

Prescott again protested, along with some others. This time the General Conference officers took action. Spicer wrote to Wilkinson and his superiors urging that the matter not be discussed.¹

According to Prescott, Spicer's letter stopped the public advertising, but Wilkinson "kept on slamming the A.R.V. at every turn." A student in Wilkinson's classes reported to the professor that "they had had nothing else in their Bible classes for nine weeks except an attack on the A.R.V." Then, during the summer camp-meetings in the Columbia Union, despite Spicer's cautions, Wilkinson kept up his "campaign." Because of Spicer's counsel, Wilkinson would not mention the A.R.V. by name. Nonetheless, in his meetings he would set up a display of several modern translations including the A.R.V. and then condemn them all.²

Prescott was greatly disturbed at the impact that Wilkinson was having on the ministerial students he was training and on the field in general. Between June and November of 1929 he approached Wilkinson three times to make an appointment when they could meet together to sit down to discuss the question, but Wilkinson declined. His explanation was that he did not have the time to make thorough preparation.³


²Prescott's account is corroborated by an independent account from another Bible teacher who was disturbed over Wilkinson's campaign. See extract from a letter dated June 23, 1929, attached to W. W. Prescott to W. A. Spicer, September 13, 1929; W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, December 3, 1929, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.,” GCAr.

According to A. O. Tait, who was apparently unaware of the discussion in the Columbia Union, G. B. Starr and F. C. Gilbert in their talks at California campmeetings were also giving the Revised Version quite a black eye.' He personally heard Starr report an alleged conversation he had had with Mrs. White in which she was supposed to have said to him "that she would like to know who was responsible for the Revised Version's being used in her later writings." She had reportedly stated that "she had never given authority for anything of that sort." In an effort to correct what he was sure was an error, Tait wrote to Starr and also published in the Signs' regular "Question Corner" an article on the relative merits of the King James and Revised versions of the Bible. The article brought to a surprised Tait a note of caution from Spicer urging against publishing anything further on the question. In reply, Tait had to inform Spicer that in fact they had already begun a series by none other than Prescott himself.¹

For three years Tait had planned for a series of articles on the history of the Bible. His contributor, however, had apparently not been able to provide them. Consequently, during the summer of 1929, his associate Alonzo Baker had approached Prescott, who was happy to comply with their request. Besides, he had been worried that nothing was being done to counter Wilkinson's influence. The professor had already done considerable study and had written some things on the matter, but he gave it renewed attention

frequently visiting the Library of Congress and spending many hours in his study at home. By early November, the first five articles of the ten-part series were at the Pacific Press being set in type. The series was advertised in the November 25 issue of the paper and commenced on December 3.¹

In response to the advertisement, and before the first article in the series had even appeared, telegrams from conference presidents in the Columbia Union conference began arriving at the Pacific Press urging Tait not to publish the series. The articles, it was argued, would bring controversy and unsettle many of the youth. The same presidents protested to the General Conference officers, who also sent a telegram urging restraint. Instead of persuading Tait to stop the articles, the protests made him more determined to proceed. The actions of the Columbia Union men reminded him of the spirit of domination and oppression that he had encountered in Battle Creek in the early 1890s. He had served on the book committee at that time and recalled that he had been "intimately" associated with Prescott in those "difficult struggles." "Astonished beyond measure," he protested vigorously to Spicer about the "peculiar spirit of self-centered domination manifested by the Columbia Union men "that resembled the spirit of the papacy."²

¹Some of Prescott's hand-written research notes and Library of Congress request slips for this series of articles are preserved. They show him to be a thorough and exacting researcher. His sources included approximately fifty journal articles, books, dictionaries, and encyclopedias. PC 21: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.,” GCAr.

²A. O. Tait to W. A. Spicer, November 27, 1929; W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, November 27, December 3, 1929, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.,” GCAr.
In December 2 the Pacific Press board considered the matter at length. They noted that the only protests over the series came solely from the Columbia Union territory. Thus, they voted to proceed with the series "as if there were no controversy at all." Their defense was that the series was one on the history of the Bible and that a comparison of the two versions was "incidental" to the story of the transmission of the Bible as a whole. In an effort to be as conciliatory as possible, Baker advised Prescott to eliminate some of the comparisons between the various versions in the seventh article. The last three articles the professor reluctantly agreed to rewrite to avoid possible misunderstanding.\(^1\)

Tait had earlier observed to Spicer that he was sure there was an ulterior motive behind the whole affair. He noted that Gilbert was against the A.R.V., particularly "because he did not like its translation involving the question of the 'daily.'" Prescott later confirmed that the same reason applied to Wilkinson. "For ten years or more Wilkinson has been strong in his opposition to my teaching on Dan 3, and of course if he can discredit the A.R.V. he thinks he was won a strong point against me." Prescott also affirmed that he had never discussed the matter in public and that his articles were not written as an answer to Wilkinson, but simply to relate the story of the Bible.\(^2\) The articles began by discussing

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\(^1\) A. L. Baker to W. W. Prescott, December 2, 6, 1929; W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait and A. L. Baker, December 11, 1929, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.", GC. Prescott was disturbed at the possibility that Tait would yield to the "Papal Combination in the Columbia Union Conference."

\(^2\) A. O. Tait to W. A. Spicer, November 25, 1929; W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, December 3, 1929, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W.W.," GC.
the origins of the Bible. The third in the series was entitled the "Carefulness of the Revisers" while the fourth dealt with "The Textus Receptus." "Putting the Bible in the Common Tongue" introduced the work of Bible revisions in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The last three articles showed how archeology confirmed the Bible and threw light on its meaning. They were a ringing defense of the authority and integrity of Scripture.1

Even so, Spicer, pressured from both sides, felt constrained in the "regular course" of his "administrative duty" to write to Prescott after the fourth article appeared. He felt that the discussion of the "faultiness of Bible manuscripts" was "ill-timed and harmful" and that it would spread "questioning and unbelief."2

1 The articles ran from December 1, 1929, through March 4, 1930.

2 W. A. Spicer to W. W. Prescott, January 14, 1930, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.," GCAr. Spicer's concern seems to have been prompted by the difficulties the General Conference was already experiencing with the Columbia Union Conference. The agitation of the versions matter by Wilkinson actually seems to have been the tip of an iceberg. The theological issues were just part of a deeper power struggle with the General Conference.

According to Prescott, the Columbia Union Conference men had "dominated" for years and had "defied" the counsel of the General Conference. W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, December 3, 1929, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.," GCAr.

The conferences that comprised the Columbia Union in the 1930s were small--the average conference membership was less than 2,000. The membership was generally strongly fundamentalist in thinking and the conference presidents were fiercely jealous of their autonomy. The presidents of the conferences had been anti-General Conference for some years, but in the early 1930s this feeling became quite marked. At the onset of the depression, in order to economize, the General Conference suggested boundary changes that would combine some of the smaller local conferences and union conferences. The plan was to reduce fifty-eight local conferences to forty-eight and twelve union conferences to eight. "Report of the Autumn Council," RH, November 26, 1931, pp. 6-8. The Lake Union Conference enthusiastically followed the suggestion but the Columbia Union stoutly resisted it. It was planned to merge the Columbia...
Towards the end of January, as the series proceeded and the time for Signs promotion arrived, the Columbia Union president informed the Pacific Press that Tait was not welcome in his territory. C. V. Leach, president of the Ohio Conference, on behalf of his own and two neighboring conferences, whose presidents attended his committee meeting, informed the Pacific Press that no promotional materials were to be sent to their conferences. The paper was being boycotted.

A highly indignant Baker tried to be tactful in his reply to Leach. He pointed out that the lead editorial in the Review of January 2 had taken an opposite view of the A.R.V. to that held by Wilkinson but there had been no embargo against it. He also noted that the standard text book on the matter in a number of the church colleges taught that the A.R.V. was technically superior to the K.J.V. "These things have been taught for years in our denomination," he argued. "Why, then, point the accusing finger at the Signs?"


¹C. V. Leach to E. F. Hackman, January 21, 1930, RG 58: LEF(1) Flid "Revised Version," GCAR.
suggested that rather than the Signs unsettling people's faith, 'some of the brethren over your way' were the guilty ones.¹

It was clear to Tait, Baker, and the Pacific Press board that the opposition to Prescott's articles was actually a highly personal antagonism to the professor stirred up by Wilkinson, Washburn, and others over "the daily" and related issues. This was made clearer when William Robbins, president of the West Pennsylvania Conference, objected to the Signs' proposition to publish another series of Prescott's articles on Daniel. The professor had prepared a twenty-six-part series, not as a verse by verse commentary, but discussing the larger themes of the book from a Christocentric perspective. Robbins was fearful that Prescott might say some things that differed from Uriah Smith.²

The controversy over the versions did not die down when Prescott's ten-part series in the Signs concluded. Four months later, in June 1930, Wilkinson published Our Authorized Bible Indicated. The 253-page book set forth the same ideas the doctor had given in his public lectures. It was greeted with a mixture of

¹A. L. Baker to C. V. Leach, February 11, 1930, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Revised Version," GCAr.

²A. L. Baker to W. M. Robbins, February 13, 1930, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Revised Version"; A. D. Tait to W. W. Prescott, July 14, 1930, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.," GCAr. Tait considered Prescott's articles to be "mighty good stuff" and was "ready to start them straight away." He knew though that if he did the Columbia Union would "start another big furor." He thought it the better part of wisdom to wait. The series was not begun until March 13, 1934. Nineteen of the twenty-six articles were published. Significantly, the series ended with Dan 7 on September 18, 1934. Daniel 8 was not discussed. In the early 1930s "the daily" was apparently still a highly emotional issue. See C. P. Bollman to J. J. Starr, September 8, 1930, JLMcCC, Bx 1 Fld 2, AUHR. Starr was still vigorously agitating the matter.
horrified amazement and mirth by Wirth, M. C. Wilcox, Tait, and Baker.

Baker summarized its main theme as a lauding of the King James Version "as the only inspired Bible in the English language." He derided it as "obscurantist propaganda," while Wirth remarked that it was "pathetic and tragic that out of Seventh-day Adventism should come forth such a quixotic belated war against the windmills of real scholarship." The men appealed to Prescott, who was attending meetings in Europe at the time, to do some further research on the topic and to get the General Conference to take some action. The General Conference officers, however, were already hearing from the field about the book. In an effort to quiet things, J. L. McElhany wrote to union and local conference presidents giving some background to the discussion and expressing the rather neutral opinion that circulation of the book would be "of no particular help to our work." The General Conference, it seems, simply wanted the issue to go away.\(^1\)

When Prescott returned to Washington in the autumn, he consulted with his fellow officers. Rather than simply regarding the book as being of no particular help, Prescott considered it to be quite damaging, particularly since its title page clearly implied

\(^1\)Wirth was a Bible teacher at Loma Linda.

that the book was closely identified with the church.\(^1\) As a result of his brief presentation to the officers' council, he was asked to set his criticism down in writing so that General Conference president, Charles Watson, could take up the issue with Wilkinson.\(^2\) By early January 1931, when Prescott read his report, the problem had grown more serious. The officers reported that Wilkinson had "fronted the General Conference committee's action in regard to versions" and had continued to agitate contrary to the advice of the committee. Furthermore, the Columbia Union was defiantly "advertising and pushing the book." The great concern was to know how to handle the difficulty. The officers felt that it might be best to subtly bring peer pressure to bear on the Columbia Union people to get them to desist. Froom and W. E. Howell were appointed to write up a full review of the book and it was planned to call the union conference presidents in to discuss the matter.\(^3\)

Froom and Howell's report on Wilkinson's book recommended

\(^1\) Froom reported that many men were "perplexed," "distressed," and "confused." He himself was not too well informed and sought Prescott's help in understanding what Prescott described as the "manifestly unfair and inaccurate charges" of the book. L. E. Froom to W. W. Prescott, November 9, 1930, PC 12: LEF(1) Fld "Prescott W. W.," GCAr.

\(^2\) Wilkinson replied to the charge that he had caused the controversy by asserting: "I absolutely plead 'not guilty' to starting a controversy over versions... All I did was to come to the defence of the Authorized Version when it was attacked" (B. G. Wilkinson, "A Reply to the 'Review' of my Book Our Authorized Bible Vindicated," "Conclusion," p. 5, AUHR).

\(^3\) Wirth and Elder O. F. Frank had also written criticisms of the book. GCO Min, November 18, 1930. It seems that the brethren were aware that Prescott's name associated with any formal review of the book would not help the situation in the Columbia Union. His material, however, was apparently used by Froom in the formal review.
that "an attempt be made to stop its circulation." They asserted that it did not "represent the Seventh-day Adventist viewpoint, or sound historical and technical Greek facts." According to Froom, Wilkinson demanded an opportunity to reply and was granted one. He appeared before the committee with J. S. Washburn, who went "before him toting a suitcase full of books, which he spread out for the Doctor." Froom remarked that the reply was "a very elaborate and wandering recitation" at the conclusion of which the officers reaffirmed their vote. Nevertheless, the doctor "kept on his urbane way and continued to distribute his book secretly."^1

Of Books and Manuscripts

If Wilkinson, Washburn, and the conference presidents of the Columbia Union considered Prescott's writing dangerous, his old-time close colleagues did not. Quite to the contrary, they considered him to be a mine of valuable ideas and information that the church ought to utilize before the professor got too old and it was too late. E. R. Palmer, manager of the Review and Herald since 1912, was one who thought this way. In late 1930, just a few weeks before his death, he discussed the matter with Watson. Later he wrote a letter presenting his thoughts about the contribution "our dear Brother Prescott" could still make.2

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^1 "A Review of Our Authorized Bible Vindicated by B. G. Wilkinson," AUHR. The manuscript lists no authors. That Froom and Howell were the authors of the document, however, is reported by Froom. L. E. Froom to M. E. Kern, July 29, 1951, RG 58: LEF(2) 1940s-50s Fld "M. E. Kern," GCAr.

"The Lord has given Brother Prescott a studious, spiritual, logical mind, and the ability both to write and to speak very carefully, wrote the Review manager. He acknowledged that the professor at seventy-five was still strong enough for active field work, but felt that a better use of his abilities might be made if he could be depended upon more for "counsel and for special writing and speaking." Although the professor's "comparatively heavy style" and his "fearlessness in attacking what he believed to be wrong" had cut him off from a number of opportunities for speaking, Palmer felt convinced that while he still enjoyed good health and a clear mind he should be given the opportunity for writing out in definite form the fruit of his study.

Palmer had in mind two books that he was sure would be a valuable legacy to the denomination. One should be on "the doctrines of the Bible in the setting of the life and sacrifice and ministry of Christ." The other should be on the papacy and its counterfeit gospel. "The two themes are of outstanding importance and I know of no man who can either write or speak more clearly or with more authority on these two subjects than Brother Prescott." Palmer was aware that the professor was hesitant to write on some features because of objections "by a few of his brethren," but Palmer felt strongly that the professor ought to be urged to do the work anyway.1

Watson took up the idea with Prescott, who seemed quite favorable. Realizing, though, that the proposal would have a hard time if it were presented to the full General Conference committee

1: Ibid.
apparently because a number of influential members were supporters of the Wilkinson-Washburn theology), Watson discreetly sought to secure authorization for the work by calling together a select group of the officers. For some reason, however, it was not until almost twelve months later that Prescott was authorized to start the work of writing. When the topics were presented to the officers, Prescott had added a third possibility—a book on archeology and the historical accuracy of Scripture. It was this third topic that the officers selected for the professor. The assignment provided him with yet another way to contribute to the education of the church's clergy.

During the winter months of 1932, Prescott busied himself with his pen. By July he had finished twenty-four chapters. Not until the end of 1933, however, did the completed work, The Spade and the Bible, come from the presses of Fleming H. Revell. The book was a first in the area for the denomination and was read widely as one of the requirements in the Ministerial Association's reading course. Its 216 pages discussed the abundance of evidence "from the rocks and dust heaps of ancient lands" that confirmed the reliability of the Scriptures when they recorded historical facts. Prescott was careful, however, not to assert that archeology proved the Bible true. Archeology, while it provided a reasonable basis for faith, must not be "pressed beyond its proper sphere." It did not confirm or deny

1C. H. Watson to E. R. Palmer, January 8, 1931, RG 11: Fid 1921-P, GCAr. Watson planned to counsel with Palmer as to who should comprise the select group.

2GCO Min, December 2, 1931. Palmer's untimely death may have somehow interfered with the project.
the "message" of the Bible. It could not "take the place of the voice of God speaking to the spiritual man."\textsuperscript{1}

In keeping with his usual approach, Prescott relied extensively on authorities in the field. In some of the chapters, citations from the more than fifty authors Prescott consulted constituted more than a third of the text. His purpose in doing this was to provide authorities and arguments that the reader could use and to stimulate the reader to further study. In his discussion of the subject, however, the professor achieved an engaging narrative style. At times quite polemical against the claims of modernism, and at other times lightheartedly amusing, the book served as a very useful educational tool.\textsuperscript{2}

As Prescott was finishing his work on The Spade and the Bible in mid-1932, he discussed with Watson his plans for his next book which he planned to be on the papacy. His two years teaching at Emmanuel Missionary College, however, prevented him from proceeding with the work. Shortly after his return to Washington he took up the matter again, suggesting to the officers that the project would take two years.\textsuperscript{3} The officers gave their approval. A year later, Prescott was finishing his work on The Spade and the Bible in mid-1932, he discussed with Watson his plans for his next book which he planned to be on the papacy. His two years teaching at Emmanuel Missionary College, however, prevented him from proceeding with the work. Shortly after his return to Washington he took up the matter again, suggesting to the officers that the project would take two years.\textsuperscript{3} The officers gave their approval. A year later,


\textsuperscript{2}Prescott, The Spade and the Bible, pp. 17, 18. For an example of Prescott's humor see his word play on getting into deep water, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{3}One of Prescott's stipulations was that the completed manuscript should be read by a committee of historians before it went to any of the existing book committees. He apparently was fearful of the negative climate in the church towards research. He was also

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though, he still had not proceeded on the project. According to
the officers he lacked the inspiration to proceed because he feared
it would not be published. By mid-1936 he still felt reluctant.
When he approached the officers again, they confirmed his suspicions
that under the prevailing political conditions it would probably not
be accepted by a book committee or published. They nevertheless
expressed a keen interest in securing the information he had col-
clected. Instead of proceeding with the book, they suggested that he
assist L. E. Froom by translating some of the original Latin sources
he was assembling for his "Advent Source Collection."

In the meantime, the professor's pen had not been idle.
Based on some Week of Prayer meetings he had conducted at the church
at Adventist headquarters in 1935, he began to write a series of
manuscripts. These, which he wrote at an earlier suggestion by
Watson and which he apparently intended to develop into a book on
the work of Christ, circulated among some of his friends and col-
leagues in Takoma Park. The reaction of the General Conference
officers seems to indicate, however, that there were lingering doubts
about the orthodoxy of the author. General Conference secretary,
M. E. Kern, seemed particularly suspicious and brought the matter
to the attention of the officers. He reported that M. L. Andreason
and Charles Thompson appreciated the material, but he himself felt
unsure. An informal reading committee was set up to screen the

aware of the difficulties over Conradi's manuscript. GCO Min,
November 25, 1923. See p. 593 below.

1 GCO Min, December 9, 1934; November 13, 1935; July 23,
1936.
material. Prescott, seemingly unaware of these moves, kept writing.¹

Five months later, on February 23, 1936, Kern brought the matter up again. He reported that there was still a mixed reaction. Some felt "that it was of the kind that would be helpful to our people generally," while others feared that the professor's view "of the work of the Lord as Mediator (Christ's pre-cross priesthood), might be detrimental in its effect upon many readers." Kern himself felt that Prescott was "hardly in accord with the accepted view of the denomination" on the point. The officers were apparently divided and no action was taken.²

The following day Kern wrote to Prescott about the book. While he felt the style was rather heavy in places, his main difficulty was with the subject matter. In chapter twenty-four, Prescott had discussed the earthly counterfeit ministry of Catholicism contrasting it with Christ's heavenly ministry. He had dealt with this in the context of Dan 3. While Kern recognized that the issue was "true and important" and was "a very fine presentation," he thought that "under the existing conditions" (apparently alluding to the continued hostility to Prescott's "daily" interpretation on the part of those who held the "old view"), it would be unwise to publish it. Twenty-five years after 1910, Prescott was still being embargoed.³

¹GCO Min, September 23, 1935.
²GCO Min, February 23, 1936. The manuscripts were given the general title, "Triumphant Christianity."
³M. E. Kern to W. W. Prescott, February 24, 1936, RG 21: Fld 1936--P-Q, GCAr.
what concerned Kern more, however, was Prescott's treatment of Christ's heavenly ministry. He related that "some of the General Conference officers" felt he was in error on the matter. Did not the book of Hebrews teach that "Christ had to qualify to be a priest?" He felt that to speak of him as being a "mediator from the first" was confusing. Worse still, it "would play into the hands of Ballenger, Conradi, and Fletcher." He believed it was not the denominational view. In conclusion, he noted that he would still like to see a book published by Prescott. "There is so much that is fine and helpful outside of the things on which you seem to differ from your brethren."

Prescott apparently took Kern's advice, and in the months that followed he developed another manuscript on "The Reality of Christianity." In mid-1937 he submitted it to the Review and Herald. Prescott's influential friends at the Review had gone, however, and the name "Prescott" seems to have become a liability. The book committee rejected the manuscript. The professor appealed to the officers on the decision. What troubled him was not the book committee's rejection of the material per se. He himself had been chairman of the book committee for many years and he knew that the committee had the right to reject any manuscript. What troubled him was the fact that in the rejection his "orthodoxy" on "particular doctrines" had been called into question. He felt he had been accused of teaching "Sabellianism, Christian Science, Theosophy, ibid."
Russellism [sic] Universalism" and that his manuscript "nullified the second coming of Christ." 1

A time was appointed to give the professor a hearing. As a result of Prescott's defense of himself, the officers appointed a committee of four to read the manuscript again. Four months later they reported that "in the main" the teaching of the manuscript was "sound, including the Trinity." With some minor editing they felt that the manuscript could be published and that, in fact, it would be "an unusually strong presentation of the practical aspects of Righteousness by faith in the personal life." Again Prescott was vindicated, but for some reason the manuscript was still not published. His reputation seems to have been scarred permanently among a few of the leaders.

Modifying a Defense of the Sanctuary

Part of the difficulty Prescott experienced in his later years in having his book manuscripts accepted, as his friend Palmer noted earlier, seems to have been his involvement in controversies. Some apparently thought he had been too ready to correct what he believed to be error and sometimes too vigorous in defending the truth. This, combined with the prejudice against him among some of the leaders which had been fostered actively by Wilkinson, Washburn, and their powerful supporters in the Columbia Union made many suspicious of him. Also contributing to his difficulties were the suspicions engendered concerning the views he held on the sanctuary doctrine. W. C. G. Murdoch related that L. H. Christian, president

1SCO Min, September 25, 1937.
if the European Division, reported on one occasion in the 1930s: "Nobody quite knows where Prescott is." On the other hand, others felt that some leaders in the thirties were not large enough in vision to understand the professor.¹

Prescott had taken a special interest in the central sanctuary teaching of the church for many years. In 1905, as editor of the Review and one of the denomination's most gifted scholars, he had been appointed as one of those to hear A. F. Ballenger with his new views on the heavenly ministry of Christ. Four years later he had written a series of articles replying to Ballenger's interpretation of Hebrews. He insisted that "within the veil" of Heb 6:19 did not mean what Ballenger said it meant. In Prescott's view, the phrase simply meant in the heavenly sanctuary as a whole.² Later, however, when asked to write a critical review of Ballenger's book, he declined because, according to F. M. Wilcox, "he felt he could not in conscience do this without making an exposition of Daniel 3." Ballenger's book, Prescott believed, needed to be answered on a "broad basis." Because of the tensions over "the daily" question, such an answer was not possible.³

¹C. B. Haynes, a close friend of Prescott's and an ardent preacher of righteousness by faith, once remarked to W. C. G. Murdoch that Prescott was "one of the greatest men in the denomination and that unfortunately he had to contend with a lot of peanuts." Though he was hurt by the brethren, claimed Murdoch, he "never wavered in his confidence in the brethren." He remained loyal. Interview with W. C. G. Murdoch, May 4, 1981.


³F. M. Wilcox to A. G. Daniells, June 5, 1911, RG 11: Fld 1911-W, GCAr.
when E. E. Andross wrote a reply to Ballenger's book in 1911, Prescott felt that Andross' answer was worse than Ballenger's challenge. As chairman of the committee appointed to review Andross' manuscript, he wrote (at the committee's request): "When you adopt the interpretation which you follow in your manuscript, you really deny the efficacy of the new covenant previous to the cross. . . . This seems to us to be a very serious perversion of the Gospel." He explained that it involved "worse consequences than the teachings of Ballenger." What perturbed Prescott was that in order to answer Ballenger, Andross (who also differed with Prescott on "the daily") was reverting to the pre-1888 theological position of the church and discarding the hard won but vitally important theological gains of the early 1890s.\footnote{W. W. Prescott to E. E. Andross, December 5, 1911, RG 11: F1d 111-A. Daniells agreed with Prescott that Andross' arguments "would be repudiated by a large number of our ministers" (A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, July 10, 1912, RG 11: Lb 50, GCAr). Prescott and many others saw that the 1888 righteousness by faith emphasis was linked closely with the new view of the covenants and the law in Galatians. Besides, they believed that Mrs. White had endorsed the new positions.}

In 1929, almost eighteen years after these developments, Daniells while visiting Australia, was shocked to find from confidential conversations with W. W. Fletcher, the vice president of the Australasian Union Conference, that Fletcher was in theological difficulty on the heavenly ministry of Christ. Daniells advised Fletcher not to present his views to the church committees immediately, but to consult with Prescott first. Fletcher took Daniells' advice, and a number of letters passed between Prescott and himself. Fletcher greatly appreciated the professor's "kindly endeavors" to
help him in his study and to show him where he was "mistaken."

Prescott also advised Fletcher not to move hastily in making a
formal statement of his convictions to the brethren but to come to
the United States for further study and consultation. Fletcher
wished he had started the correspondence with Prescott earlier and
agreed with the professor that he did not know of any body of workers
to which he could turn for greater light. He felt, nonetheless,
that he ought officially to inform his president and the General
Conference. Later, when Fletcher visited Washington, he spent time
again with Prescott.¹

At the time of their dialogue, Prescott had just returned
from a summer in Europe where he had spent time with Conradi con­
sidering some related questions. Conradi had been researching the
history of prophetic interpretation and had come to conclusions
at variance with the traditional positions of the church. Prescott
was asked to review the lengthy manuscript Conradi had earlier sub­mitted to the Review and Herald--a task he apparently was reluctant
to undertake. Eventually, ten months later, he submitted a twenty­
two-page review which was primarily a summary of some of the manu­script's "outstanding features" with no judgment expressed as to
their merit.² Prescott recommended, though, that the manuscript

¹W. W. Fletcher to A. G. Daniells, June 5, 1929, RG 58: LEF
(1) Fld "Fletcher W. W."; W. W. Fletcher to W. W. Prescott, August
27, 1929, RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Fletcher and Sanctuary Service," GCAr.

²GC0 Min, November 11, 1930; E. Kotz to H. F. Schuberth, June
19, 1931, RG 21: Fld 1931-Central Europe, GCAr. Kotz expressed a
fear that Prescott would be in harmony with most of what Brother
Conradi had written. It seems he may have thought that this was why
Prescott took so long over the assignment.
should not be published. He felt, first, it would not interest the average reader, and second, its variance with traditional positions would suggest that a representative committee should consider the material first. Nevertheless, Prescott was "impressed" with the amount of valuable information the manuscript contained. He wished that it "could be copied and placed in every editorial library and placed in every college... It would be of much value to editors and Bible teachers." The professor's rather favorable review of Conradi's manuscript apparently gave rise to rumors in Europe that the professor was in harmony with Conradi's doctrinal views. He was asked to deny the rumor in order to protect himself and to help the European church leadership give a clear answer. In fact, he did share Conradi's view that Christ had a pre-cross ministry, although what he thought of Conradi's other views is not known. He strongly disapproved Conradi's schismatic activities.¹

The theological issues with which Fletcher and Conradi had confronted the church were serious, and in the endeavor to provide answers there seems to have been considerable confusion. A series of Sabbath School lessons on the sanctuary that Howell had been asked to write—apparently to counter the impact of Fletcher's withdrawal—

¹W. W. Prescott, "Report on Elder L. R. Conradi's Manuscript, September 3, 1931," RG 58: LEF(1) Fld "Conradi"; W. E. Howell to W. W. Prescott, October 14, 1932, RG 11: (Asst. to Pres.), Fld 1932-P, GCAr. F. M. Wilcox apparently became quite antagonistic to Prescott over the issue. In the 1934 episode at Emmanuel Missionary College, he adopted a very inflexible position. Later the two men had a further disagreement over the publication of an article on the papacy by Prescott and over Wilcox's general editorial policy. This may also have contributed to the difficulties over Prescott's own manuscripts. Prescott eventually suggested to the General Conference officers that Wilcox needed to be replaced as editor of the Review. GC0 Min, March 8, 1934; August 9, 1935; January 21, 1936.
was found unsatisfactory. Another set of lessons had to be sub-
stituted. Some members of the Sabbath School lesson committee were
"concerned over the effect of a virtual acknowledgement that lessons
could not be proposed which would be satisfactory." Mrs. Flora
Plummer, the Sabbath School department secretary, however, was
convinced that receiving a "blast" from Ballenger's followers for
their failure would be "a lesser difficulty than to prepare a set of
lessons that they might attack with a show of success."^1

In 1933, a book prepared by C. H. Watson, The Atoning Work of
Christ, had rough passage before it was published. Some on the
reading committee felt it would draw a vigorous attack from the
Ballenger party and that the church would "eat the bitter" over it. ^2
Prescott particularly was anxious to see the result of Watson's
efforts. He hoped it would give "a clear treatment of the sanctuary
matter from the standpoint of the Bible." He felt it would be of no
use to quote the writings of Mrs. White to the critics of the church.
Part of Prescott's anxiety to see Watson's book, it would seem,
 arose from the fact that he himself had been unable to persuade
either Fletcher or Conradi that they were in error. While not
agreeing with all they said, it seems, he was prepared to concede
that a number of their criticisms of the church teachings should not
be dismissed lightly. ^3

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^1 Flora Plummer to C. H. Watson, February 2, 1931, RG 11:
F1d 1931-P, GCAr.

^2 H. Evans to W. W. Prescott, August 25, 1933, RG 11: Vice
Pres.: IHE Fld 1933-P, GCAr. Howell had also prepared a manuscript
that troubled some. Evans thought he conceded too much.

^3 It was probably in this context that Prescott made his
Three years after the professor's return to Washington from Emmanuel Missionary College, he was asked to critique a Sabbath School lesson quarterly manuscript on the sanctuary that had been prepared by Branson. He apparently decided that this would be an appropriate time to raise the subject with the General Conference officers. Branson was absent, but two long sessions were held with his colleagues and Prescott went through the lesson series in fine detail. The criticisms he offered and the points he raised with the brethren clearly indicated that he had done a lot of reflecting on the whole doctrine of the atonement since his encounter with Fletcher and Conradi. But his main criticism was simply a refinement of that which he had offered to Andross twenty years earlier. Adventists should not deny that Christ served as a priest and mediator before calvary as well as afterwards. He believed that Christ's priesthood was inherent in his sonship. Citing Heb 5:5-6, he maintained that Christ was "a Priest forever after the order of Melchizadek." He also indicated that the significance of the 2,300 days related to the "restoration of the sanctuary perhaps after the modern Babylonian captivity"—a more flexible approach to the chronology. Other criticisms concerned the misuse of Scripture in the manuscript, such as using Acts 3:19 to apply to the end time, inaccurate statements concerning the blotting out of sin, and inconsistencies between one part of the pamphlet and another.¹

¹ GC Min, March 5, 6, 1937. An abbreviated transcript of the meeting (two sessions) was included in the minutes.
After the first session, some of the brethren apparently felt that their suspicions about the professor's orthodoxy were indeed true. He had openly disagreed with a statement in *Great Controversy* where Mrs. White said that Christ began his work in the heavenly sanctuary "after his ascension." At the commencement of the second session, therefore, Prescott quoted four passages from the *Spirit of Prophecy* that, he argued, showed unequivocally that Christ exercised his priestly ministry prior to his ascension (even during Old Testament times). He pointed out that two leading brethren, Watson and Branson, had taken positions contrary to these specific statements in their books and no one was disturbed by it. He desired that "the same liberality of attitude" that was maintained toward these men should be maintained toward him. In spite of the fact that many of his criticisms of the manuscript seemed valid, his efforts to have changes made were unavailing. The lessons were published apparently unaltered. A generous attitude however, was manifested toward the professor.

In the tense atmosphere in the church following Fletcher and Conradi's departures, it was difficult to look at the issues they had raised. Frequently more concern was expressed about whether some point or argument played into the hands of the critics than about whether the ideas were valid in their own right. During the

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1 E. G. White, *Great Controversy*, p. 420. The statement had been cited in Branson's manuscript.

2 The passages cited were *Desire of Ages*, pp. 625, 680, 751, and *Fundamentals of Christian Education* p. 403. GCO Min, March 6, 1937. See Sabbath School Lessons, Fourth Quarter, 1937.
'930s, E. S. Ballenger's Gathering Call magazine worried the church leaders who, understandably, seemed to be more interested in replying to the critics—or at least in not giving them any ground—than addressing the issue raised. Prescott had no sympathy for the Gathering Call or Conradi's campaign against the church, but he was possessed of a scholarly concern for truth and a reformer's passion for advancement and progress. Furthermore, in his later years he was much freer from direct administrative responsibility, thus, he seemed more inclined to investigate issues and look seriously at what the critics of the church were saying. The price he paid for this was the price of being criticized and misunderstood. Nonetheless, he retained confidence in the church and in what he believed to be its distinctive mission. His brethren in leadership recognized this and even after his seemingly unproductive educational efforts with them,

1See, for example, M. E. Kern to J. F. Wright, June 8, 1933, JLMcCC, 8x1 Fld 2, AUHR. Institutionally the church felt strongly pressed to defend itself against criticism and to develop an effective apology. There were some moves, however, to look at the questions that had been asked. After Fletcher's withdrawal the Australasian Division had petitioned the General Conference to call a world-wide Bible Conference to discuss matters related to prophecy and the sanctuary. This was planned for 1932 but had to be cancelled because of the economic depression. The cancellation unfortunately gave further grist for the critics' mill. It was hoped that the newly established seminary would help to resolve some of the difficult questions. See C. H. Watson, "Information Concerning the Australasian Petition to the General Conference," July 12, 1948, RG 17: Biblical Research Institute File: Fld "Ballenger"; E. Kotz to H. F. Schuberth, April 25, 1932, RG 21: Fld 1932-Central Europe, GCAr.

2Prescott was not alone. Taylor G. Bunch was criticized and misunderstood for the same reasons, but his suggestion of using the word "phases" instead of referring to apartments to describe Christ's heavenly ministry has become the more or less standard position of the denomination. J. E. Fulton to T. G. Bunch, August 6, 1932, JLMcCC, 8x1 Fld 2, AUHR.
he was still invited to participate in their councils.  

"Vicarious Filii Dei"

One other issue on which Prescott tried to educate his colleagues during the closing years of his active career was the application of the mystical number 666 to the expression "Vicarius Filii Dei," an alleged title of the Pope. As in the case of the sanctuary doctrine, Prescott's view on this matter was not really a novelty. He had held his particular view of 666 for twenty years or more. In fact, Prescott had previously discussed the issue with the General Conference committee who had been partial to his position. The new generation of church leaders were apparently unaware of this previous discussion sometime shortly after 1910. He seems to have been a little more successful in this issue than in the one on the ministry of Christ. Even so, he had to weather considerable opposition.

The question arose in 1935 when F. J. Nichol, editor of Present Truth, published an article in his paper alleging that the official title of the Pope was "Vicarious Filii Dei" and that this fulfilled the 666 of Rev 13:18. The widely read Catholic paper, Our Sunday Visitor, in reply, challenged Adventists to prove their claim. They also alleged that Adventists relied on biased, unreliable, anti-Catholic sources to make the claim, instead of on reliable, acknowledged Catholic sources. Another writer in a

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1SCO Min, May 1, 1938. By 1938 a series of study groups on sanctuary issues conducted by Andreason and Froom helped to inform church leaders on some of the complexities of the issues. M. E. Kern to J. K. Jones, February 24, 1938, JLMcCC, 3x 1 Fld 3, AUHR.
prominent Catholic paper complained that the "ingenious method of reckoning" that Adventists employed in applying the number 666 to the Pope could just as well be used to show that the number applied to "Ellen Gould White." Nearly a year passed before Adventists published a reply by someone who felt he could adequately prove the point.1

Nichol, three months after the Catholic papers published their challenge, approached Prescott and asked him "to submit such proof as may be available to justify our claim." Prescott responded that he had studied the matter extensively when he was editor of the Protestant and had come to the conclusion that there was, in fact, no satisfactory proof. The claim was based on an acknowledged and discredited forgery, "The Donation of Constantine" in The Decretum of Gratian. His study during the six weeks since Nichol had written him only confirmed the fact. Prescott was concerned about the intellectual honesty of the whole exercise. He argued that Adventists would complain bitterly if their opponents made claims about their church beliefs based on the authority of what their critics or opponents said. Recognized Adventist authorities were a much more accurate source for information about Adventist beliefs. Adventists should therefore treat others as they themselves wished to be treated, he maintained.2

After repeated approaches to the church leadership, he was

1 Our Sunday Visitor, June 2, 30, 1935, p. 3; The Commonweal, August 16, 1935.

2 W. W. Prescott to F. D. Nichol, October 16, 1935, RG 21: Correspondence Fld 1936--P-R, GCAr.
finally granted opportunity to make a presentation on the matter. Prescott prepared thoroughly for the meeting and had quotation after quotation to support his thesis, many of them in Latin. He attempted to show that the formal title used of the Pope was, in fact, "Vicarius Christi," not "Vicarius Filii Dei." Furthermore, while gematia was used in both Greek and Hebrew, it was not used in Latin where arbitrary numbers were assigned to only a few letters. The Greek number 666 could not therefore legitimately be used for a Latin expression which was not a formal title of the Pope anyway.¹

The claim that "Vicarius Filii Dei" was actually inscribed on the tiara used at the Pope's coronation, Prescott labeled as completely false. He related that when he was editor of the Protestant, he had pictures taken of the tiara in the Vatican museum by C. T. Everson and published them in the Protestant. The title "Vicarius Filii Dei" was not on it. When the Southern Publishing Company published the revised edition of Smith's Daniel and the Revelation, a picture of the tiara was included, but an artist had added to the photograph (apparently one that Prescott had had taken) the title "Vicarius Filii Dei." When Prescott received the book and noted the plate, he immediately brought it to the attention of the General Conference committee and presented the facts of the matter. The committee took immediate action to stop the book until the photograph was removed. The professor argued that that was just

¹A full transcript of the presentation and interview was taken. See "Meeting with Elder W. W. Prescott," April 16, 1936, RG 11: Correspondence Prescott Fld 1936 II, GCAR. "Gematria" is the practice of expressing numbers by using consecutive letters of the alphabet.
as much a fraud and a forgery as anything the Catholic church had done. He added, "When we are driven to such conduct as this to prove some of our theology, we had better stop."¹

While some, like M. E. Kern, resisted Prescott's arguments, Froom, Evans, and Watson, among others, seemed supportive and acknowledged the weight of his evidence. The matter was shelved for further study, although it was understood that "in the meantime" the "interpretation should not be repeated." The understanding was apparently not widely known. Twelve months later, a short time before his formal retirement, the persistent Prescott was replying in writing to another author in the Watchman Magazine who continued to make the claim that 666 applied to the non-existent title of the Pope. To the end of his career, Prescott's passion for truth did not dim. He remained an educator to the last.²

¹Ibid., p. 14.

²Ibid., p. 16. W. W. Prescott, "The Interpretation of 'The Number of a Man,'" [April 1937], RG 21: Correspondence Fld 1937--P-R, GCAr. GC O Min, December 18, 1938.
CHAPTER XXIII

RETIREMENT

The 1930s brought to the General Conference in Washington a younger group of leaders. Many of these such as James McElhany, Branson, Watson, and E. Kotz came from service in territories far from Washington, or served there when Prescott was elsewhere. Consequently, to many Prescott was just a name—one that had been surrounded with controversy at that. While the professor's preaching abilities were still recognized, his age and experience respected, and his counsel valued, times were changing. The church was rapidly growing larger. Management of its interests were more complex and its officers were more numerous. Furthermore, during this period the financial trials of the depression years were severe and occupied the attention of the church leaders. Prescott's scholarly concerns somehow did not always seem to mesh with those of the brethren. It seemed that, of necessity, they had to be strongly oriented to more pragmatic considerations. In a sense, he seemed to be outliving his age.

It became increasingly difficult for the brethren to relate to the professor's repeated requests for interviews regarding correcting wrong positions and the troubles connected with his manuscripts. The officers' minutes of these sometimes lengthy interviews convey the impression that the brethren began to regard the elderly
gentleman as something of a bother. (M. R. Thurber, book editor at the Review and Herald in the late 1930s and a neighbor of Prescott's three or four doors removed, reported that sometime around 1940 a rumor went around the park that the professor had been called in by McElhany and was asked to stop "pestering" the brethren.) Prescott himself had begun to feel that increasingly he was being left out of field work and complained to the officers. They were unmoved and noted to themselves that there were, in fact, fewer invitations for his services coming from the field.¹

Invitations, though they were fewer, still came. In May 1936 he attended the General Conference session in San Francisco and served on some of its committees. The sermon that the eighty-one-year-old professor delivered at a morning Bible study hour impressed the congregation and merited special mention in the Review. His theme--"Our faith must lay hold on a person and that person is Christ." Preaching appointments in California and an official visit to the Loma Linda Medical School rounded out his stay on the west coast. Campmeeting appointments in the Lake Union Conference occupied the summer.²

In his preaching during these latter years the professor increasingly enjoyed reminiscing with his congregation about his personal acquaintance with the early pioneers in the movement and his own experiences in connection with the work. Repeatedly he

¹Interview with M. R. Thurber, March 24, 1981. GCO Min, November 13, 1935.

²RH, June 4, 1936, p. 136. GCO Min, March 1, 3, 1936.
emphasized the Sabbath and the sanctuary as the hallmarks of the movement's message. The mediation of Christ and the fourth commandment, in his view, were the two points of reform the church was especially raised up to proclaim before the advent.¹

By 1937 Prescott realized that the time had come for him to be released from active service. His last official engagements as a General Conference field secretary included participating in the landmark 1937 Educational Convention at Camp Blue Ridge and a preaching tour at the Indiana campmeeting during the summer. Thus were concluded fifty-two years of denominational service.

Though retired Prescott did not lay aside his burden for the church to whose prosperity he had devoted his life. During his active life, his work had been his only hobby. Reading, writing, and speaking were his interests. So it was in his closing years. There was nothing he enjoyed more than visiting with younger workers in his home and discussing the results of his on-going Bible study or his burden for the church. Denton Rebok, a teacher at Washington Missionary College at the time, related that many were the hours he spent in conversation with the professor. In his opinion, the professor was "an intellectual giant, a prince of Israel. . . . I loved to probe into his mind, his heart, his soul; and then listen intently as he poured out his thoughts in a flow of rich delightful language." Rebok reported that it was Prescott who taught him to

think and to strive towards a higher level of thinking. Similarly, R. A. Anderson enjoyed his fellowship during these closing years. In his opinion, the retired professor "was a charming man to be with." Students of former years also enjoyed visiting with the professor--particularly those whom he had assisted financially with their schooling. Prescott had been exceedingly generous, almost to a fault. Even in his retirement years he continued his unobtrusive practice of assisting students from his personal funds.1

Daisy kept a immaculate flower garden at their home on Carroll Avenue in Takoma Park. This added to the relaxation of the quiet years of retirement. The professor's library was his first love, however, and he continued to spend hours there studying and writing (see fig. 20). His articles for the Signs and The Ministry on devotional topics still appeared occasionally.2 A Bible study group that he conducted each week in his home and an occasional sermon in the local church at the Adventist headquarters also continued to provide stimulus for his study.

Even his retirement years were not entirely free from controversy. In late 1939 he preached a sermon in the Takoma Park church that provoked his old antagonist, J. S. Washburn, living in retirement in Hagerstown---a small town near Washington. Prescott's


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sermon was a study on Christ. Entitled "The Coming One," the sermon pointed out the work of Christ in Old Testament times and the significance of the name "Jehovah-Jesus." It was a theme he had written on for many years. In the sermon Prescott also discussed incidentally the doctrine of the Godhead, mentioning that the doctrine of the Trinity was clearly implied in the Scripture. He also mentioned that the English word "person," when used of the Godhead, had its limitations because it tended to foster a concept of three Gods.

The "unity" of the Godhead must also be stressed, he argued, to provide a correct balance. Prescott had the sermon printed up as a booklet. According to the editor of the Alumni Magazine of his alma mater the sermon "forcibly expounded" the teachings of his church. According to J. S. Washburn, it was rank heresy.1

During the early months of 1940, Washburn prepared a mimeographed manuscript entitled "The Trinity," in which he vigorously attacked Prescott. In Washburn's view the doctrine of the Trinity was "a cruel heathen monstrosity, . . . an impossible absurd invention, . . . a blasphemous burlesque, . . . a bungling absurd irreverant caricature, . . . a Roman doctrine" that was "seeking to intrude its evil presence into the teachings of the Third Angel's Message." It was neither scriptural nor in accord with the Spirit of Prophecy. The last half of Washburn's document was a personal attack on Prescott, accusing him of no longer being a Seventh-day Adventist because he believed in the Trinity, used the Revised Version, had worked with Waggoner and Jones, and had advocated the

1Darmouth College Alumni Magazine, December 1939.
new view of "the daily." Much of the attack was a repetition of the slander he had published in 1922.1

Apparently it was circulated quite widely. In June 1940, Washburn reported to General Conference President McElhany (who he felt was sympathetic to his cause) that one conference president had asked him for thirty-two copies to distribute to all the ministers in his conference. Prescott graciously invited Washburn to his home to discuss the matter, but the visits were unproductive. Washburn considered the professor to be intractable and on the verge of going down into darkness. He felt duty-bound to continue his campaign because, in his view, Prescott "seemed to have a powerful influence" over some of the teachers in the seminary. Furthermore, he argued, "Prescott's influence has done more to make it difficult to establish the theological seminary than anything else."2

Those connected with the theological seminary were upset at Washburn's propaganda. He reported that he had heard "some very serious threats . . . made by men high up" for his circulation of the document but there appears to have been no official rebuke. In April, J. E. Robinson, who was associated with the White Estate, came to Prescott's defense. With careful documentation from the White Estate files he demonstrated the falsity of Washburn's accusations. He suggested that Washburn's views, in fact, were the "variant views"

1 J. S. Washburn, "The Trinity," [1940], JLMcCC, Bx 17 Fld 28, AUHR.

2 J. S. Washburn to J. L. McElhany, June 2, 1940, JLMcCC, Bx 1 Fld 3, AUHR. Prescott had read someone else's copy and wrote to Washburn asking him to send one. He was surprised at Washburn's "misrepresentation." W. W. Prescott to J. S. Washburn, April 24, 1940, JLMcCC, Bx 1 Fld 3, AUHR.
and wondered why he should launch such a harsh personal attack on Prescott when the same views were held by "scores of Bible teachers, editors, and ministers." The letter seems to have had no effect on the retired evangelist.¹

Although personally depressed by Washburn's activities, the professor was more distressed that there were so many in the church who would give credence to them. He felt burdened for the church over such things. This combined with the fact that he knew that some church leaders misunderstood him and were therefore suspicious of him, disappointed him. Some leaders even felt uncomfortable over his home Bible studies. But most days were bright and there were things that made his arduous labor for the cause seem worthwhile.²

On May 24, 1941, Founders Day celebrations at Emmanuel Missionary College honored Prescott's contribution to the church. With due ceremony, a bronze plaque was dedicated to his memory. It read:

William Warren Prescott
President of this College 1885-1894
Author Educator Friend of Youth
These Words of Tribute
Raised to His Honor in Carven Bronze

¹J. S. Washburn to J. L. McElhany, June 2, 9, 1940; J. S. Washburn to W. W. Prescott, April 25, June 1, 1940; C. E. Robinson to J. S. Washburn, April 25, 1940, JLMCC, Bx 1 Fld 3, AUHR. The doctrine of the Trinity had, in fact, been a topic of some discussion at the seminary and around Washington for some years. See M. E. Kern to J. L. Jones, February 24, 1938; M. E. Kern to J. L. McElhany, February 27, 1938, JLMCC, Bx 1 Fld 3, AUHR. Kern referred to the protests from the Columbia Union as "foolish prattlings."

Are but a reflection
Of a greater memorial engraven in the
Hearts and Lives of the Generations
Of students To Whom he ministered
Founders Day 1941

The grand musical offerings, speech making, and ceremony would have reminded the professor of the commencement exercises he had enjoyed at Battle Creek College, but it seems that he was not able to be present to enjoy it. Besides, he was embarrassed at such things and probably preferred to be absent. As it happened, his health did not permit him to make the journey to Berrien Springs.

In 1939 he had undergone a serious surgical operation which, he reported, left him an invalid. He was largely confined to his home, though not to bed. In 1943, he related that he was able to "be about the house, retiring early and getting up late." Even his church attendance had to be curtailed, although as often as he could he tried to be there. He was able to "walk around some" and visit his neighbors, some of whom, he reported, were in poorer health than himself. According to Lynn Wood, he also continued to enjoy visits from old colleagues and maintained a keen "interest in every detail connected with the cause he loved more than life itself." Wood related: "How his eyes would brighten as bits of information came to him showing the rapid consummation of all his hopes."  

In the winter of 1944, his long, busy, and eminently useful life came to a close. Sometime late in December 1943, he caught influenza which soon turned to pneumonia. At the Washington

1Founders Day "Dedication Program," 1941, AUHR.
Saritarium, the best of medical care sustained his life for some days and enabled his last hours to be quite free from pain. But on Friday, January 21, he succumbed to the illness and quietly fell asleep. He was in his eighty-ninth year.

News of his death was reported across the nation by Associated Press and obituary notices appeared in newspapers in many places where he had labored. On Monday afternoon, January 24, in the Takoma Park church, Lynn Wood preached the funeral sermon. Interment was at the Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, D.C. (see fig. 21). The service was simple. According to Wood, Prescott in the modesty of his soul . . . asked for no mention of his work, of the positions of trust that he had held, of the thousands of souls he had inspired, of the numberless cases of help, financial and otherwise given unstintingly at great personal expense. Could he now speak he would but beckon us to carry on.

Alluding to the war that was then engulfing the nations of Europe and the Pacific, Wood likened the professor to a soldier who "when shot and shell are bursting around him . . . catches an inspired vision." Prescott had caught such a vision—a vision of Christ which made him feel "that his life was expendable in the warfare against sin." The vision had transformed his own soul and the spirits of his companions had caught fire from it.1

1Nebraska State Journal, January 21, 1944; L. H. Wood manuscript, "Funeral of Professor W. W. Prescott," AUHR.
Fig. 20. Prescott, age 86, at work in his library at home, November 1941.
(Courtesy T. K. Martin)

Fig. 21. W. W. Prescott Family Tombstone, Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.
CHAPTER XXIV

CONCLUSION

On one occasion near the end of his career, Professor William Warren Prescott was asked by one of his students who was contemplating taking up employment in the church what a good motto would be. Prescott replied simply, "Do what you are asked to do." The motto aptly summarized the professor's own fifty-two years of service to the church.

Because he was such a highly capable individual, endowed with many talents, his church asked him to carry numerous responsibilities in many different places. Furthermore, whether the task was preaching, writing, editing, teaching, or administration, Prescott seemed to do the job unusually well. All of these various activities, however, seemed to revolve around a central focal point. At heart, Prescott was an educator—a religious educator.

Trained at Dartmouth as a teacher and ordained to the gospel ministry in 1889, throughout his career he was referred to as either Elder or Professor. He seemed to embody the integration of religion and education. It is from this perspective that this study has viewed his life. While it may be difficult in some areas to single out the extent of the influence of Prescott on the church, it nevertheless seems appropriate to ask what Professor Prescott's long life of service as a religious educator in the Adventist church...
accomplished. He was widely known and respected in the denomination, but did his preaching, writing, and teaching have a lasting influence? In what way was the church changed or benefited by his educational ministry? What permanent contributions, if any, did he make to the life and thought of the church?

As might be expected, among the most significant contributions made by the professor were those he made to the development of Adventist formal education. Under Prescott's leadership, Battle Creek College went through a period of remarkable growth and development. When he began his nine-year term as president, the institution was actually still just a high school. Prescott immediately set about upgrading it. He enlarged and improved facilities, upgraded the faculty, and imbued the institution with a new sense of purpose. Degree courses were added and the institution became a genuine college. Enrollment increased by more than 100 percent during his administration.

While this contribution was of particular benefit to Battle Creek College, other programs that Prescott began there proved to be of lasting value not only to the college but to Adventist education as a whole as it attempted to grapple with the problem of integrating religion and education. In the first decade of the college's existence, there were no residence halls associated with the school. To the institution's constituency, dormitories sounded too much like army barracks. They were decidedly apathetic to the idea. But the practice of students boarding themselves or living in community homes gave rise to a serious disciplinary and morale problem. In 1882 the school had to be closed down for a year. Shortly after
Prescott's connection with the school he introduced a new concept of student residence. Dormitories were not to be just convenient boarding places. They were to be "school homes"—as important, if not more important, to the educational goals of the school as the classrooms. Here Christian character was to be inculcated. Here, as faculty and students dined, worshipped, and lived together, students would learn culture and refinement. They would learn to live like "Christian ladies and gentlemen." President Prescott himself took up residence in the dormitory to set the pattern.

The plan, although not original with Prescott (it was used for its academic advantages in England), was nevertheless a major breakthrough in Adventist schools and a significant contribution toward solving the problem of integrating education and religion in Adventist education. Its impact on Adventist education was far-reaching. Graduates trained under Prescott's plan took the idea and implemented it in Adventist schools elsewhere in North America and in other countries. It characterized Adventist institutions for decades. (In some schools outside North America, the basic plan was still being followed as late as the mid-1960s.) Though the plan has changed markedly in modern Adventist colleges, today's highly developed student-residence programs with their live-in deans, required worships, and related student-life activities have built on Prescott's model.

A second way in which Prescott helped resolve the difficulty of integrating religion and education in his school was by making the daily chapel period a focal point of the school program. School assemblies, or daily chapels, were not new to Adventist schools, but
Prescott gave the chapel period greater importance by making it the center of the school's program and by making it almost exclusively his. The chapel period was typical of Prescott's concern to emphasize the spiritual dimensions of the school. So important was this dimension that he was often ready to dispense with classes to allow for revivals or some special religious services. Prescott's role as the pastor-president in the school was fostered through the chapel. Daily at this hour he sought to inculcate Christian principles. The testimony of his students was that he succeeded. Chapel periods did shape character. The talks, the lessons, the ideals implanted were remembered years later. Graduates from Battle Creek College, the senior institution of the denomination, carried their vision and idealism to new schools.

Perhaps the most significant contribution Prescott made to Adventist education while he served as president of Battle Creek College, however, was his revolutionary reshaping of the college curriculum. When Prescott became president of the institution, the only Bible subjects offered by the school were two classes—Old Testament and New Testament history. These were at the ninth- or tenth-grade level. A twice-weekly lecture on Adventist doctrines given by Uriah Smith during the winter and spring terms and offered as an optional addition to the usual courses was the only religion course at the college level. Prescott's attempts to introduce regular biblical classes as a core requirement in the college courses eventually changed the shape of Adventist education.

The 1888 Minneapolis Conference and the animated discussions on righteousness by faith that followed it proved to be the turning
point for the professor and his college. Prescott came to realize that the church's teaching needed to be Christ-centered not doctrine-centered. In the same way, education had to be Christ-centered if the graduates and church workers it produced were to be Christ-centered. But in order for education to be Christ-centered, the curriculum would have to be Bible-centered. With this new conviction motivating him, he organized (in his capacity as the denomination's educational secretary) the landmark Harbor Springs Teachers' Convention in 1891. As a result of this conference, major curriculum changes were recommended. A separate ministerial training course was developed, history subjects were introduced (taught from the perspective of biblical prophecy), and two full-fledged college Bible classes were commenced.

Prescott struggled to have these new classes introduced as substitutes for the usual classical language study and higher mathematical studies. At first the classes were offered as electives. Later he succeeded in having them adopted as required subjects although to do so coursework had to be lengthened. Eventually, after major upheavals, the Bible subjects were allowed to displace some of the more traditional subjects as core requirements.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, American education at large wrestled with the problem of reshaping its curriculum to make it more relevant to the needs of society. While the curriculum struggles at Battle Creek College need to be understood in this larger context, they were more particularly oriented toward making the college curriculum more relevant to the needs of the church. Prescott's efforts to shape the college program so that
biblical studies would be at its center was basically an attempt to enable it to provide graduates who would better serve the mission of the church.

Because of Prescott's influential position as the first educational secretary of the church, his ground-breaking work at Battle Creek in the area of curriculum was extensive in its influence. As secretary he was able to foster reforms and influence other Adventist colleges to adopt them. By virtue of his leadership position in education, he was also able to make the matter of the educational program of the church a prominent issue for discussion at General Conference sessions during the late 1890s. He thereby helped to confront the church with the task of developing a viable philosophy of education—of making Adventist education Christian education. If today Adventist education may be viewed as having a Bible centered curriculum, it is probably due more to the influence of W. W. Prescott than to any other single educator apart from Ellen G. White herself.

As educational secretary of the General Conference, Prescott made a lasting contribution to the educational program of the church in other important ways. Prior to 1887 (when Prescott assumed the position of secretary), each of the six or seven Adventist schools followed its own individual program without regard to each other. Furthermore, the establishment of new schools was hindered by local jealousies among the various constituencies. Prescott succeeded in unifying the developing denominational educational program by establishing parity or uniformity in coursework, planning teachers' conventions, arranging for an interchange of faculty, and by
centralizing the task of developing new schools, thereby overcoming the debilitating local jealousies.

His careful supervision of the rapid educational expansion during the late 1880s and early 1890s helped the church to avoid over-extending itself educationally at a time when many colleges of other denominations went bankrupt. Lasting memorials to his contribution in this area are Union College and Walla Walla College. In the late 1880s local conferences were eager to establish their own local schools. It was intended that these would consist only of classroom buildings. Students would care for their own boarding arrangements in the community. Prescott, aware that both money and committed Adventist teachers were scarce, was convinced that such schools would be "cheap" schools. They would be Adventist in name only—Adventist because Adventist students attended them. He successfully persuaded the various conferences to adopt his plan of unifying their efforts to build more central institutions. This enabled him to incorporate "school homes" as a part of the institution which in turn facilitated the attainment of his objective of making religious training "the prominent feature." As the founding president of Union College and Walla Walla College, he was also instrumental in giving a distinctive mold to both institutions in the curriculum they adopted.

In his last years as educational secretary, during his visit to Australia, Prescott was involved in the development of a practical program for the new Australian college. While Ellen G. White is duly recognized as providing the vision and direction for this experimental school, Prescott's participation in laying out the
campus, clarifying the school's objectives, establishing curriculum guidelines, and developing a workable program set a significant Prescott mold on the school. Not only the shape of many college campuses but the shape of Adventist education itself is in a large measure a legacy of W. W. Prescott.

It needs to be pointed out, perhaps, that in the early years of educational development in the Adventist church there was no clearly defined philosophy of Adventist education. Mrs. White in the 1870s and 1880s had written a few suggestions pointing the way. These counsels on the general direction Adventist education should take urged church leaders to keep abreast and even lead out in educational reform. The counsels did not give specific instructions on how school curriculums should be worked out in detail, how various courses should be organized, timetables arranged, what specific textbooks should be used, or even how classes should be taught. Many of the counsels pointed out the problems with current practices in education, but the task of developing a practical, workable philosophy of education was the responsibility of teachers and educational leaders. This task involved experimentation and trial and error. Ellen G. White continued to give counsel during this process, prodding those unwilling to change, pointing the way, and warning of dangers. The general principles enunciated by Mrs. White, however, had to be adapted, modified, and put to work by those actually involved in the school. The educational leaders of the church were partners with her in the task. As president of Battle Creek College in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Prescott led the way among the church educators.
Another of the professor's lasting contributions to the church in his capacity as educational secretary was his successful attempt to persuade the church to commit itself to the formal theological training of its ministry. Concern had been expressed by church leaders in the early 1880s over the lack of education possessed by ministers. Reading courses were developed in an effort to meet the problem. As a further step (taken during Prescott's early years as president of Battle Creek College), the twice-weekly doctrinal lecture at the college by Uriah Smith was expanded into a two-week session during the Christmas season so that ministers around the Battle Creek area could attend. These measures, however, were inadequate, and the 1888 Minneapolis controversy seemed to highlight the lack of a serious program of theological education in the church.

In the months after the 1888 conference, Prescott successfully persuaded the church leaders to adopt his proposal for a formal Bible school for the training of the ministry. This was the beginning of a new era. As principal of this first "seminary" and the one entrusted with the task of drawing up the curriculum for the two-year sequence of studies (the schools were convened for periods of five months each year), Prescott was able to set important precedents.

The bold new venture commenced in the midst of heated theological controversy, but it survived and continued until 1896, by which time, under Prescott's urging, the colleges had developed more acceptable biblical studies courses and ministerial training programs of their own. Prescott, therefore, might well be called the
Theological education for the ministry of the Adventist church continued as one of Prescott's major concerns for the rest of his life. During his years of general church administration in England in the late 1890s and during his editorial years in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century, it was of vital interest to him. It was his years as field secretary of the General Conference after 1915, however, that gave him particular opportunity to contribute to the church in the area of theological education. In his extensive field-institute work in North America and in foreign countries, and in his six years of formal college Bible teaching in the 1920s and 30s, he made a large contribution not only to the preparation of large groups of ministers but also to the formal development of ministerial education itself.

In this field his two major books made a positive contribution. Both his archeological book *The Bible and the Spade* and his college textbook *The Doctrine of Christ*, in a sense, were pioneering works. *The Bible and the Spade* was the first serious work on archeology authored by an Adventist. It appears to have had a significant impact in contributing to a widened interest in the subject within the church. The approach of using archeological discoveries to substantiate the authenticity of biblical history eventually came to be a predominant opening thrust for Adventist evangelism in many places.

*The Doctrine of Christ* apparently did not have an immediate impact on the church, but its content and theme nevertheless
represent one of the most valuable contributions Prescott made to the education of the church's ministry and to the nature and content of its preaching. Prior to 1888, and for sometime afterwards, Adventist preaching and teaching was characterized by argumentative doctrinal presentations. After 1888 Prescott joined with Waggoner, Jones, and Mrs. White in fostering the revolutionary new Christocentric emphasis. After both Waggoner and Jones withdrew from the church, Prescott was the foremost figure continuing the emphasis in the church. His practical efforts to find a way of presenting Adventist teaching from a Christocentric perspective in evangelism, his writing on the theme, the testimony of his own preaching, and his constant promotion of the need to refocus Adventist preaching had no small impact on the church both in the nature of its preaching and in its basic understanding of this aspect of its theology. The profound and lasting legacy he left in these matters is inestimable.

In several other ways he contributed much to the theological thinking of the church. As noted above, Prescott's influence in moving the church to a more Christocentric theology was marked. (Thirteen of the some fourteen Sabbath School lesson series he wrote were on the theme.) His contribution in moving the church towards a more thoroughgoing view of the deity of Christ and to trinitarianism was significant. Similarly, his emphasis on the Christocentric nature of prophecy which really lay at the heart of the discussion over "the daily" has been of lasting significance to the church. Although it would be incorrect to suggest that Prescott was the only one making this Christocentric emphasis, his persistent and persuasive fostering of the concept contributed significantly in bringing
about profound shifts in the theological understanding of the church.

On the subject of inspiration and revelation, particularly as it related to the work of Ellen G. White, Prescott had much to contribute to the church. His own experiences in connection with Ellen White and his intimate acquaintance with the way in which she worked gave him insights which appeared threatening to many of his contemporaries. The more factual view of Mrs. White's work that he advocated in the years following her death temporarily lost out in the struggle with those forces at work in the church that advocated a more rigid, artificial, and idealistic view. In this sense, he, along with a few others, was ahead of his time. His insights on these matters, however, seem to be particularly relevant in the 1980s.

The difficulties Prescott experienced in trying to educate the church on some of these theological matters were partly of his own making. Capable of catching the broad outlines of an idea and of being enthused with its potential, he sometimes had difficulty communicating his vision effectively to his hearers. His loud-toned, authoritative manner was often perceived as opinionated or imperious. This frequently made it difficult for those who held contrary opinions to see light in his arguments. If, as a religious educator, he could have adopted a less dogmatic approach and appeared less pompous he might have had less trouble in persuading people to change their views.

On the more popular level—as an evangelist and devotional speaker at campmeetings—he was much more effective as a communicator and educator. Here his note of certainty, conviction, and sincerity
along with his skillful use of language impressed his audiences. In this setting his educational efforts on behalf of his general Christocentric emphasis were more successful. Yet even here those who heard him report a strange paradox.

Always a highly popular speaker at campmeetings, he continually drew large crowds and for the most part people were both inspired and informed by his preaching. At the same time, however, numbers of his hearers, even while enjoying his sermons, were not able to grasp all that he said. Prescott's effectiveness as a religious educator would probably have been greater if he had been able to adapt his ideas and insights to the understanding of his audience. Scholar and deep-thinker that he was, this was apparently a continuing struggle. But, in spite of this, his scholarly gifts were not unavailing in the church.

One of the large benefits that accrued to the denomination as the result of Prescott's wide research and erudition were the two volumes that he compiled, the Bible Students Source Book and the Handbook for Bible Students. As editor of the Protestant Magazine, the professor collected much valuable resource material on church history and prophetic interpretation. Aware of the value of this material to the church's ministry, the General Conference urged him to prepare them for publication. The two volumes served as valuable aids for ministers for many years. Another more intangible contribution in the same area was Prescott's influence in sensitizing the church to the need of being more careful in its use of history and so-called "authoritative statements" in its prophetic expositions and in its polemic against Catholicism. As an editor of various
publications of the church, the professor set a pattern for accuracy and meticulous scholarship that was esteemed by his colleagues. His example both challenged and inspired his successors.

While Prescott's work as an administrator was not directly related to educational matters, there is no question but that the church was significantly benefitted by his large executive abilities. While his vigorous efforts (along with others) in calling for reforms at the 1897 and 1899 General Conference sessions proved abortive, in 1901 far-reaching reforms were implemented. A number of these were specific measures that Prescott had boldly advocated, particularly with regard to the conducting of the General Conference session itself. These became part of the new organizational procedures. As a church executive his participation in the planning and supervision of the church's overseas developments in the early years of this century also were of lasting benefit to the denomination.

As editor of the Review, the professor modernized the paper and brought it into the twentieth century. It was also as editor of the Review that Prescott administered to the church in a way that materially shaped its history. His critical analysis of the theology of Kellogg's Living Temple and his education of the church membership on the issues contributed markedly to a continued emphasis in the church on an objective view of the doctrine of the Atonement that has more or less characterized the denomination since. Furthermore, his determined editorial stand with Daniells in the bitter power struggle between the medical branch and the "evangelical" departments contributed prominently to the particular form of church government in Adventism whereby church-related institutions are legally owned and
operated by the church through a centralized Conference organization.

Another prominent contribution to the development of the church made by Prescott in his capacity as administrator and editor was his establishment of the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Washington. His reforming zeal and his executive ability combined with his enormous capacity for hard work assisted the church immeasurably in transferring the publishing institution and the church headquarters to Washington, D.C. The leading Adventist publishing house in Washington stands in considerable debt to the labors of its founding president.

This biographical study has viewed William Warren Prescott primarily as an educator. At the same time, however, considerable notice has been given to his years in general church administration and to his theological views in order to provide a rounded picture of his life and to provide a basis on which to make some assessment of his overall contribution to the church. Several other areas not treated in this study warrant further investigation.

1. While some notice has been given to Prescott's theology, the subject merits a much fuller treatment. A systematic analysis of Prescott's theology and its development would be of particular value and help to the church. The present study has revealed the importance of Prescott's Christology. Further study, it seems, could focus on Prescott's Christology and explore how the developments in the professor's thought on this matter led to important developments in other areas of his theology such as in his soteriology and eschatology. Because Prescott was such a prominent thought leader in the church, a study of this kind would contribute
significantly to an understanding of the theological development in Adventism.

2. Prescott's prominent involvement in the Kellogg crisis has been noted in some detail in this study, but the episode deserves an exhaustive study. A systematic theological and contextual study of the period 1890-1910 would be of value to the church.

3. "The daily" controversy in Adventism warrants further study. It would seem that its impact on the church was much greater than has been realized. Certainly the controversy has significant implications in the ongoing development of Adventist theology. An examination of the episode would also serve as an excellent case study in the religious education of a community.

4. This study has looked somewhat incidently at Prescott's views on inspiration and his relationship with Ellen G. White because the issues involved related closely to important events in the professor's life. A more thorough and systematic investigation of this topic is needed. Such a study would provide helpful perspectives in the ongoing discussion in Adventism of Mrs. White's role.

5. Because Prescott left his position as educational secretary of the church in 1897 and moved into general church administration, only a very brief treatment of the late 1890s was possible. The decade 1897-1907, was a period of significant educational upheaval in the denomination. A thorough study of this period would be helpful.

6. Similarly, a contextual study of the 1891 Harbor Springs Convention, its relationship to the 1888 Minneapolis Conference, and the developments that grew out of it await further study. The
episode has been discussed in this study because it was of major significance in Prescott's career, but a much more detailed investigation of the convention seems warranted.

In summation, what may be said about Prescott's legacy to the church? As an educator and church leader, Prescott lacked the gift of original genius. He was not a creative inventor of novel thoughts, although he did possess a large intellect. His critical abilities of analysis and synthesis were exceptional. Furthermore, he read and researched widely and his expansive memory retained his learning. This alone, however, did not set him apart from his fellows. Rather, Prescott's power and influence came from the combination of these abilities with the more crucial attribute of a keen spiritual and moral sensitivity. Gentle and sensitive by nature, he was nevertheless a man of powerful convictions. All this aided by the tradition of culture and refinement in which he was reared made him a power of the first order. As one of the leading thinkers and preachers of the church, his influence on the church was extensive.

Prescott's breadth of learning and large intellect gave him a perspective on life and truth that few of his contemporaries were able to appreciate. He could see beyond the present in the sense that he often saw solutions to problems before others were really aware of the problems. Thus, in some ways, he was ahead of his time. This contributed to his being misunderstood and made his lot in life, particularly in his later years, a lonely one.

At the same time, however, this singularly gifted professor created barriers for himself that tended to dull the immediate
effectiveness of his influence. Possessed of a keen, discerning mind and motivated by a driving passion for truth and accuracy, he found it difficult to let error pass by unchecked. Moreover, his forceful personality backed by his breadth of learning was often perceived as pompous, dogmatic, and domineering. His tendency to urge his convictions and his insights on his fellows with what seemed to be excessive zeal could provoke vigorous resistance. Thus, controversies occasionally swirled around him, and some matters (such as "the daily"), while themselves not unimportant, threatened to obscure more important concerns.

It would seem that such weaknesses are common to many who, as reformers, seek the betterment of a church or society. Prescott, was certainly not immune to them. Misunderstandings and misperceptions generated by the occasional over-wrought discussion—particularly those in the latter decades of Prescott's life—caused his career to end somewhat on the downside and made it difficult for the church to recognize his large contributions. Perhaps because of this it is only with the perspective that history provides that a more adequate assessment of a person's life work can be made. This biographical and critical study of Prescott as an educator has attempted such an assessment.

Emerson once said that "there is properly no history—only biography." This look at denominational history by means of biography should have continuing relevance and usefulness for the church, in fact, in the form of biography, history has perhaps its most effective vehicle for informing the present. This study can help inform the present in several ways. (1) The practical
implementation of the ideals and objectives of Adventist education is a matter of ongoing discussion and experimentation. This must be so if Adventist education is to continue to serve the needs of the church and of those who attend its schools in an ever-changing society. An awareness of Prescott's struggles to develop a philosophy of education and to implement it in the schools under his care during the formative years of Adventist education serves to highlight and clarify the principles themselves and cast light on how they need to be adapted in different situations. Such clarification should assist Adventist educators today in the same task. (2) If Ellen G. White's writings are to have a continuing meaning and relevance to the Adventist church, the context in which they were written must be rediscovered and preserved. This is true of her educational statements as it is of her other writings. Prescott's life has significant value because it helps to provide a clearer, historical context for many of the things Ellen G. White wrote. (3) Despite the oft-repeated warning of Ellen G. White about the dangers of forgetting the workings of Providence in the history of the church, much of the real history of Adventism that illustrates the workings of that Providence has been neglected or forgotten. The inclination to remember the past only from a comfortable, self-serving, or narrow perspective is strong and no institution is immune to the temptation. The adage that those who forget their history are destined to repeat it is not without some merit. Hopefully, this study will help us to avoid the temptation to remember selectively or to forget our past.
APPENDIX A

LINEAGE OF W. W. PRESCOTT
APPENDIX A
LINEAGE OF W. W. PRESCOTT

James Prescott
1637-11.25.1728 (85)
Married 1668
Joshua Rebecca Jonathon Mary Abigail Patience John Nathaniel

James Jr. Prescott
3.1.1671 - ?
Married 3.1.1695
Maria Hamton Abigail Sanborn
Jeremiah Elija Sarah Lucy Ebenezer James Rebecca

Samuel Prescott
Married 16.17.1717
Mary Sanborn (at Hampton Falls) 7.28.1697 - ?

Jeremiah Prescott
4.29.1718-Suicide 1780
Married 1.15.1741
Mary Hayes Mary Towle

Samuel William

Colonel Jeremiah Prescott
12.22.1741-4.25.1817
Married 1. ?, 1764
John Jeremiah Huldah Samuel Sarah Joseph Sherburne

Jeremiah Prescott
3.14.1831-3.1.1920
Married 12.30.1847

Lewis Amos Charles Belle George James Frank Fred
Morrill Lewis Henry S. 16.51- Morris Eddy Howard Everett
3.29.52- 4.30.53- 8.3.57- 7.15.1924 1.8 63- 4.16.66- 6.19.68- 5.20.71
3.6.52 11.16.1929 12.19.1923 12.4.69 12.4.69- 2.15.69

Married 7.8.1880
William Warren Sarah F. Sanders Daisy Grindorff
3.2.1855-1.21.1944 2.28.1856-6.10.1910 11.11.1879-4.24.1959
Married 1.3.1911
Lewis William
2.10.1891-7.4.1918

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APPENDIX 3

LINEAGE OF HARRIET M. TRIPP

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APPENDIX B
LINEAGE OF HARRIET M. TRIPP

Andrew McClary
(Came to America in 1776)

Richard Tripp
M. 7.18.1762

Ann McClary
1753 - ?

John Tripp
M. 11.1.1798
4.5.1870 - 1844

Sally Gordon
(6 other children)

(6 other children)

Jeremiah Tripp
10.3.80 - 1884

Chloe Prescott

Harriet Chloe O. A. b. 4.5.1827
William Ann Warren b. 9.2.1854 b. 9.15.1836 b. 10.16.1839
b. 8.28.1824

James Lewis Prescott
Harriet M.
3.14.1831 - 3.1.1920

M. 12.22.1847

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished Materials

Essay on Manuscript Collections

This essay will describe the unpublished sources held in various archival collections. Published materials both primary and secondary are listed in the regular manner following the essay.

Andrews University Administration
Building Vaults, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Minutes of the Battle Creek College Faculty 1890-93, 1896-97; Minutes of the Battle Creek College Board 1977-80, 1896-1901; the Minutes of the Emmanuel Missionary College Faculty 1901-03, 1932-34; and the Emmanuel Missionary College Board 1901-02, 1932-34--important sources on Prescott--are housed in the first floor admissions records vault. Recently xerox copies of these records have been made for the Andrews University Heritage Room. (Board minutes from 1890-96 and Faculty Minutes from 1885-90, 1893-96 are not extant.) Letters relating to Prescott's service as a Bible teacher at Emmanuel Missionary College in the early 1930s are in the microfilmed presidential correspondence for 1931-34. These are housed in the second floor admission records vault.

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Minutes of the Australasian Union Conference Committee 1921-23 provide some background to Prescott's appointment to the principalship of Avondale College in 1921. These Minutes are in the records of the division office in Wahroonga, Australia. Minutes of the Australasian Union Conference session of 1895, the Australasian Union Conference Committee for 1895, and the Australasian Missionary College Board for 1921-23 are in the Ellen G. White Research Centre at Avondale College, Australia. Xerox copies of these last three sources are now also available in the Heritage Room of the James White Library, Andrews University.

The most extensive and probably the most important unpublished sources on Prescott are found in the Archives of the General Conference.

Minutes of the General Conference Executive Committee from 1887-1944 are valuable sources. They are in Record Group 1: General Conference Committee. In addition to the published records of the General Conference sessions found in the General Conference Bulletin, the session records of the Recording Secretary for 1887-1905 are helpful. These include lengthy transcripts of the 1901 and 1903 sessions and are found in "G.C. Session Recording Secretary's Transcripts and Notes," Record Group 1: General Conference Committee.

Minutes of the meetings of the Officers of the General Conference
Testimonies of Ellen G. White," Record Group 11: Presidential Correspondence.

A number of Prescott's letters to church officials and letters to Prescott and about Prescott from a variety of church officials are filed in Record Group 9: General and Historical. Some of Prescott's correspondence as field secretary of the General Conference is in the file "W. W. Prescott Correspondence 1916-17," Record Group 17: Field Secretaries. Other helpful denominational history background materials are found in the "M. L. Andreason Reference Files, 1840s to mid-1950s," Record Group 17: Field Secretaries.


Records and correspondence of the General Conference book committee on which Prescott served in the 1880s and 90s is in the file "Book Committee 1887-97," Record Group 25: Committees. Correspondence between Prescott and General Conference Treasurers I. H.
Evans, W. T. Knox, and J. L. Shaw is in the "Files of the General Conference Treasurer 1903-06, 1921-68," Record Group 31: Treasury. Some valuable correspondence on J. S. Washburn is found in the file "J. S. Washburn," Record Group 33: Sustentee Files. Minutes for the Foreign Mission Board of which Prescott was a trustee are in Record Group 48: Foreign Mission Board. A small quantity of correspondence and copies of minutes of early meetings of the General Conference departments of education and the Central Educational Association of Seventh-day Adventists are in the file "Collected Materials Pertaining to Education 1894-1963," Record Group 51: Department of Education.

A large quantity of very helpful correspondence and other historical materials on theological issues related to Prescott are in the "L. E. Froom Files 1920s to 1950," Record Group 58: Ministerial Association.

Official records (mostly incomplete) of various institutions with which Prescott was connected such as The Washington Foreign Missionary Seminary, The Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, and the Review and Herald Publishing Association are in Record Groups 251-300: General Conference Institutions. (Full minutes of the Review and Herald Publishing Association Board are in the General Managers Office, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C.) Letters concerning Prescott from officers in overseas divisions of the church are found in "Correspondence," Record Group: Overseas Divisions. Minutes of the Far Eastern Division Executive Committee for 1917-19 and minutes of other overseas divisions are in "Minutes," Record Group: Overseas Divisions.
The personal collections of W. W. Prescott (Personal Collection 21: W. W. Prescott) and F. M. Wilcox (unnumbered) contain useful materials. Particularly helpful are the "Protestant Magazine Reference Files 1909-1916" in the former collection. Two unpublished papers by Bert Haloviak "In the Shadow of the 'Daily': Background and Aftermath of the 1919 Bible and History Teachers Conference" (1979) and "Pioneers, Pantheists and Progressives: A. F. Ballenger and Divergent Paths to the Sanctuary" (1980) are also available at the General Conference Archives.

Baker Memorial Library Archives Department, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

"Records of the Trustees of Dartmouth College," volume IV, covering the years 1873-77, 1885; "Records of the Faculty of Dartmouth College," volume 2, for the years 1873-77; the "Dartmouth College Merit Roll: Academical Departments 1871-80"; and the "John Moore Comstock 1877 Scrapbook" are all valuable sources for Prescott's years at Dartmouth. Useful biographical information is also found in the following files: "W. W. Prescott: Class of 1887"; "Class Report 1877-1927"; "Class Secretary's Book, Class of 1877"; and the "W. W. Prescott: Photograph File." Information on the grading system used at Dartmouth is found in the "Grading File."

Biddeford Historical Society, McArthur Public Library, Biddeford, Maine

A number of scrapbooks containing information about Biddeford and the Biddeford Weekly Journal are housed in this collection. "Biddeford Scrapbook #6" particularly provides helpful background material.
The "Letter File" of Mrs. Ellen G. White contains a number of important letters to Prescott dating from the 1880s until 1910. Letters to Daniells, Haskell, other prominent church officials, and various church boards or committees are also valuable sources for information on Prescott. The extensive "Manuscript File" of Mrs. White contains many useful source documents as well. Particularly valuable are Mrs. White's diary entries during her visits to Battle Creek in the 1880s and 1890s, during Prescott's visit to Australia in 1895-96, and during the first decade of this century. In the "Incoming Letter" files are significant amounts of Prescott's own correspondence to Mrs. White, W. C. White, and C. C. Crisler. Letters to Mrs. White or her staff from O. A. Olsen, G. A. Irwin, A. G. Daniells, S. N. Haskell (and his wife Hetty), G. I. Butler, E. R. Palmer, Leon Smith, and many other church officials are also in these files. All are good sources on Prescott. W. C. White was a prolific letter writer. His numerous "Outgoing Letterbooks" contain a large number of letters to Prescott and to other church officials on matters related to Prescott. The extensive miscellaneous "Document File" of the White Estate also contains some correspondence and much useful background material.

The following unpublished research papers are housed in the White Estate Collections: Ronald O. Graybill, "Workpaper: The '1911 Revision' of Great Controversy," n.d.; Robert W. Olson, "Historical Discrepancies in the Spirit of Prophecy Discussed at the 1919 Bible Conference," 1979; "The 1919 Bible Conference and Bible and History

Most of the materials described above except for the "Incoming Letter" files and the W. C. White "Letterbooks" are also available at the Ellen G. White Center at Andrews University, Berrien Springs.

Heritage Room, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan

The Heritage Room has a considerable number of sources utilized in this study. The E. K. Vande Vere Papers (c 4) contain much useful information on Battle Creek College during Prescott's years as president. Vande Vere's original footnoted manuscript of his published history of Andrews University, The Wisdom Seekers, is in this collection. It is particularly helpful. Scattered helpful letters and some background material on Prescott are found in the Heritage Room's collection of correspondence and other personal papers of the following individuals: James L. McElhany (c 1); William Ambrose Spicer (c 3); Charles Henry Watson (c 5, xerox); John Harvey Kellogg (c 6, xerox); George Royal Avery (c 7); Arthur Whitefield Spaulding (c 10); Frederick Griggs (c 15); William Ward Fletcher, and J. H. Haughey. A copy of P. T. Magan's Diary for 1903-04 is also held in the Heritage Room.

Other materials providing information about Prescott's years at Battle Creek College are: The Ferris Samuel Hafford Diary 1881-85;
D. W. Reavis, "I Remember," n.d. (a typescript copy of reminiscences of Battle Creek College); Ellen Hughes, "Reminiscences of Battle Creek College"; and student Wilmotte Poole's 1893 letter to his parents.


Other helpful miscellaneous sources on Prescott include Lynn Wood's sermon manuscript for Prescott's funeral, Prescott's study Bible, some Prescott photographs, records of the 1941 Emmanuel Missionary College Founders Day program given in his honor, and the bronze plaque dedicated to him at that time.


Loma Linda Libraries, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California

The papers of Percy T. Magan contain a few items of correspondence related to Prescott's activities.

Maine Historical Society Library, Portland, Maine

This library houses the "North Berwick Register," "North Berwick Record Book" (cemetery notes) compiled by John Elderidge Frost, and "Vital Records: North Berwick, Maine," all of which contain helpful biographical and genealogical information on the J. L. Prescott family.

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New Hampshire Historical Society  
Library, Concord, New Hampshire

Information regarding the attendance of both Prescott and his wife Sarah at Penacook Academy is found in "Penacook Academy Cashbook, 1867-1875" and "Records of the Officers and Students of Penacook Academy, 1866-1883." Helpful snippets of information on Prescott's family history is in "Epsom, N.H. Church Records" and "Epsom Marriages, 1784-1816," compiled by Reverend Ebenezer Haseltine (Congregational).

Takoma Park Historical Society, Takoma Park Library, Takoma Park, Maryland

A miscellaneous collection of photographs, real estate brochures, street maps, business directories, and program folders for various civic occasions provide useful information on Takoma Park in the early decades of the century. The library also holds an unpublished paper by Sandra Kurtinitis, "Railroads and Real Estate Speculation: Takoma Park's Beginnings," 1977.

Union College Library Historical Collection, Union College, College View, Nebraska

This collection includes an incomplete set of Faculty Minutes for 1891-94, 1923-27, and Union College Board Minutes for 1890, 1910, 1923-27, and Union College Board Minutes for 1890, 1910, 1923-38--the years when Prescott was associated with the school. Also housed in the library are the Minutes of the Union College Building Committee, 1890, and the Union College Locating Committee, 1899.
Vermont Historical Society Library, Montpelier, Vermont

The file "Montpelier Union School Records dating from 1860-1880" contain a number of miscellaneous items related to Prescott's principalship of the combined Montpelier Union and Washington County Grammar School.

Personal Collection

Theses and Dissertations


Published Materials

Newspapers and Periodicals

The Advocate of Christian Education (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1879, 1904.

Alumni Magazine (Dartmouth College) (Hanover, New Hampshire) [1930-1944].

American Citizen, 1915.

Atlantic Union Gleaner (South Lancaster, Massachusetts), 1908-1912.

Australasian Record (Warburton, Victoria), 1921-1923.

Battle Creek Daily Journal (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1885-1894.

Bible Echo (Melbourne, Australia), 1895-1896.
Biddeford Daily Journal (Biddeford, Maine), 1923.

Biddeford Weekly Journal (Biddeford, Maine), 1890-1883.

The Christian Educator (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1897-1899.

The Commonwealth (New York), 1935.

Concord Monitor (Concord, New Hampshire), 1890.

Daily Capital (Topeka, Kansas), 1889.

The Dartmouth (Hanover, New Hampshire), 1875-1877

Down East; The Magazine of Maine (Camden, Maine), 1966.

Educational Messenger (College View, Nebraska), 1924-1928.

General Conference Bulletin (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1887-1901; (Washington, D.C.), 1903-1946.

Gleaner (Melbourne, Australia), 1897.

Home Missionary (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1889-1897.


The Lincoln Call (Lincoln, Nebraska), 1890.

Medical Missionary Conference Bulletin (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1903.

The Menace (Aurora, Missouri), 1914.


Missionary Magazine (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1901-1902.


The Monitor (San Francisco, California), 1914.

Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln, Nebraska), 1890-91, 1897, 1944.

New England Magazine (Boston, Massachusetts), 1894.


New Hampshire Patriot (Concord, New Hampshire), 1880.
Our Sunday Visitor (Huntingdon, Indiana), 1935.
Penacook Herald (Concord, New Hampshire), 1880.
Penacook Rays of Light (Concord, New Hampshire), 1880.
Presbyterian Standard (Charlotte, North Carolina), 1915.
Review and Hera’d (Battle Creek, Michigan), 1860-August 1903; (Washington, D.C.), August 1904-1944.
Signs of the Times (Mountain View, California), 1905-1940.
Southern Watchman (Nashville, Tennessee), 1915, 1937.
Student Movement (Berrien Springs, Michigan), 1932-1934, 1941, 1944.
Vermont Chronicle (Montpelier, Vermont), 1882-1885.
The Vermont Watchman--Souvenir Edition (Montpelier, Vermont), 1893.
The Vermont Watchman and State Journal (Montpelier, Vermont), 1882-1885.
Wesleyan Methodist (Syracuse, New York), 1915.
Youth’s Instructor (Washington, D.C.), 1944.

Pamphlets


Washburn, J. S. An Open Letter to Elder A. G. Daniells and An Appeal to the General Conference. N.p., December 26, 1921. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives Department, Washington, D.C.


The Startling Omega and Its True Genealogy. N.p., April 18, 1920. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives Department, Washington, D.C.


School Bulletins, Catalogues, and Yearbooks


Cardinal 1933. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Published by Student Association of Emmanuel Missionary College, 1933.


Golden Cords 1924-1929. College View, Neb.: Published by the Students of Union College, 1924-29.


Books


Rees, David D., and Dick, Everett. Union College: Fifty Years of Service. Lincoln, Neb.: Union College Press, 1941.


VITA

NAME: Gilbert Murray Valentine

DATE OF BIRTH: August 18, 1947

PLACE OF BIRTH: Wanganui, New Zealand

WIFE: Gail Ann (nee Cover)

CHILDREN: Andrew, b. September 25, 1975; Lincoln, b. July 6, 1978

EDUCATION:

1968 Bachelor of Arts--Theology
Avondale College
Cooranbong, Australia

1979 Master of Arts--New Testament
Andrews University

1982 Doctor of Philosophy--Religious Education
Andrews University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1969-70 Pastoral-Evangelism and Youth Pastor
Victorian Conference, Australia

1971-72 Assistant Director Youth & Temperance Department
South Queensland Conference, Australia

1972-74 Assistant Director Youth & Communication Department
North New South Wales Conference, Australia

1974-78 Teacher of Religion and Dean of Men
Longburn College, New Zealand

1978-79 Part-time Teacher of Religion
Andrews University

1978-79 Part-time Teacher of Religion
Andrews University Academy

1980-81 Graduate & Research Assistant
Andrews University