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Lest We Forget

“We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” LS196

A Second Look at—

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ADVENTIST PIONEERS

PART 4 (Conclusion)

by Fred Bischoff

We are attempting a brief and focused overview of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church. From its roots in the Advent awakening some 30 years before the church organized, we are tracing down to the crisis 40 years after. This emergency was the greatest threat yet to the church's mission and existence. We pick up here as events in 1901 transition into 1902. Can we learn anything for our day? Can the alpha teach us of the omega? Read carefully the extracts that begin on page 3, “Reaffirm! Reprint! Retell!”

Confusion was increasing as the church was growing. Even the messengers of the Minneapolis message¹ were susceptible. Reflecting back on the 1901 Session, Ellen White observed how both Prescott and Waggoner were holding “sentiments” that were erroneous. She said, “The ideas of some regarding a great experience called and supposed to be sanctification, have been the alpha of a train of deception which will deceive and ruin the souls of those who receive them.” She “was led to speak words intended to counteract” Waggoner’s “overdrawn expressions frequently used... at the conference.”²

Events rapidly occurred the next year that necessitated the repeated calls that Ellen White began to make in increasing frequency at that time. Two of the churches ministries remaining in Battle Creek were destroyed by fire. Dr. J. H. Kellogg openly moved, against the counsel of Ellen White as well as other key workers, to promote views of God that directly attacked the sanctuary doctrine. Amazingly, he was supported in this, at least to some degree, by the very men God had used to bring the message some 14 years earlier that would have fa-

cilitated the finishing of the work of the gospel.³ And A. F. Ballenger began adding his influence to interpretations of Scripture that also undermined the landmark understanding of the sanctuary ministry of Christ since 1844.⁴

Renewed Call for the Pioneers’ Witness

Just 13 days before the first fire, Ellen White wrote on February 5, 1902, a significant letter to one of the pioneers, S. N. Haskell, in which she spoke at length of the importance of the role of these tried workers, mentioning several by name with their contribution.⁵ With this letter began anew the theme on which she had briefly focused in the previous decade. This would be a recurrent topic she would write about at least through 1910. The death of Uriah Smith, March 6, 1903, only added to the importance of what she was saying.

To the delegates at the 1903 General Conference session, she openly called for people to leave Battle Creek and to learn the lessons of the fires. She recounted

how Magan and Sutherland moved the school out in response to God's counsel, but how before its burning the publishing house had engaged in business that violated heavenly principles. In addressing the needs of putting the sanitarium on a proper foundation, she encouraged the leaders to acknowledge and support Dr. Kellogg, who in turn must have his feet "planted on the truth of the living God" and leave the "spurious scientific theories" that are "stealing away the landmarks and undermining the pillars of our faith." Nothing should be allowed to "disturb the foundation of the faith upon which we have been building ever since the message came in 1842, 1843, and 1844."⁶

A week later, still addressing the 1903 session, as she made an appeal for the work in the South where G. I. Butler had returned to church employment, she spoke of the need for the surviving pioneers:

Let us take hold of the work in the Southern states intelligently. I rejoice that Brother Butler is with us in this work. I have known that the time would come when he would again take his place in the work. I want you to appreciate the trials that he has passed through, and to help him all you can. God desires the gray-haired pioneers, the men who acted a part in the work when the first, second and third angels' messages were first given, to stand in their place in His work to-day. They are not to drop out of sight. We commit Brother Butler to you, in the name of the God of Israel, asking you to help him all you can. And Elder Butler must plan to have others share his burdens.⁷

Later that year and the next she wrote letters to G. I. Butler eloquently addressing again the need for the pioneers' witness.⁸ In 1904 she also wrote an article "The Foundations of Our Faith."⁹ The next year at least ten documents contained the call, at least five in 1906, and one each in 1908 and 1910.¹⁰ It seems clear that these repeated counsels were written in continuation of the need she had been addressing at least since 1890, but now which was greatly multiplied in its seriousness and importance. (See the extracts on next page.)

These calls that went forth were in the context of the Minneapolis message and the landmarks, and in essence said, "If you are not going to finish the house, at least don't tear up the foundations. Leave them for another generation who will come and finish the build-

ing." The confusion resulting from the rebellion traced through the preceding years would blind those who had not seen the early working of God in the movement, draw key workers away from church, and lessen confidence in the biblical landmarks that made us a people. In addition, as noted before and as we will trace, one by one, those who had lived through the founding years were dying.

The condition of the church in 1904 evoked similar counsel to that given some 15 years earlier on the heels of Minneapolis, when she stated "a reformation must go through the churches."¹¹ In an article entitled, "A Call to Repentance" which was published in the December 15, 1904, *Review*, she echoed the need that, if anything, had worsened as the years passed.

In every church in our land, there is needed confession, repentance, and reconversion. The disappointment of Christ is beyond description.... Christ is humiliated in his people. The first love is gone, the faith is weak, there is need of a thorough transformation.... I can not fail to see that the light which God has given me is not favorable to our ministers or our churches. You have left your first love. Self-righteousness is not the wedding-garment. A failure to follow the clear light of truth is our fearful danger. The message to the Laodicean church reveals our condition as a people.¹²

Through all of this, the role of Ellen White's ministry remained pivotal. Without that testimony of Jesus through His messenger, the church would indeed be left to flounder. It is thus that we need what these documents still record of those years, for the church's need over a hundred years ago is ours today to an even greater degree.

It was in light of this history that the Lord shared with Ellen White the burden that she wrote about so extensively. And she addressed the importance of her writings as the church entered deeper and deeper into the time when the preparation was being prolonged, when we would have to remain in this world many more years, when no pioneer would remain alive. Her writings would be essential, and eventually her will established her estate to preserve and publish them. Speaking of the role of her writings in the years beyond her life, she wrote in 1907:

Continued on page seven

Reaffirm!

Key Extracts of 24 Documents

Reprint!

Counsels of 1896-1910

Retell!

We begin here to present extracts from documents written over a 15-year period calling for the pioneer witness and the affirmation of the landmarks, waymarks, and pillars. The background for these counsels has been given in the series “A Second Look at the Importance of the Adventist Pioneers” which concludes in this issue. The challenge remains for the church today to implement what was called for 100 years ago. The need increases as the years are prolonged and the attacks multiply.

*Fred Bischoff, Compiler**Ms31, 1896 (17MR1-5)*

Testimony Concerning the Views of Prophecy
Held by John Bell—Part I

8 November 1896

The great waymarks of truth, showing us our bearings in prophetic history, are to be carefully guarded, lest they be torn down and replaced with theories that would bring confusion rather than genuine light....

There are those now living who in studying the prophecies of Daniel and John, received great light from God as they passed over the ground where special prophecies were in process of fulfillment in their order. They bore the message of time to the people. The truth shone out clearly as the sun at noonday. Historical events, showing the direct fulfillment of prophecy, were set before the people, and the prophecy was seen to be a figurative delineation of events leading down to the close of this earth's history. The scenes connected with the working of the man of sin are the last features revealed in this earth's history. The people now have a special message to give to the world, the third angel's message. Those who, in their experience, have passed over the ground and acted a part in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angel's messages, are not so

liable to be led into false paths as are those who have not had an experimental knowledge of the people of God.

... We have a sleepless adversary, and he is constantly at work upon human minds that have not had a personal experience in the teachings of the people of God for the past fifty years. Some will take the truth applicable to their time, and place it in the future. Events in the train of prophecy that had their fulfillment away in the past are made future, and thus by these theories the faith of some is undermined....

The true workers of Jesus Christ are to cooperate with their brethren who have had an experience in the work from the very rise of the third angel's message. These followed on step by step, receiving light and truth as they advanced, bearing one test after another, lifting the cross that lay directly in their pathway, and pressing on to know the Lord, whose goings forth are prepared as the morning. You and other of our brethren must accept the truth as God has given it to His students of prophecy, as they have been led by genuine, living experience, advancing point by point, tested, proved, and tried, until the truth is to them a reality. From their voices and pens the truth in bright, warm rays has gone to all parts of the world, and that which was to them testing truth, as brought by the Lord's del-

egated messengers, is testing truth to all to whom this message is proclaimed.

The burden of the warning now to come to the people of God, nigh and afar off, is the third angel's message. And those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today.

The truths that have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today. Those who passed over the ground step by step in the past history of our experience, seeing the chain of truth in the prophecies, were prepared to accept and obey every ray of light. They were praying, fasting, searching, digging for the truth as for hidden treasures, and the Holy Spirit, we know, was teaching and guiding us. Many theories were advanced, bearing a semblance of truth, but so mingled with misinterpreted and misapplied scriptures that they led to dangerous errors. Very well do we know how every point of truth was established, and the seal set upon it by the Holy Spirit of God....

The leadings of the Lord were marked, and most wonderful were His revelations of what is truth. Point after point was established by the Lord God of heaven. That which was truth then, is truth today. But the voices do not cease to be heard—"This is truth. I have new light." But these new lights in prophetic lines are manifest in misapplying the Word and setting the people of God adrift without an anchor to hold them. If the student of the Word would take the truths which God has revealed in the leadings of His people, and appropriate these truths, digest them, and bring them into their practical life, they would then be living channels of light....

The third angel's message is our burden to the people. It is the gospel of peace and righteousness and truth. Here is our work, to stand firmly to proclaim this....

Ms32, 1896 (17MR6-23)

Testimony Concerning the Views of Prophecy
Held by John Bell—Part II

8 November 1896

The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old....

The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been and the things that will be.

... In history and prophecy the Word of God portrays the long, continued conflict between truth and error. That conflict is yet in progress. Those things which have been, will be repeated. Old controversies will be revived, and new theories will be continually arising. But God's people, who in their belief and fulfillment of prophecy have acted a part in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages, know where they stand. They have an experience that is more precious than fine gold. They are to stand firm as a rock, holding the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end.

A transforming power attended the proclamation of the first and second angels' messages, as it attends the message of the third angel. Lasting convictions were made upon human minds. The power of the Holy Spirit was manifested. There was diligent study of the Scriptures, point by point. Almost entire nights were devoted to earnest searching of the Word. We searched for the truth as for hidden treasures. The Lord revealed Himself to us. Light was shed on the prophecies, and we knew that we received divine instruction.

... After the great Disappointment there were few who set themselves to seek the Word with all their heart. But some souls would not settle down in discouragement and deny that the Lord had led them. To these the truth was opened point by point, and entwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies. The

searchers after truth felt that the identification of Christ with their nature and interest was complete. Truth was made to shine forth, beautiful in its simplicity, dignified with a power and invested with an assurance unknown before the Disappointment. We could then proclaim the message in unity.

... The Lord will not lead minds now to set aside the truth that the Holy Spirit has moved upon His servants in the past to proclaim.

Many will honestly search the Word for light as those in the past have searched it; and they see light in the Word. But they did not pass over the ground in their experience, when these messages of warning were first proclaimed. Not having had this experience, some do not appreciate the value of the truths that have been to us as waymarks, and that have made us as a peculiar people what we are. They do not make a right application of the Scriptures, and thus they frame theories that are not correct. It is true

that they quote an abundance of Scripture, and teach much that is true; but truth is so mixed with error as to lead to wrong conclusions. Yet because they can weave Scripture into their theories, they think they have a straight chain of truth. Many who did not have an experience in the rise of the messages, accept these erroneous theories, and are led into false paths, backward instead of forward. This is the enemy's design.

... The light God has given me is that the Scriptures you have woven together you yourself do not fully understand. If you did, you would discern that your theories tear up the very foundation of our faith.

... There are others besides yourself, and more than one or two, who like you think they have new light, and are all ready to present it to the people. But it would be pleasing to God for them to accept the light already given and walk in it, and base their faith upon the Scriptures, which sustain the positions held by the people of God for many years. The everlasting gospel is to be proclaimed by human agents....

... Theories will be continually agitated to divert the mind, to unsettle the faith. Those who have had the actual experience in the unfolding of the prophecies,

have been made what they are today, Seventh-day Adventists, by these prophecies. They are to stand with their loins girt about with truth, and with the whole armor on. Those who have not had this experience are privileged to hold the message of truth with the same confidence. The light that God has been pleased to give His people will not weaken their confidence in the path in which He has led them in the past, but will strengthen them to hold fast the faith. We must hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.

Lt47, 1902 (20MR219-222)

To S. N. Haskell

5 February 1902

The cause needs the help of the old hands, the aged workers, who have had so many years' experience in the cause of God, who have seen many going into fanaticism, cherishing the delusion of false theories, and raising all the efforts made to let the true light shine forth in the darkness to reveal the superstitions that

were coming in to confuse judgment, and to make of none effect the message of truth that in these last days must be given in its purity to the remnant people of God.

Many of the tried servants of God have fallen asleep in Jesus. We greatly appreciate the help of those who are left alive to this day. We value their testimony....

We can easily count the first burden bearers now alive. Elder Smith was connected with us at the beginning of the publishing work....

I am thankful that Elder Loughborough can still use his abilities and his gifts in God's work. He has stood faithful amid storm and trial. With Elder Smith, my husband, Brother Butler, who joined us at a later period, and yourself, he can say: [1 John 1:1-10, quoted].

It is with feelings of satisfaction and of gratitude to God that we see Elder Butler again in active service. His gray hairs testify that he understands what trials

1903

Nothing is to be allowed to come in that will disturb the foundation of the faith upon which we have been building ever since the message came in 1842, 1843, and 1844.

are. We welcome him into our ranks once more, and regard him as one of our most valuable laborers....

A few of the old standard-bearers are still living. I am intensely desirous that our brethren and sisters shall respect and honor these pioneers....

GCB04/06/1903

Our Duty to Leave Battle Creek

3 April 1903

The Lord wants us to do our duty. He wants us to understand that Dr. Kellogg shall not be pushed out of his place, but that he shall stand acknowledged and supported in his God-given work. This he will be if his feet are planted on the truth of the living God. If they are not planted on this truth, specious temptations will come in, through scientific problems and scientific theories regarding God and His Word. Spurious scientific theories are coming in as a thief in the night, stealing away the landmarks and undermining the pillars of our faith. God has shown me that the medical students are not to be educated in such theories, because God will not endorse these theories. The most specious temptations of the enemy are coming in, and they are coming in on the highest, most elevated plane. These spiritualize the doctrines of present truth until there is no distinction between the substance and the shadow.

You know that Satan will come in to deceive if possible the very elect. He claims to be Christ, and he is coming in, pretending to be the great medical missionary. He will cause fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men, to prove that he is God. We must stand barricaded by the truths of the Bible. The canopy of truth is the only canopy under which we can stand safely.

... The warning has come: Nothing is to be allowed to come in that will disturb the foundation of the faith upon which we have been building ever since the message came in 1842, 1843, and 1844. I was in this message, and ever since I have been standing before the world, true to the light that God has given us. We do not propose to take our feet off the platform on which they were placed as day by day we sought the Lord with earnest prayer, seeking for light. Do you think that I could give up the light that God has given me? It is to be as the Rock of Ages. It has been guiding me ever

since it was given. Brethren and sisters, God lives and reigns and works today. His hand is on the wheel, and in His providence He is turning the wheel in accordance with His own will. Let not men fasten themselves to documents, saying what they will do and what they will not do. Let them fasten themselves to the Lord God of heaven. Then the light of heaven will shine into the soul-temple, and we shall see the salvation of God.

Lt105, 1903 (17MR344-347)

To G. I. Butler

1 June 1903

I feel deeply over our present situation. We must now do a work that should have been done long ago. We must do as the Lord directed Moses to do when the children of Israel, having crossed the desert, were encamped on the borders of Jordan. Moses was bidden to rehearse to them all the dealings of the Lord to them during their journeyings through the wilderness. The record of this rehearsal is found in the book of Deuteronomy.

The record of the experience through which the people of God passed in the early history of our work must be republished. Many of those who have since come into the truth are ignorant of the way in which the Lord wrought. The experience of William Miller and his associates, of Captain Joseph Bates, and of other pioneers in the Advent message, should be kept before our people. Elder Loughborough's book should receive attention. Our leading men should see what can be done for the circulation of this book.

We must study to find out the best way in which to take up the review of our experiences from the beginning of our work, when we separated from the churches and went forward step by step in the light that God gave us. We then took the position that the Bible, and the Bible only, was to be our guide; and we are never to depart from this position. We were given wonderful manifestations of the power of God. Miracles were wrought....

(Continued in the next issue)

**Elder Loughborough's book should
receive attention. [See p. 8]**

Continued from page two

Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people.¹³

But what of the writings of other pioneers, other eyewitnesses of how God had worked, who while not inspired messengers must still tell what they had seen and heard and handled? She was instructed repeatedly to call for their participation.

The only pioneers still alive besides Ellen White when this call was reaching its peak were J. L. Prescott, G. I. Butler, George Amadon, S. N. Haskell, and J. N. Loughborough. Observe below when the other prominent first-generation Seventh-day Adventists had died. (The bolded names are those who wrote extensively.)

<u>Pioneer</u>	<u>Year of Death</u>
Rachel Oakes Preston	1868
Bates, Joseph	1872
White, James	1881
Edson, Hiram	1882
Pierce, Stephen	1883
Andrews, J. N.	1883
Byington, John	1887
Farnsworth, William	1888
Waggoner, J. H.	1889
Cottrell, Roswell F.	1892
Cornell, Merritt E.	1893
Smith, Uriah	1903

Those alive when these documents were written eventually died in the following years:

Amadon, George	1913
Prescott, J. L.	1915
White, Ellen	1915
Butler, G. I.	1918
Haskell, S. N.	1922
Loughborough, J. N.	1924

1907
Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last.

Thus we come to where we must share portions of the multiple documents written to address the need. On page 3 begins the extracts of 24 manuscripts, letters, and articles, which we have entitled “Reaffirm! Reprint! Retell!”

The question remains for you, dear reader: *What will you do in response to these calls?*

¹ The messengers are identified in *Lt86*, 1895 (September 25, 1895; in *EGW 1888 Materials*, p. 1455). See *Lest We Forget*, Vol. 9, Nos. 1-3 for more references.

² *Lt269*, 1903 (December 14, 1903; in *10MR356*, 357)

³ J. H. Kellogg gives credit at the end of the preface to his book *The Living Temple* to the help E. J.

Waggoner and A. T. Jones had given him on the manuscript. Speaking of the book, Waggoner stated in a January 14, 1903 letter to Prescott, “I cannot detect anything radically wrong in it.” Jones was on the subcommittee commissioned to examine the manuscript and voted with the majority (Jones, Kellogg, and David Paulson) to print it. In contrast W. W. Prescott was the lone vote against publication. (See *5Bio290*, 291.) We have no record of Jones or Waggoner publicly opposing Kellogg’s concepts, as Prescott did repeatedly in his *Review* editorials. Prescott clearly parted company with Waggoner, as noted in his November 14, 1904 letter to Waggoner. (See *Lest We Forget*, Vol. 10, No. 2, p. 4.) See also *Lt279*, 1904 (written 08/01/1904) to “Brethren Paulson, Sadler, Jones, and Waggoner” where she quotes a Speaker in a dream she had, “Dr. Kellogg ... has refused to wear My yoke, and unless he is converted I will separate from him and from those who sustain him in his self-exaltation.” She later describes seeing Jesus appeal to both messengers. “Our Counsellor then laid His hands on the shoulders of Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, and said, ‘You are confused. You are in the mist and fog. You have need of the heavenly anointing.’” (Published in *21MR174-177*; quotes are from pp. 175, 176; there is much more of significance in the letter.)

⁴ *Ms59*, 1905 (published in *MR760*, p. 4). Extracts

of her manuscript regarding A. F. Ballenger's views are included in the next issue. Ballenger is also mentioned in many of the others extracted documents.

⁵ *Lt47*, 1902 (published in *20MR219-222*). Extracts of this letter are included herein.

⁶ *GCB*, April 6, 1903, par. 27 and 35 (April 3, 1903). Extracts included herein.

⁷ *GCB*, April 14, 1903, par. 38 (April 10, 1903, in *EGW 1888 Materials*, p. 1801)

⁸ *Lt105*, 1903 (June 1, 1903, in *17MR344-347*) and *Lt237*, 1904 (July 14, 1904, in *19MR308-312*). Extracts included herein and in the next issue.

⁹ *SpTB02*, 1904, pp. 51-59. Extracts included in the next issue.

¹⁰ References and extracts of each of these 17 documents are included in the next two issues.

¹¹ *Ms30*, 1889 (published in *EGW 1888 Materials*, p. 356).

¹² *RH12/15/1904*, paragraphs 8 & 9

¹³ *Lt371*, 1907 (October 23), published as "My Work and My Helpers" in *PH116*, pp. 13, 14 (also *ISM*, p. 55 and *6Bio* 445)

**Summary Thoughts from this section of
*Reaffirm! Reprint! Retell!***

- The great waymarks of truth, showing us our bearings in prophetic history, are to be carefully guarded.
- Those who are seeking to understand this message will not be led by the Lord to make an application of

the Word that will undermine the foundation and remove the pillars of the faith that has made Seventh-day Adventists what they are today.

- The truths that have been unfolding in their order, as we have advanced along the line of prophecy revealed in the Word of God, are sacred, eternal truth today.
- The proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed.
- We do not propose to take our feet off the platform on which they were placed as day by day we sought the Lord with earnest prayer, seeking for light. Do you think that I could give up the light that God has given me? It is to be as the Rock of Ages.

"Elder Loughborough's Book"

His 1905 revision of his history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been republished. ***The Great Second Advent Movement*** is available from:

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Reaffirm! Reprint! Retell!
continues in Part 2 in the next issue.

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