

Howard, Luther Loomis II (1825–1903)

BARRY M. MAHORNEY

Barry M. Mahorney graduated from Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University) (B.A. Music Education), and then from LaSierra University (M.A. Administration and Leadership). Mahorney served the Seventh-day Adventist Church in education and pastoral ministry for forty-five years. He is married to Sharryn Hughes Mahorney, granddaughter of China missionaries Alton and Emma Hughes. They have two adult children.

Luther Loomis Howard II, evangelist and first president of the Maine Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, was born on October 18, 1825, in Leeds, Androscoggin County, Maine, to Luther Loomis Howard, Sr. and Rhoda Mitchell Howard.¹ Five months later, Luther, Sr. died and two years after that, Rhoda married Luther's brother, Warren.

At an early age, Luther II began preaching the Baptist faith. Then, about 1843, he heard his "first second advent principles" from a young, teacher-turned-evangelist, James White.² Two factors subsequently came together to lead Luther to a deepening interest in the advent message and eventually to preach it. The first was his marriage to Sarah P. Hussey from Hallowell, Maine on April 24, 1845.³ Around 1842, Sarah heard William Miller preach in Lowell, Massachusetts and was convinced that his message was truth.⁴ Second, around 1850 to 1852, while employed as a tradesman at the Prescott machine shop in Hallowell, Howard further studied second advent teachings with Dr. Nicholas Smith, a physician of some prominence among the "first day" Adventists. Howard then dedicated himself to sharing the message throughout the Kennebec valley.⁵

During the 1850s and early 1860s, Howard continued to preach and hold positions with the first day Adventists who organized as the Advent Christian Association in 1860.⁶ He was president of the Advent Christian Conference of Maine for six years.⁷ He reconnected with James White in 1855 when White and some other Sabbatarian Adventists visited a meeting Howard was conducting near Brunswick Village, Maine. At Howard's



Luther Loomis Howard II and Sarah Hussey Howard

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invitation, White spoke twice the next day. At that point, Howard did not embrace White's teaching regarding the Sabbath and the three angels' messages, but apparently showed some openness. In his report on the meetings in the *Review*, White expressed the hope that the Lord would help Howard "to see clearly the third and last message for the church."⁸

About a decade later, though, in the mid-1860s, Howard did accept the Sabbath message and began to preach it. He often joined John N. Andrews, Dudley Canright, Merritt E. Cornell and others in preaching the Seventh-day Adventist message throughout New England.⁹ At the same time, though, he seems to have maintained a rather close connection with the Advent Christians.

In November 1867, the Maine Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was organized in Norridgewock, Maine. In attendance were James and Ellen White and John Nevins Andrews, then serving as General Conference president. During this meeting, Luther L. Howard was elected president of the conference,¹⁰ a position he held until November 1869 (two, one-year terms).

While it appears that Luther was an able preacher, he was critical of the church's leadership in Battle Creek, Michigan, and his influence damaged the work in Maine. He made an acknowledgment of wrong and the 1870 Maine Conference session affirmed him for this step, but withheld endorsement of his ministry until he gave "good and full evidence" of having been "fully reformed."¹¹

Apparently, he did not fully follow through on his promises. Seventh-day Adventist publications are silent about Luther Howard from 1870 until his death in 1903. His wife, Sarah, died on December 14, 1900.¹² Her obituary in the Advent Christian periodical *World's Crisis* mentions, "With one or two exceptions, he (Elder L. L. Howard) is the oldest Advent preacher now living."

Luther L. Howard II died in Hallowell, Maine, June 3, 1903.¹³ In his obituary Seventh-day Adventist minister F.C. Gilbert wrote, "During his last suffering the precious truths of the third angel's message shone with a new luster in his soul."¹⁴ Gilbert conducted Howard's funeral service, assisted by H. H. Dexter, president of the Maine Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and the Methodist minister of Hallowell.

Luther Loomis Howard II had the unusual distinction of receiving an obituary in the main periodical of both the Seventh-day Adventists (*Review and Herald*) and that of the Advent Christians (*World's Crisis*¹⁵).

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NOTES

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