

Prescott, William Warren (1855–1944)

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A highly influential writer, scholar and administrator among Seventh-day Adventism's second generation of leaders, William Warren Prescott served the church for a total of fifty-two years, holding numerous senior leadership roles in education and publishing and at the General Conference. He was a member of the General Conference Executive Committee for forty-two years.

Early Life (1855-1873)

Born in the village of Alton, New Hampshire on September 2, 1855, to shoemaker, James L. Prescott (1828-1915) and Harriet (nee Tripp) (1831-1920), William Prescott grew up in an enterprising family supported by their cottage industry and deeply conscious of their New England heritage.¹ William's paternal forebears migrated to America in 1665, from Derby, England eight generations earlier.² His mother's Irish-Scottish family descended from Scottish Covenanters. They migrated from Ireland in 1720 and identified with the local Congregational Church.³ Both families had been actively involved in the Revolutionary War and bore a heritage that cherished the liberties won by the Republic. William's father, James L. Prescott had been baptized as a Free-will Baptist but in 1842 after hearing Joshua V. Himes preach on the nearness of the second Advent of Christ he had become a Millerite believer and an itinerant lay preacher for the Millerites. He experienced the bitterness of the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844 and for the next decade associated with a group that kept setting new



W. W. Prescott.

Photo courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

dates only giving up on the idea of date-setting in 1857. The following year he learned of the Seventh-day Sabbath teaching and joined the fledgling Sabbatarian Adventists but by this time he was concentrating his energies on developing a family business in shoemaking.⁴

When William was nine years of age, during the last year of the Civil War, his father moved his wife and family of five children to North Berwick in Maine where there were more commercial opportunities and he continued to grow his small factory. William Prescott spent his early teen years in North Berwick as other siblings were added to the family. Tragedy blighted the home during a two week period just before Christmas of 1869 when fourteen-year-old William's three younger brothers, aged one, three and six, succumbed during an epidemic of diphtheria. The experience sobered William and deepened his spiritual sensitivity. The following year, 1870, his father invested in a small stove polish enterprise that he soon expanded to include several lines of shoe polish and the family business rapidly expanded over ensuing decades under the leadership of William's father and older brother Amos. It developed into a leading New England manufacturer of national brand polishes and other household chemicals.⁵

William Prescott attended primary school in a number of small hamlets such as Barnstead and Penacook, New Hampshire and at Wells on the Maine Coast. For high school he attended South Berwick Academy, just ten miles away from his home. It was the oldest and most prestigious secondary school in Maine. For his senior year he transferred to Penacook Academy where he studied for a quarter and then as a seventeen-year-old filled out the rest of the year teaching Latin and Greek classes. While at Penacook he fell in love with attractive sixteen-year old Sarah Sanders, a fellow Sabbath keeper who was registered as a student in his language classes.⁶

College Education, Marriage and Early Career (1872-1885)

In the fall of 1873, Prescott enrolled with eighty other freshmen at the Ivy League, Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. It was a school that still valued its religious heritage and required attendance at chapels and Sunday services. Prescott was the only Seventh-day Adventist in attendance but secured permission from the president not to have to attend Sabbath recitations. Known as "Billy" by his friends, Prescott spent his four years at Dartmouth pursuing the classical studies course graduating in 1877 among the top 10% of his class of fifty-six who completed the BA degree course. The college conferred its MA degree on him five years later in 1885. During his time as an undergraduate student he enjoyed a reputation as a keen athlete, developed valuable skills as an editor of the student newspaper *The Dartmouth*, and enhanced his teaching proficiency through extensive practice teaching assignments in local schools.

Prescott quickly achieved prominence in his early career. Following graduation at age twenty-two, he accepted a position as principal and teacher of a 300-student high school in Northfield, Vermont in the fall of 1877.⁷ Two years later he was appointed as the principal of the prestigious Washington County Grammar School with an enrolment of 350 just a city block away from the State Legislature in Montpelier, Vermont.⁸

A year later, the ambition to exercise wider influence than even a school principalship at the center of the state capital could provide led Prescott to form a business partnership with his brother Charles. In 1880 they purchased a weekly newspaper, the *Biddeford Union and Journal* and launched a career in publishing.

Before moving to Biddeford on the Maine coast, Prescott married Sarah Sanders (1856-1910) at a wedding in her parents' Penacook home on July 8, 1880. Sarah was the daughter of another shoemaker, Jacob Sanders, of German ancestry. Her mother had become a Sabbatarian Adventist in 1858 at the same time as Prescott's family. The Sanders had prospered and her father held substantial retail interests and commercial property in central Penacook.⁹ Sarah had taken some summer studies at Harvard to complete her education for the teaching profession.¹⁰

After two years in Biddeford, in May 1882, Prescott ended the partnership with his brother Charles and moved back to Montpelier where he expanded his own newspaper interests with the purchase of the *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, the state's oldest and most influential Republican newspaper. The business also included book publishing and two other weekly church newspapers. Prescott's editorial stance vigorously supported teacher education reform and curricular reform as well as an anti-corruption emphasis that called for honesty and transparency in business and politics.¹¹ The publishing business prospered in spite of Prescott adopting a five day work week in order to ensure the Sabbath closure of the plant. The editorial skills Prescott developed at this time and the publishing business experience he acquired contributed to his success and his marked influence in later leadership roles in the Adventist church.

College President (1885-1897)

Motivated by a desire to become more fully involved in the mission of the Adventist Church, Prescott responded to an invitation in July 1885 to become the president of the church's fledgling senior college in Michigan. He sold up his newspaper interests and moved to Battle Creek. A decade after its opening, Battle Creek College, in 1882 had become unmanageable and had gone into recess for a year, confused over its identity. Should it be a liberal arts college or a trade school with a manual labor program? What discipline should be expected of its students? Factions among students, faculty and trustees had torn the campus apart. In 1883 it had opened again under an interim president, W. H. Littlejohn, but it was drifting and needed strong leadership.

"Professor Prescott" (the respectful term by which he would be almost universally addressed for the rest of his life) quickly stabilized the shaky institution and during nine years as president nurtured it through a period of steady growth in admissions and influence. He oversaw a doubling of enrolment to over 700, with summer school programs sometimes taking the total over 1,000, as well as a tripling of its physical capacity. The latter included the addition of much needed residential facilities made possible by drawing on his own financial resources. He greatly strengthened academic resources and the curriculum enabling the institution to award its first degrees in 1889. His most enduring achievements at Battle Creek were the introduction of a "school home"

environment for students with “preceptors” and “preceptresses” and the study of required Bible courses as part of the degree curriculum. Implementation of the latter reform involved protracted struggles with his faculty and the episode left him feeling bruised.¹² By the end of his presidency, however, he believed that the college was at last offering what he believed could be called “Christian education.”¹³

In 1887, two years after Prescott had assumed the presidency of Battle Creek College, General Conference leaders persuaded him to also accept the newly created role of educational secretary for the General Conference so that he could nurture the growth of Christian education across the rapidly growing denomination. The professor occupied this central role for a decade — until 1897 — and it enabled him to give permanent shape to the church’s educational system.

During this period he served as midwife to the birth of Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska (1891) and supervised plans for the establishment of Walla Walla College in Washington state (1892). He served as the founding president of both institutions in addition to his Battle Creek College duties, relying on deputized on-site principals for day-to-day campus administration.

He also worked closely with Ellen White during this period as she articulated the ideals for Christian education and he looked at the campus and classroom level for practical ways to put ideals into practice. He strongly advocated for a Christ-centered biblical studies curriculum and emphasized the role of colleges in providing the future workforce of the church. His centralized approach to early educational development enabled him to promote an overarching mission for the church’s educational institutions, achieve efficiency in the use of resources by overcoming sectional interests, and establish a “mold” for future institutions. He was closely involved with Ellen White in the establishment of the Avondale School for Christian Workers during a ten-month visit to Australia in 1895-96, laying out plans for the campus and the curriculum and setting its course as a “model” for future Adventist colleges.¹⁴

The 1888 Minneapolis General Conference Session with its sharp debates over righteousness by faith prompted a personal spiritual renewal and a profound theological paradigm shift for Prescott. He was ordained to the gospel ministry a year later on November 9, 1889.¹⁵ His new perspectives undergirded his drive for introducing Christo-centric Bible courses into the college curriculum. The negative attitudes and prejudices manifested at Minneapolis also persuaded him of the critical need for a more intentional program of theological education for the Adventist ministry and he persuaded the General Conference to adopt a program to address this problem.¹⁶ During the early 1890s he conducted several extended Bible institutes for practicing clergy on the campus of Battle Creek College and thus had a critically important role in the birthing of Adventist theological education.¹⁷

The same post-1888 theological reorientation led Prescott to articulate a new Christo-centric setting for the understanding and preaching of Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. His new gospel-centered approach, presented at a landmark evangelistic camp meeting in late 1895 in Melbourne, Australia, was enthusiastically endorsed by Ellen White and other church leaders. His new Christo-centric themes emphasized the eternal deity of Christ and

that, together with a new emphasis during the same period on the personality of the Holy Spirit, led to the clearer understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity that began to take root in the church after his visit to Australia.¹⁸ During his Australian sojourn he had been invited to assist Ellen White in the revision of her manuscript for the *Desire of Ages* published in 1898. The resultant book clearly articulated a trinitarian understanding of the Godhead and became a significant change agent in this area of doctrinal development.¹⁹ During his time in Australia Prescott was able to establish a strong and enduring friendship with A. G. Daniells, the leader of the Australian church. It was a relationship that would shape his future career.

Prescott remained an advocate for a high christology and trinitarian theology for the rest of his ministry although he sometimes struggled to express his views clearly. His college textbook published in the 1920s, *The Doctrine of Christ*, enjoyed only a modest circulation because of the lingering resistance in the church to trinitarian thought. His "new theology" views were often ridiculed and he was exposed to criticism and much harsh rhetoric from more fundamentalist Adventists who sought to preserve the anti-trinitarian stance of Adventism's earliest pioneers.²⁰ On the other hand, leaders like *Ministry* editor LeRoy Froom regarded his Christocentric emphasis both in doctrine and prophetic exposition, as "a great breath of fresh air." In Froom's view the professor was "ahead of his time."²¹

Church Administrator (1897-1919)

Following his return to the United States from Australia in 1897, Ellen White expected that Prescott would be elected as General Conference president to replace O. A. Olsen. Instead he was assigned by a fractious General Conference session to leadership of the church in Great Britain. His four years in the United Kingdom met with mixed success. His focus on evangelism nurtured membership expansion but he considered the rate of growth as glacial and his efforts at establishing enduring institutions were frustrated by limited finance, personnel resources, and the mishaps of fire and ill-health.

When A. G. Daniells was appointed to lead the denomination through a period of difficult re-organization in 1901 he ensured that Prescott was appointed as his lieutenant. The Professor was first appointed to the powerful role of secretary of the Foreign Mission Board (1901) and then added the role of General Conference vice president to his responsibilities in 1902. The church-wide re-organization was contested by John Harvey Kellogg, the director of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and leader of a network of associated medical institutions. Kellogg argued that the medical branch of the work should not be brought under the control of the General Conference. The struggle resulted in the eventual loss of the Battle Creek Sanitarium by the church and during the process, in 1907, Kellogg was dismissed from membership in his local church. When, early in 1902, it appeared that *Review* editor Uriah Smith was allying with Kellogg against the reorganization effort, Prescott was appointed to replace Smith as editor of the *Review* and as president of the publishing association, positions he held until 1909.²²

After the General Conference session of 1903 resolved to transfer church headquarters and the publishing house from Battle Creek, Prescott, in his combined administrative roles, became the primary agent responsible for implementing the relocation to Washington, D.C. He oversaw the establishment of the new publishing enterprise first in rented quarters near the center of the nation's capital and then in Takoma Park, Maryland where a completely new plant had been built. There, Prescott succeeded in developing a new organizational culture through a five-day work week and by focusing the company on the publishing of religious material rather than commercial work.²³ His key role in assisting Daniells during the struggle with Kellogg resulted in his being perceived in contrasting ways. Kellogg viewed him as, "the wildest and most unsafe man that has ever undertaken to pose as a leader of this denomination."²⁴ On the other hand, Daniells, who went on to become the longest serving General Conference president in the church's history (1901-1922), valued the professor because he demonstrated, "some of the rarest gifts possessed by any man in our ranks." In Daniells' view Prescott had "large executive ability" and he was confident that "the interests of the cause" were "safe" in his hands.²⁵

The overload of multiple responsibilities on the professor during the Kellogg schism threatened a nervous breakdown in 1906. Consequently, Prescott relinquished some administrative roles although he retained editorship of the *Review*. As part of a strategy to maintain his health, he spent eight-and-a-half months overseas in Asia and in Europe conducting ministerial institutes and fostering the mission of the church.

During 1907-1908, his advocacy of a revisionist interpretation of the expression "the daily" in Daniel 8:13 to bring it into line with his Christo-centric hermeneutical framework agitated traditional Adventists such as Stephen N. Haskell and Judson Washburn who held to an inerrantist view of scripture and of Ellen White's authority. Inerrantists in the church led a campaign to discredit Prescott and the subsequent tensions threatened the stability of the church.²⁶ At the 1909 General Conference Session Prescott was reassigned from his editorship of the *Review* to city evangelistic work. He was permitted however, to continue editing the *Protestant Magazine*, an anti-Catholic monthly journal that the church's publishing house had just launched in mid-1909 in response to aggressive plans by the Roman Catholic hierarchy "to win America for the Church."²⁷ Monthly circulation of the magazine steadily climbed to a peak of 23,000 in 1915 but the paper struggled to cover its costs.

In 1910, Prescott's wife died after an extended battle with cancer and this trauma, compounded by the repeated attacks on his orthodoxy by his conservative critics, brought about a nervous breakdown and the professor was obliged to take extended sick leave. On his return to work in 1911 administrative colleagues at the General Conference assigned him book revision work, and other editorial and research tasks in addition to his editing of the *Protestant Magazine*. At the end of 1911 Prescott married Daisy Orndorff, a nurse, twenty-four years his junior who had helped care for Sarah during her last illness. Remarriage re-energized his outlook and the professor was soon taking on more work and developing a reputation as resident theologian for the General Conference. During this period he made large contributions to and helped edit an important volume that provided valuable resources for the ministry of the church. The *Source Book for Bible Students* (1919) eventually

became part of the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary series. The *Protestant Magazine*, however, was discontinued in 1916 because of continuing financial difficulties and heightened inter-church sensitivities occasioned by the Great War of 1914-1918. Inerrantists in the church also campaigned against the paper because they perceived it as a vehicle for Prescott to continue advocating his views on “the daily.”

When A. G. Daniells experienced health problems related to overwork and the additional complexities of wartime leadership, the Annual Council of 1915 created a new role of field secretary of the General Conference and assigned the sixty-year old Prescott to the position. His task was to assist Daniells with the supervision of a rapidly expanding world field and during the next five years up until 1921 he spent much of his time advising and consulting with overseas administrations and conducting ministerial training institutes, particularly in South America and in the Asiatic Division.

The death of his son Lewis who was “lost in action” over the battle-fields of France in April 1918 caused his father deep sorrow. Lewis had joined the Royal Flying Corps of Canada in order to avoid being drafted for the US military and being sent to the trenches of Flanders. There were long months of agonizing uncertainty. His son’s body was never found and there was no funeral.

In 1919 Prescott was a prominent participant in a number of leadership conferences that had to be delayed until after the war, including the Bible and History Teachers Conference of July 1919. This conference, at which Prescott was the primary presenter, caused major difficulties for both himself and Daniells because of the frank discussions about the methodologies Ellen White had adopted in preparing her books and manuscripts and the necessary limitations on her authority. Prescott had already addressed his concerns about the misrepresentation of her work in a protest letter to W. C. White in 1915.²⁸ Both Daniells and Prescott, who had worked closely with Ellen White, understood that her writing was not inerrant. The transcripts of the 1919 discussions were so sensitive however that they were not circulated as originally intended but kept in the General Conference archives until their discovery in 1974.²⁹

Bible Teacher and Interim College President (1919-1944)

Prescott continued to serve as field secretary of the General Conference until his formal retirement in 1937, although during this period he also accepted several interim teaching or educational administration appointments to help the church address various short-term crises. At the age of sixty-six, he responded to an appeal in August 1921 from church leadership in Australia to take the role of president of Avondale College. Conflict over curriculum issues and mission complicated by the expectations of state accreditation authorities was crippling the institution and a sudden increase in tuition had led to a 43% drop in enrolment. The situation required the skills of an experienced leader. Prescott spent a year implementing staff retrenchments and other cost-cutting adjustments to stabilize the institution, re-imposed an academic culture from the era of the school’s founding in the mid-1890s and then persuaded Lynn H. Wood, president of Southern Missionary College in

Tennessee to come and take over.³⁰ The challenge of dealing with the troubling state accreditation issues was postponed for two decades. During the following year Prescott continued as a member of the board and in his capacity as General Conference field secretary travelled around Australia and New Zealand conducting ministerial institutes and recruiting students for the college.

Upon his return to America in 1924 Prescott was persuaded by his General Conference colleagues to take a similar crisis-management appointment to Union College in Nebraska. For several years, declining enrolments and swelling deficits had plagued the small mid-western college Prescott had helped found in 1891. During the previous year trustees in desperation had placed the college on the market but had not found a buyer. Serving as both president and business manager, and advised by General Conference Treasury, Prescott implemented the most rigid of economies, cut back on staffing, sold off the farm, secured loans to continue operating and again worked to re-establish the original college culture of the 1890s.³¹ Prescott had developed a reactionary response to the recurring issues of academic accreditation during this period and was not at all worried during his presidency when the North Central Association threatened to drop Union from its list of accredited junior colleges. Although, as he expressed to a General Conference colleague he was “not particularly anxious to retain this accrediting” and was against such “outside entanglement” the majority of his board felt otherwise and Prescott dutifully complied with their wishes and appealed against the loss of accreditation.³² After spending a year as president, averting the demise of the college, the professor was persuaded to stay on at Union teaching religion and heading up the Theology Department for a further two years continuing also to serve as a member of the college board.³³ He used the opportunity to further develop his textbook, the *Doctrine of Christ*.

At Union College Prescott developed a reputation as a much respected religion teacher who was deeply pastoral but who also expected high standards of work from his students. But increasingly the aging Prescott was falling out of touch with educational developments and contemporary administrative responses to them. “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,” he wrote to General Conference President W. A. Spicer during his third year on campus.³⁴ He could also be reactionary. The leadership struggles that swirled around the college and the constituency administration during Prescott’s last year on campus illustrate the kind of forceful leadership of which Prescott was sometimes capable. As the senior General Conference representative at the Central Union Conference session in early 1928 Prescott found himself overseeing a highly politicized and quarrelsome nomination process for a new Union Conference president. As chair of the session Prescott sought reconciliation. In a contentious, long-remembered ruling he determined that a constituency minority of 55 votes against 91 votes in favor of receiving the nominating committee report, was “too big a minority to ignore,” and referred the report back.³⁵ When the committee refused to change its nomination it was dismissed and another appointed. But after several days of further consultation it could not agree on a nomination either. The incumbent was eventually continued in office for a further six weeks until the new executive committee resolved the situation with a new appointment.

At the end of 1928 Prescott left Nebraska to return to his General Field Secretary duties in Takoma Park. It was during this period that the professor became involved in several minor controversies that swirled around headquarters. He wrote apologetic literature in the so-called "Versions Controversy," defending Adventists who used the Revised Version of the Bible against those Adventists who argued that the King James Version was the only reliable version and that those who did not use it were apostate.³⁶ He also sought to provide clarification on the church's teaching on the Sanctuary and developed a response to Roman Catholic charges that Adventists were unethically misinterpreting and misrepresenting the phrase *Vicarious Fillii Dei*.³⁷ He also produced the first book published by Adventists exploring the relationship between the Bible and the expanding science of archaeology. Entitled *The Spade and the Bible*, the volume discussed evidence from archaeological discoveries that helped confirm the historicity of scripture. It was published by Fleming and Revel in 1933.

In 1931 under pressure from accreditation authorities to secure teachers with graduate degrees, Emmanuel Missionary College president Lynn Wood pressed Prescott to accept an appointment as theology department chair. Faced with the task of 12 hours in the classroom each week he declined. Eighteen months later when the accreditation problem became acute, with EMC facing the cancellation of its junior college status unless it succeeded in meeting the criteria for senior college accreditation in 1934, the General Conference officers recommended that Prescott connect with the school and they would continue his salary (a boon in the midst of the economic depression) and his appointment as Field Secretary.³⁸ In fall quarter Prescott moved to Berrien Springs to begin teaching and to lend his graduate degree to the theology department's need for academic qualifications.

The 1930s was a difficult time for any theology teacher in the denomination who may have been inclined to engage in enquiring, probing scholarship. At the beginning of the decade, two high profile church leaders, W. W. Fletcher and L. R. Conradi, had raised scholarly questions about church doctrines that had not been easy to answer and both had severed connections with the church. A reaction set in. In this context, several suitable candidates with appropriate qualifications had been sought by the college board to join the faculty in Berrien Springs but all had declined because of what they perceived as a prevailing fundamentalist attitude of suspicion and distrust toward theology teachers. The problem of "lack of confidence" in theology teachers frustrated and "alarmed" W. H. Holden, chair of the Emmanuel Missionary College board, because each year it seemed to be getting worse.³⁹ L. E. Froom, editor of the church's magazine for clergy was anxious about the climate of "reactionism" that was spreading throughout the church and stifling enquiry. The policy of evading "fundamental questions" and the trend "to codify and creedalize" church teachings troubled him. "Positions which have to be protected by ecclesiastical legislation and popular sentiment and prejudice are weak indeed," he lamented to the college president.⁴⁰ The climate of suspicion caused problems for Prescott and marred his last teaching assignment.

In 1933, Prescott was suspected of having variant views on the church's sanctuary doctrine and some conservative General Conference officers attempted to engineer his removal from the theology department,

alleging that he was not in “full harmony” with the church’s teaching on “vital points.” Prescott vigorously disputed the allegations, and protested the “unethical” proceedings of the General Conference to remove him.⁴¹ He was supported in his refusal to move by the chair and the full board of the college and the embarrassed General Conference officers were obliged, after some time, to apologize for the allegations and their inappropriate procedures and withdraw the letter that had initiated the attempt to remove him.

Although Prescott and the officers were formally reconciled, the suspicion and lack of confidence hurt Prescott badly and cast a cloud over his reputation during his final years. He returned to Takoma Park in 1934 to take up his field secretary duties again and was still a speaker in demand on the camp meeting circuit until, in 1937, his diminishing physical capacities began to limit his ability to be heard in canvass pavilions and he formally retired from ministry. Even in retirement, caustic critics such as J. S. Washburn continued to circulate angry fundamentalist tracts attacking him for his views on Ellen White and his teaching on the Trinity. Teachers from the new seminary in Takoma Park and long-time colleagues like D. E. Robinson from Elmshaven would write vigorously in defense of the professor and lament the unchristian attitudes of his critics.⁴² His last years were spent in his study, occasional writing and visiting with old colleagues in the Takoma Park area. Periods of illness slowly limited his mobility and on January 21 1944 he died quietly at home in his eighty-ninth year. Three days later funeral services were conducted in the Takoma Park Church and he was interred in the Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington D.C.⁴³

Contribution

William Prescott was an extraordinarily gifted individual with a large capacity for work and thus his fifty-two years of service to the church extended across a wide range of important roles that at various times he was asked to fill. As a college president and as the first educational secretary for the General Conference he gave an enduring mold to Adventist education. His radical reshaping of the college curriculum, introduction of the “school home” concept and emphasis on Chapel broke new ground for the integration of faith and learning and helped establish “Christian education” as the model for Adventist schools and colleges, and Battle Creek graduates took the model world-wide.

His Christocentric emphasis in theology, his teaching on the Trinity and his birthing of theological education for the church’s ministry helped firmly establish the church as a confidently evangelical movement. As one who worked closely with Ellen White and her son, W. C. White, Prescott provided insights and cautions about misunderstanding the nature of Ellen White’s work. His highlighting of the problem of attributing to her an authority that was not appropriate did not sit well with many of his contemporaries in the church. Only since the 1980s has his perspective been understood and valued. In this regard he was ahead of his time.

As editor of the *Review* during a critical period of the church’s development he helped educate the church on the important issues of the day and helped ensure A.G. Daniells’ success as the church leader. His scholarly

insistence on accuracy in books and publications helped ensure that the church would be heard in the public arena with respect and encouraged the church to be careful in its claims and in its dialogue with the public. Prescott's breadth of learning and large intellect often gave him a perspective on issues in the church that not many of his contemporaries shared and thus he was perceived as provocative. In some things he could see beyond the present, perceiving answers to problems before others were aware that there might be a problem – and he was misunderstood. In the years that immediately followed his death it was more comfortable for many church leaders to put his troubling ideas him out of mind. In the view of those who were more prescient in regard to church affairs, however, Prescott's insights gave fresh credence to Adventist teaching and his influence was profound. Newly available documentary sources have provided the basis for a new appreciation for his legacy and the extensive influence he exercised in the church.

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12. Gilbert M. Valentine, *W. W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Seventh-day Adventism's Second Generation* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 97-109 provides a detailed account of this struggle. See also Valentine, "William W. Prescott: Architect of a Bible-Centered Curriculum," *Adventist Heritage* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 18-24.
13. According to Percy Magan, the term was first used in Adventist circles as a result of the groundbreaking educational convention which Prescott organized at Harbor Springs, Michigan in 1891. "The Educational Conference and Educational Reform," *Review and Herald*, August 6, 1901, 508.
14. Australasian Union Conference Session Minutes, November 11, 1895. Adventist Heritage Centre, Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW.
15. "Ordination," *Review and Herald*, November 12, 1889, 720. A discussion of the circumstances can be found in Valentine, "William Warren Prescott," 139-141.
16. General Conference Committee Minutes, March 25, 1889. General Conference Archives; O. A. Olsen, "A Bible School for Ministers," *Review and Herald*, September 17, 1889, 592.
17. Gilbert M. Valentine, "The Controversy of 1888: A Stimulus for Theological Education," *ARH*, November 3, 1988, 11-12.
18. For a detailed account of these developments see Gilbert M. Valentine, "Learning and Unlearning: A Context for Important Developments in the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Trinity, 1888-1898," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 55, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 213-236.
19. Ibid.

20. See for example J. S. Washburn to A. G. Daniells, May 1, 1922 published as an "Open Letter." See also, J. S. Washburn, "The Trinity" (1940), J. L. McElhany Collection Box 17, Folder 28, and J. S. Washburn to J. L. McElhany, June 2 and 9, 1940, J. L. McElhany Collection Box 1, Folder 3, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
21. L. E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, D.C.; Review and Herald, 1971), 380-391.
22. General Conference Committee Minutes, February 15, 1902, General Conference Archives. W. W. Prescott to A. G. Daniells, February 20, 1902 cited in A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, February 25, 1902. Record Group 11, Box 55, Outgoing Letterbook. General Conference Archives. Carefully documented discussions of Prescott's role in the re-organization and in the Kellogg crisis can be found in Valentine, "William Warren Prescott," 265-344 and in R. W. Schwarz, "John Harvey Kellogg: American Health Reformer," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1964).
23. Valentine, *W. W. Prescott*, 200 – 210.
24. Cited in Schwarz, "John Harvey Kellogg," 394.
25. A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, June 25, 1908, Record Group 11, Folder 1908-P; A. G. Daniells to W. W. Prescott, November 12, 1916, Record Group 17, Folder 1916-17 - - D. General Conference Archives..
26. Bert Haloviak, "The Shadow of the Daily: Background and Aftermath of the 1919 Bible and History Teacher's Conference" (1979), 36, 57, accessed 28, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/conferences/Docs/SDABiblicalScholars1979/InTheShadowOfTheDaily.pdf>; see also Valentine, *W. W. Prescott*, 214-235.
27. *The Protestant Magazine* 1.1 (1909): 64.
28. Gilbert M Valentine, "The Church 'drifting toward a crisis': Prescott's 1915 Letter to William White," *Catalyst* 2, no. 1 (November, 2007): 32 – 95.
29. Michael W. Campbell, "The 1919 Bible Conference and its Significance for Seventh-day Adventist History and Theology" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 1908).
30. Milton Hook, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora* (Cooranbong, NSW: Avondale Academic Press, 1998), 110, 111, 132, 133.
31. J. L. Shaw to W. W. Prescott, August 11, 1924, Record Group 11, 1924 J. L. Shaw Folder 1924-PQ, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring MD.
32. W. W. Prescott to C. M. Meyers, February 23, March 1 and 10, 1925, Record Group 21, Folder 1925-P, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, MD. See also Everett Dick, *Union: College of the Golden Cords* (Lincoln, NE: Union College Press, 1967), 98, 99.
33. C. K. Meyers to W. W. Prescott March 1, 1925, Record "Group 21, Folder 1925-P, General Conference Archives. A fuller discussion of Prescott's time at Union College can be found in Valentine, "William Warren Prescott," 532-551.

34. W. W. Prescott to W. A. Spicer, April 27, 1927; W. A. Spicer to W. W. Prescott, May 1, 1927, Record Group 11; Folder 1927-P, General Conference Archives.
35. Everett Dick to G. M. Valentine, January 22, 1981 (in author's possession); G. E. Hutches, interview by author, February 11, 1981; Valentine, "William Warren Prescott," 551.
36. W. W. Prescott to W. A. Spicer, September 13, 1929. Record Group 11, Folder 1929-P; W. W. Prescott to A. O. Tait, December 3, 1929, President's Correspondence 12: L E Froom Files Folder "Prescott, W. W." General Conference Archives.
37. *Our Sunday Visitor*, June 2, 1935; *The Commonweal*, August 16, 1935. W. W. Prescott to F. D. Nichol, October 16, 1935, Record Group 21: Correspondence Folder 1936-P-R, General Conference Archives. W. W. Prescott, "The Interpretation of 'The Man of Sin,'" Record Group 21: Correspondence Folder 1937-P-R. General Conference Officers Minutes December 18, 1938, General Conference Archives.
38. General Conference Officers Minutes, February 20, 1931; August, 8, 9, 1932. General Conference Archives.
39. W. H. Holden to M. E. Kern, March 6, 1932, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, Andrews University.
40. L. E. Froom to L. H. Wood, July 3, 31, 193, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#3, Andrews University. See also L. H. Wood to L. E. Froom, August 8, 1932, Presidential Correspondence, Reel 6#1, Andrews University.
41. W. W. Prescott to W. H. Branson and I. H. Evans, February 9 and 13, 1934, Record Group 21: Special Files Folder "Prescott," General Conference Archives. A full discussion of the episode is found in Valentine, "William Warren Prescott," 556-567.
42. D. E. Robinson to J. W. Washburn, April 25, 1940. J. L. McElhany Collection Box 1, Folder 3, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
43. "Death of William W. Prescott," *ARH*, February 3, 1944, 24; *Nebraska State Journal*, January 21, 1944, 1, 8.

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