

The Rise of American Protestant Fundamentalism at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century and Its Influence upon the Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical Inspiration in the 1920s

Introduction

Thesis

During the 1920s Adventism was divided on the issue of biblical inspiration. Prominent leaders advocated for either thought or verbal inspiration, which led to internal denominational struggles over these differences. A study of the Protestant religious context at the beginning of the twentieth century indicates that Adventism's struggle over inspiration was not an isolated occurrence. In the fierce liberal-conservative debate of the 1920s, the Fundamentalist movement led and fueled the defense of biblical authority largely through their assertion of verbal inspiration. An examination of the intersection between Adventism and Fundamentalism in the 1920s demonstrates that Adventism's divided views on the inspiration of Scripture were partially a result of the external influence of Fundamentalism. In this paper I examine the influence of Fundamentalism upon the Adventist understanding of biblical inspiration in the 1920s.

Methodology

The paper is structured in three sections. First, I will first study the religious framework in which the liberal-conservative debate took place: the rise of modernism and liberalism. Then I will look into the emergence and activity of Fundamentalism, highlighting the context of its rise and the spectrum of its reach, focusing particularly on the fundamentalist view on Biblical inspiration. Lastly, I will examine the intersection between Adventism and Fundamentalism, underscoring the Fundamentalist influence upon Adventist views on Biblical inspiration.

The Rise of Modernism and Liberalism

Modernism

The nineteenth century hosted an outburst of discoveries and inventions profoundly influential to the western society in particular, and to the world-wide civilization at large. Among the numerous names of inventors and discoverers, two stand out undoubtedly as some of the most prominent figures of the century: Charles Lyell (1797 – 1875) and Charles Darwin (1809 –1882). Their work had a foremost impact on various aspects of the western culture and civilization, including the religious sphere.

Lyell's *Principles of Geology* espoused James Hutton's theory of uniformitarianism, which shook the confidence in the Bible as a starting place for scientific knowledge and posed a rigorous challenge to the flood geologyⁱ since it implies vast periods of time to account for the "slow forces of erosion, deposition and compression."ⁱⁱ Darwin is known as the most important proponent of the theory of evolution. Before the emergence of this theory, and before the Enlightenment took off following the French Revolution in 1848, most theologians believed that God had created the world in six literal days several thousands of years ago, that the world population had descended from Adam and Eve –the first pair of humans recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, and that living organisms had deteriorated from an ideal and faultless state in which they had originally been created. Darwin's new theory, however, implied that the past could not be characterized as a "golden era."ⁱⁱⁱ The story of human's fall could not be taken literally any longer because humanity had not been created in a perfect state, but instead emerged from simpler

and lower organisms.^{iv} Thus, in advocating for “bottom-up causality,”^v the Darwinian concept of evolution profoundly influenced the theological scene.

These changes occurred in a world that had already been shaped by the discoveries of Isaac Newton (1642 – 1727) in the previous century, which had prepared the soil for the acceptance of evolutionary theory. Newton’s ability to prove that the universe is governed by consistent, rational natural laws, aided the birth of a new rapport between religion and science.^{vi} As a result of the new laws he discovered, facts that were long time believed to be supernatural involvement were now explained as the result of consistent natural laws at work.^{vii} The rise of nature on a par with Biblical revelation redefined the relation between nature and Scripture as mediums of God’s revelation, which resulted in hot debates since.

Liberalism

The nineteenth century also witnessed major shifts in theology under the influence of Friedrich Schleiermacher, the founder of continental Protestant liberalism. Schleiermacher’s radical proposal was that “the ultimate authority in religious experience is the heart of man rather than the content of the Bible.”^{viii} This ideology, cultivated in an American society that increasingly emphasized “Christian nurture, instead of cataclysmic conversion, and the poetic nature of religious language, as opposed to its cognitive specificity,”^{ix} slowly birthed a new religious outlook.

The co-rising of liberalism and modernism produced an intriguing theological ideology. Liberals showed preference for a pastoral approach to religion, high morality, and a rather vague expression of doctrines. Modernism relied more on scientific knowledge and methods and fervently advocated historical criticism with its core principle –that culture conditions religion.^x The idea that the writing, preservation and spreading of the Bible was the result of human processes undermined the Biblical authority,^{xi} and many Christians abandoned the long-held belief in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, defending a conviction that the Bible was highly conditioned by the culture of its authors.

Not only was the Biblical authority questioned, its interpretation also underwent changes with the practice of the higher criticism, the main purpose of which was the application of modern, scientific methods to the study of Scriptures. The historical critics sought for objectivity when studying the Bible and believed this could not be achieved through traditional methods that they felt bore the sway of moralism.^{xii} Thus, “theological liberalism, which was built on the tradition of accommodation to culture and human progress, found in Darwinism and higher criticism the necessary tools for the assertion of its views upon the mainline denominations.”^{xiii}

While there was room for diversity within the religious left wing, several characteristics were common to most of the liberal theologians. Arnold Reye provides a concise summary of these in the following five points he argues liberals held in common:

1. “Belief in the immanence of God; that is, God is present in and revealed through the progress of history and the evolution of culture; God is not external to the world, rather he permeates all life.
2. Man is basically good. That is, sin is not a radical fracture of a relationship, but is essentially a matter of ignorance, maladjustment, or immaturity that can be mediated through Christian education.
3. Christianity is built on experience, not creeds, nor doctrines. Ultimate authority for faith rests in the self-evidencing testimony of the heart of each believer.
4. The Bible is but an account of the advancing religious consciousness of the Hebrew people culminating in the life of Jesus.
5. Ethics represents the core of religious experience. That is, the value and truth of religion are best demonstrated by the moral impact it has on the individual and upon society.”^{xiv}

The concurrent influence of the scientific theories of evolution and uniformitarianism, synchronized with Schleiermacher’s emphasis on feeling and experience as source for religious consciousness, led to the rise of modernism and liberalism in America –a blend which resulted in a major shift in religion. This religious shift was not an isolated occurrence. Not just a few accepted this new

ideology; rather, a significant number of theologians acknowledged this new scientific worldview – a perfect frame for the historical-critical premises.^{xv} Thus, many scholars of the Bible began to carry out their study while yielding in “to higher criticism, lower criticism, relativistic views of truth, and attempts to reconcile geology and evolutionary science with Christian belief.”^{xvi}

Some, however, continued to hold to a more traditional view of the Bible. The differences led to a severe controversy between the liberals who promoted evolution and a critical study of the Bible and the conservatives, who sought to preserve the authority of the Scriptures.^{xvii}

The Rise of Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism –the fiercest religious conservative party at the beginning of the twentieth century, is defined as “a movement organized in the early twentieth century to defend orthodox Protestant Christianity against the challenges of theological liberalism, higher criticism of the Bible, evolution and other modernisms to be judged harmful to traditional faith.”^{xviii} Thus, while liberals had made way into many denominations by the beginning of the twentieth century,^{xix} fundamentalism rose in an attempt to reestablish the traditional Christian beliefs, particularly as they related to the Scriptures.

The split between conservatives and liberals grew steadily in the first decades of the twentieth century, producing a deep gap among the evangelicals, who gradually divided into two camps. Marsden suggests that “the key to understanding this division within the evangelical mind is the Enlightenment – or more properly, divergent attitudes toward the Enlightenment.”^{xx} Liberal evangelicals embraced the chief motif of the nineteenth-century thought – that of “growth development.”^{xxi} Accordingly, they saw “both the Enlightenment and Christian faith as works in progress,”^{xxii} and were eager to redefine theology in light of the new scientific discoveries. Fundamentalists, on the other hand, were unwilling to accept the innovative modern worldview, believing that scientific truth is valid only to the degree in which it corresponds to truth already established by revelation through Scriptures.^{xxiii}

Thus, the liberal-conservative controversy, the chief religious episode of the 1920s in America,^{xxiv} involved a sharp struggle between the two opposed camps. This fight was also notable in the premillennialism – postmillennialism debate. Modernists promoted postmillennialism, which had by now been emptied of the supernatural facet.^{xxv} Since Christ's substitutionary death and his resurrection imply the reality of supernatural forces and beings, modernism was unable to accept it; instead, it embraced the hope in progress and ultimate establishment of a divine empire on earth.^{xxvi} On the other hand, premillennialists continued to hold that the world condition was worsening, situation which could be remedied only by “divine intervention in the form of Christ's literal, visible, physical return.”^{xxvii}

The Emergence and Activity of Fundamentalism

The first seeds of fundamentalism can be traced back to Irish John Nelson Darby who, after the French Revolution in 1848, interpreted the deadly wound referred to in Daniel 7 as the defeat of Catholicism. His premillennial message, shared with the American population in the second half of the nineteenth century found acceptance from “an audience primed for doctrines of Christ's any-moment return and a rapture of the church.”^{xxviii}

During the 1860 decade, Premillennial dispensationalists and Presbyterians from Princeton Theological Seminary met in small groups for concentrated Bible study, holding in common a strong motivation to preserve the traditions of the church. These Bible study groups were called Bible conferences, the most important being those held at Niagara Falls in 1878-1897, where the participants delineated the following five teachings, considered essential for Christian belief:

1. The inspiration of the Bible and inerrancy of Scripture
2. The virgin birth of Christ
3. Christ' death as atonement for sin
4. The bodily resurrection of Christ
5. The historical reality of Christ's miracles.^{xxix}

These five points were popularized through a series of twelve volumes published between 1910 and 1915 under the title *The Fundamentals*, project funded by the wealthy Christian brothers Milton and Lyman Stewart. The publication included ninety articles by sixty-four authors from different denominations. The majority of the articles were written by Presbyterians, Baptists, Dutch-Reformed and Congregationalists.^{xxx} *The Fundamentals* were sent to “every pastor, missionary, professor, theological student, YMCA/TWCA secretary, Sunday school superintendent, and religious editor in the English-speaking world. In all, some three million volumes went out.”^{xxxii}

Although the volumes touched on all five fundamental points, in practice, the point regarding the Bible was the focus of most of the controversy, since “Biblical infallibility and Biblical authority were hallmarks of the entire movement.”^{xxxiii} A third of these articles dealt with Biblical inspiration and were written in defense of Biblical authority.^{xxxiii}

Fundamentalist Views on Biblical Inspiration

The inerrancy of the Bible was one of the major claims of Fundamentalism, espoused initially by Princeton theologians Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield, two key figures of the movement who affirmed that “the inspiration of the Scriptures extended to every word in every book.”^{xxxiv} Since God, who is all knowing and cannot be mistaken, inspired the Scriptures, then the Scriptures must be inerrant.^{xxxv} In addition to this, inerrancy was considered an accurate representation of “orthodoxy throughout church history” and “the claims the Bible makes about itself.”^{xxxvi}

The development of Fundamentalist views of Biblical authority can be rather clearly seen in the difference between the definition of Biblical inspiration given at the Niagara conference in 1895 and the narrower conceptualization of inspiration 15 years later. In 1895, fundamentalists believed that “it is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide and move the writers of the Holy Scriptures as to keep them from error.”^{xxxvii} While this definition allowed for latitude between thought and verbal inspiration, by 1910, the *Fundamentals* presented a narrower view, and thus thought inspiration was by and large abandoned and replaced with verbal inspiration.^{xxxviii} James Grey’s rationalization –as expressed in the following lines- was prevalent in advocacy for verbal inspiration: “If the divine influence upon the writer did not extend to the form as well as the substance of their writings; if, in other words, God gave them only the thought, permitting them to express it in their own words, what guarantee have we that they have done so? Can even God Himself give a thought to a man without the words that clothe it? Are not the two inseparable?”^{xxxix}

The most extreme fundamentalist position was taken by George Bishop, who wrote that the Bible is “a book dropped from heaven. . . . God has written it, and none can exhaust it.”^{xl} No breath, no syllable, no word: no word, no Book; no Book, no religion.”^{xli}

In conclusion, verbal inspiration can be described as one of the main characteristics of the Fundamentalist movement. The fundamentalists insisted that the words of Scripture were “specifically chosen by the Holy Spirit” and that “the Bible writers were only reporters of the words dictated to them. [...] So complete was the divine control over the writers that every mark made by their pens was made as if by a pen in the hand of God.”^{xlii}

Although fundamentalism was largely a non-denominational or interdenominational movement with a rather amorphous organization^{xliii}, it did gain some official structure in 1919, during the World Conference of Fundamentalists meeting at Philadelphia. At this conference, William B. Riley, a leader of the Baptist Bible Union, emerged as the leader of the newly formed movement: World’s Christian Fundamentalist’s Association.^{xliv} Riley said in his first speech: “The importance of this occasion exceeds the understanding of its originators. The future will look back to the World Conference on Christian Fundamentals. . . as an event of more historical momentum than the nailing up, at Wittenberg, of Martin Luther’s ninety-five theses. The hour has struck for the rise of a new Protestantism.”^{xlv}

The movement did have success for a while in terms of new adherents and political victories. By the 1960s the fundamentalist movement grew at a rate of 400-700 percent, while mainline denominations remained under 100 percent in their membership addition.^{xlvi} Their fight against evolution had noteworthy

effects as well, considering that thirty-seven bills against evolution were passed in the short time period between 1921 and 1929.^{xlvii} However, the fall of fundamentalism followed its previous success at what was considered the most consequential public controversy between fundamentalists and liberals: the Scopes trial.

The Scopes trial in 1925 revolved around the creation-evolution debate. John Thomas Scopes, a high-school biology teacher from Tennessee was tried for teaching evolution in a school funded by the state. The trial, however, was not so much over the innocence or guilt of Scopes; rather it was a “duel being waged between two strong emissaries of two opposing parties, evolution versus the inspiration of the Scripture.”^{xlviii} Scopes was found guilty and fined \$100, yet “although the court ruled against John Scopes, the nation ruled against William Jennings Bryan and the nonsensical perceived by many as the religion he represented.”^{xlix} After the trial, the fundamentalist Association began to weaken and divide due largely to leadership issues, and eventually disintegrated by late 1920's and early 1930.¹

Fundamentalism and Adventism in the 1920s

The intersection of Adventism with the fundamentalist movement was somewhat inevitable since the two movements coexisted for a few decades in the same geographical area. They also shared some doctrinal views, and faced similar challenges with the rise of liberal theology, both expressing a particularly vigorous disapproval of historical-criticism and the evolutionary theory. Passionate for the Scripture's authority, Wilcoxⁱⁱ, one of the leaders in the Adventist church at the beginning of the nineteenth century, wrote the following: “The confusion of doctrine held by the professed church of Christ must be evident to every thinker. Of what absurdities of idea and preaching has not the pulpit been guilty! And during the last few years Higher Criticism has been doing its baneful work. Christened infidelity sits enthroned behind many sacred altars. Simple faith is relegated to the past, and classed with the superstition of savagery. The story of Eden is classed as an allegory, the characters in Job as myths, Christ but a good man, and His atonement of no vicarious virtue.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In the context of these common grounds between Adventism and Fundamentalism, some Adventism figures identified themselves with the fundamentalist movement to a significant extent. During the 1920s, George McPready Price, “unashamedly a fundamentalist”^{liii} published fragments of his book in the *Review and Herald* under the heading ‘Fundamentalist Literature.’ His own words testify of the high regard in which he held the movement: “I wish that we might study briefly, as detached but interested spectators, that great contemporary movement known as Fundamentalism”^{liv} Geologist by profession, Price expressed satisfaction at the acceptance of Adventist work by fundamentalists: “We have developed our own line of books dealing with these scientific problems which are so agitating the world at present time. The views taught by these books, in opposition to the evolution theory, have already been enthusiastically adopted by all the leading Fundamentalists as the only adequate and logical methods of defending the Bible against the insidious teachings of Modernism.”^{lv} He also sought to ease the acceptance of fundamentalists by Adventists, regarding them as fellow believers who were helping share the prophetic message to the world,^{lvi} and warned the Adventist church against assuming that the Adventist denomination alone is doing genuine work.^{lvii}

Siegfried Horn, though not an adherent to inerrantism, “was proud to count himself among the fundamentalist scholars”^{lviii} and, frustrated with the liberal's influence on Biblical interpretation, expressed his conviction that ““this is a challenge for us as Seventh-day Adventist theologians, true fundamentalists, to do our part in restoring Biblical truth to rightful position.””^{lix}

Wilcox, reacting against scholarship suggesting the Bible was merely a collection of folk tales, wrote in a 1929 column of the *Review and Herald*: “Adventists, with their historical belief in the Divine Word, should count themselves as the chief of fundamentalists today. They should consider it not only their privilege, but their bounden duty to emphasize the authenticity of the Scriptures of truth.”^{lx}

Between 1909 and 1915, W. W. Prescott edited the journal *The Protestant*, which sanctioned many of the fundamentals.^{lxi} Steve Daily's analysis of the magazine's content reveals that: "(1) A high percentage of the articles focused on the debate over inspiration, evolution and higher criticism; (2) many articles were direct reprints from *The Fundamentals* or were written by fundamentalist Christians; (3) Prescott affirmed the fellowship of true Christianity; (4) Adventists were free in making moral judgments about the spirituality of those who disagreed with their view of propositional revelation; and, (5) like most fundamentalists, Adventists were suspicious of those who had earned higher degrees in religion."^{lxii}

Interactions between Adventists and Fundamentalists occurred also at the annual fundamentalist conferences, where the Adventist church sent regular observers from 1919 until 1928, when the movement began to lose momentum and fade.^{lxiii} Adventist observer F. M. Wilcox, an important and "venerated figure in the Advent Movement,"^{lxiv} attended the conference in 1919, during which the World Christian Fundamentals Association was established. His report in the denominational journal included the following description of the conference's purpose: "'to combat 'the influences of this evil age', such as higher criticism and evolutionary thinking, and 'the subtle species of infidelity taught by many who stand in the sacred desk.'"^{lxv}

Wilcox expressed his agreement with most of Christian fundamentals highlighted at that conference, remaining reserved about the concepts of eternal punishment and premillennial reign of Christ. "But Wilcox apparently saw nothing wrong with the conference's statement on the status of the Bible, which read as follows: 'We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as verbally inspired by God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life.'"^{lxvi} As will be noted later, Wilcox indeed accepted the verbal inspiration, as did other Adventist leaders under the influence of fundamentalism.

The fundamentalist focus on verbal inspiration, however, was not the only factor leading to an increased acceptance of this view in the Adventist circles. By 1920, when the fundamentalist-modernist controversy was at its peak, Adventism was also struggling with defining the authority of Ellen White's prophetic voice, following the death of the prophet in 1915. But in order to define the inspiration of Ellen White, the church needed to first clarify its understanding of the biblical inspiration, especially in light of the acceptance of sola Scriptura as ultimate authority.^{lxvii}

SDA Views on Inspiration in the 1900-1920s

The polarization surrounding Biblical inspiration grew in Adventism alongside the fundamentalist-liberal divergence and in the context of Ellen White's death, leading to a controversy in which advocates of thought inspiration and proponents of verbal inspiration engaged bitterly.^{lxviii} That the division was sharp can be noted from F.M. Wilcox's letter to C.H. Watson, in which he mentions "church members and college students [...] taking sides and labeling ministers and teachers as either 'fundamentalist' or 'modernist.'"^{lxix}

A major public conflict between supporters of thought and verbal inspiration occurred in 1919 at the Bible and History Teacher's Council, in Washington, DC, regarding the inspiration of White's *Testimonies*.^{lxx} Seventh-day Adventist General Conference president A.G. Daniels insisted on thought-inspiration, suggesting that neither she, nor anyone in her entourage at the time of her writing alleged verbal inspiration. On these lines, he said: "There is no use of our claiming anything more on the verbal inspiration of the Testimonies, because she never claimed it, and James White never claimed it, and W.C. White never claimed it; and all the persons who helped to prepare those Testimonies knew they were not verbally inspired. I will say no more along that line."^{lxxi} But Daniells was less concerned with the Adventists coming to a unified view on biblical inspiration. As recorded in the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts, A.C. Daniells noted the presence of both those who believed in verbal inspiration of the Scripture, as well as those who held to thought-inspiration: "As you know, there are two views held by eminent men regarding the verbal inspiration of the Bible. You read their views in the books they have put out. One man, – scholarly, devout, earnest, a full believer in the Bible in every sense of the word, – believes that it was a revelation of truth to the writers, and they were allowed to state that truth as best

they could. Another man – equally scholarly and pious and earnest in his faith – believes that it was a word-for-word inspiration of revelation, that the actual words were given, – that every word in the original as it was written by the prophets down from Moses to Malachi, was given to them by the Lord. These men differ, and differ honestly and sincerely; and they have their followers among us, right here at the conference, both of them.”^{lxxii}

Thus, while he appears to be a vocal advocate for Ellen White’s thought-inspiration, he solicits tolerance from each camp in regards to Biblical inspiration: “The power of the Bible and its grip on the human race does not depend on a technical point as their belief in it, whether it is verbally inspired or truth-inspired. The men who hold directly opposite positions have the same faith in the Bible. I will not allow a man who believes in the verbal inspiration of the Bible to depreciate my faith in the Bible because I do not hold with him, -- I will not consent to that a moment.”^{lxxiii}

Along the same lines, Wilcox, the editor of *Review and Herald*, noted in January 1922 that there had been much discussion “as to the precise manner of the inspiration of the Bible.”^{lxxiv} He acknowledged that “there were ‘earnest Christians’ who believed in verbal inspiration, but that there were ‘Christians equally earnest’ who believed in thought, or idea inspiration.” After noting that “both believe equally that the Scriptures are the inspired, infallible word of God,” he went on to declare: “for one class to charge the other with disbelief of the Bible because of difference of opinion as to the technical features of the inspiration, would be ungenerous and un-Christian.”^{lxxv} He judged that these questions of technicality should remain “undiscussed” and that “they should not be magnified to the place where they constitute a test of orthodoxy, or where they become a bone of contention or a line of division between brethren.”^{lxxvi}

Wilcox himself, however, seems to have held to Biblical verbal inspiration. In a series of articles written for the *Review and Herald*, entitled ‘Fundamentalism or Modernism –Which?’ he wrote that “inspiration meant that the original Scriptures are given of God; the words are God’s words. ... for if the Bible is not the word of God, it is not infallible, nor all-sufficient, and all the other named fundamentals based on the Word are open to doubt.”^{lxxvii}

Several other Adventist leaders can be counted among those who accepted verbal inspiration. George B. Starrs not only strongly opposed higher criticism, labeling it as “blasphemy”, but also defended inerrancy.^{lxxviii} Samuel Snow, quoting Biblical examples where God’s voice was heard audibly, implied that all the words contained in the Scriptures were dictated by God to the biblical writers.^{lxxix} The progressive voices of Daniells and G. Camden Lacey, advocating for thought inspiration,^{lxxx} encountered “sharp and vocal criticism” from those who feared this was a doorway for the entrance of modernism and historical criticism. Two notable figures who took this approach against the moderate view were J. S. Washburn, a renowned preacher, and Claude E. Holmes.^{lxxxii}

During the 1920s-1930s, several pieces of religious literature written in defense of the authority of the Scripture as God’s Word – books, pamphlets, and a quarterly Sabbath school, did not include content that reflected the moderate view.^{lxxxiii} Instead, the fundamentalist view of inspiration was promoted in writing, and prevailed in the following years.^{lxxxiii} The moderate view was also weakened by the SDA leaders’ fear of being regarded as disloyal to Ellen White. Along these lines, Pierce noted: “Coming to terms with the loss of the prophetic voice, coupled with a highly charged and conflicted environment, resulted in the perception, nay belief, that any person who did not hold to verbal inspiration was both unorthodox and apostate. Certainly, any publicly held moderate view was not possible.”^{lxxxiv} The 1919 Bible conference transcripts have not been known, nor published until discovered by chance in 1974 at the General Conference archives. Since most Adventists preferred verbalism, the publication of these transcripts or public advocacy for thought inspiration would have caused commotion in the church. Thus, influenced by the fundamentalist-liberalist storm and the death of prophet Ellen White, the Adventist denomination moved “inexorably toward verbalism and inerrancy,” while the moderate voices, “who held the minority position, kept silent.”^{lxxxv} Thus, verbal inspiration “prevailed and became dominant for decades to come.”^{lxxxvi}

The Church Manual's 1932 edition stated, under the title "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists: '1. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by the aspiration of God, contain an all-sufficient revelation of His will to men, and are the only unerring rule of faith and practice.'" ^{lxxxvii} The wording does not mention either inerrancy, infallibility, or verbal inspiration, thus being broad enough for both sides to adhere to it. "This statement was not voted by a General Conference session but it was not altered in any subsequent edition of the Church Manual until after the 1980 session adopted the statement of belief that contained twenty- seven fundamentals." ^{lxxxviii}

Between 1950 and 1970 the denomination gradually reintegrated thought inspiration, ^{lxxxix} and the issue of inspiration was not raised at the General Conference meetings in 1952 and 1974, since the conflict around verbalism and inerrancy had subsided.^{xc} As noted above, it was only in 1983 in an action voted by the General Conference Committee that the explicit term of thought inspiration was employed: "We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightening of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed."^{xc}

Summary and Conclusions

In this paper I examined the influence of twentieth century American Protestant Fundamentalism over the Seventh-day Adventist view on Biblical inspiration in the 1900-1920s. First, I provided an overview of the liberal-conservative debate at the crossroad between the nineteenth and twentieth century. This initial background research offered a framework for understanding the changes within the Protestant world, including the Adventist church.

Next, I analyzed the Fundamentalist movement in order to find out whether there were any similarities between Fundamentalism and Adventism at the time. In light of the religious shifts and divisions noted in the paper, it was clear that the Adventist church was closer in its beliefs to the conservative religious party than to the liberal religious party. I discovered that the two movements held in common their zeal for defending the Biblical authority, and that with the intensification of the liberal-conservative conflict, both Fundamentalism and the Adventist church moved towards verbal inspiration.

Lastly, I examined the intersection between Fundamentalism and Adventism, in order to understand whether the Adventist tendency to uphold verbal inspiration might have been influenced by the Fundamentalist movement. The research shows that the two movements did not operate isolated from each other. On the contrary, the Seventh-day Adventist leaders were familiar with the Fundamentalist claims and proposals, and many supported the movement overall, particularly due to its focus on creationism and Biblical authority. Furthermore, the Adventist church seems to have had high regard for the Fundamentalist movement, principally for their insistence on Biblical authority. There is little indication that the Adventist leaders were suspicious of Fundamentalism, while, on the contrary, distrust in the liberal views was expressed with clarity. Thus, at the end of this research, I conclude that the tendency of Adventism to believe in verbal inspiration in the 1900-1920s was partially a result of Fundamentalist influences.

Considering the general religious atmosphere at the beginning of the twentieth century, the profound changes taking place within various denominations, as well as the crisis within the Adventist church caused by the death of Ellen White, it is somewhat easy to understand why prominent Adventist figures leaned towards the fundamentalist beliefs of inspiration. However, this episode of church history shows that, in times of crisis, a majority in our church can adopt rushed solutions that in the heat of the moment seem the normal course of action, and accepts beliefs that later –once the crisis diminishes and further study sheds more light, it disposes of. As mentioned earlier, by the 1980s there was no longer any significant conflict within the Adventist church regarding verbal and thought inspiration, as thought inspiration was by default accepted and practiced by the majority. Yet the response Adventism offered the crisis over Biblical authority in the 1920s raises further questions:

1) How did the Adventist advocacy for verbal inspiration in the 1900-1920s influence other doctrinal and practical aspects of our church, such as ecclesiology, the understanding of human authority, the view of women in pastoral ministry and other leadership positions? Is it possible that a verbal understanding of inspiration contributed to a reading and interpretation of the Bible that led to the prohibition of women occupying leadership position? Would a thought-inspiration revise some of the arguments against women in leadership that arose from a literal reading of certain Bible passages?

(2) What can the Adventist church learn from this episode of church history in terms of both the theology we advocate for, as well as our approach to navigating times of crisis? Does tension and pressure –whether from issues outside of the church or within the church- justify reactive decisions, and if not, how can we make sure that both our theology and practice –our beliefs and our approach to implementing these beliefs, are built upon God’s Self-revelation through Scripture, rather than reflecting a reactive solution that answers one extreme with another? As this paper shows, complex factors are at work, influencing a denomination’s beliefs and practice, and it is essential that we do not allow human influence to replace or weaken the divine influence and cultural norms take priority over scriptural truth.

ⁱArnold C. Reye, “Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s” (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 2.

ⁱⁱIbid.

ⁱⁱⁱTerry Cooper, *Dimensions of Evil: Contemporary Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 22.

^{iv}Ibid.

^vMartinez Hewlett, “Do Our Genes Unite Us, or Divide Us?,” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* Vol. 42, Issue 3, 2003, <http://rpandru.andrews.edu/ebSCO-web/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=a6126881-f634-4679-9511-fcda9507a10e%40sessionmgr4&vid=2&hid=13> (accessed June 20, 2012).

^{vi}Arnold C. Reye, “Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s” (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 1.

^{vii}Carl Walter Daggy, “A comparative study of certain aspects of Fundamentalism with Seventh-day Adventism” (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 1955), 8.

^{viii}Idem, 4.

^{ix}George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of 20th Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 30.

^xGeorge M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of 20th Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 34.

^{xi}Adam Murrel, *Concise Fundamentalism: An Introduction to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2001), 4.

^{xii}George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of 20th Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 32.

^{xiii}Blanco Michael Harry, *The Hermeneutics of the Fundamentals* (Ann Arbor, MI: U.M.I., 1990), 48.

^{xiv}Arnold C. Reye, “Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s” (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 5.

^{xv}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 3.

^{xvi}Arnold C. Reye, “Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s” (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 4.

^{xvii}Adam Murrel, *Concise Fundamentalism: An Introduction to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2001), Xvi.

^{xviii}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 4.

-
- ^{xix}Adam Murrel, *Concise Fundamentalism: An Introduction to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2001), Xvii.
- ^{xx}George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of 20th Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 21.
- ^{xxi}Idem, 31.
- ^{xxii}George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of 20th Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 31.
- ^{xxiii}Idem, 27.
- ^{xxiv}Blanco Michael Harry, *The Hermeneutics of the Fundamentals* (Ann Arbor, MI: U.M.I., 1990), 2.
- ^{xxv}Mark J. Pearce, "An examination of the Inter-Relationship between Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2000).
- ^{xxvi}Ibid.
- ^{xxvii}Mark J. Pearce, "An examination of the Inter-Relationship between Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2000).
- ^{xxviii}George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of 20th Century Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 28.
- ^{xxix}Todd Miller, "Are Adventists Fundamentalists?: A Comparison of Fundamentalism with the Seventh-day Adventist Church Today" (Term paper, Andrews University, 1990), 6.
- ^{xxx}Blanco Michael Harry, *The Hermeneutics of the Fundamentals* (Ann Arbor, MI: U.M.I., 1990), 12-13.
- ^{xxxi}Ibid.
- ^{xxxii}Idem, 16.
- ^{xxxiii}Idem, 15.
- ^{xxxiv}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 14.
- ^{xxxv}Henry P. Hammann, *The Bible Between Fundamentalism and Philosophy* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 12.
- ^{xxxvi}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 13.
- ^{xxxvii}Carl Walter Daggy, "A comparative study of certain aspects of Fundamentalism with Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 1955), 38.
- ^{xxxviii}Idem, 39.
- ^{xxxix}Idem, 41.
- ^{xl}Carl Walter Daggy, "A comparative study of certain aspects of Fundamentalism with Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 1955), 42.
- ^{xli}Ibid. 42.
- ^{xlii}Idem, 58-59.
- ^{xliii}Idem, 59.
- ^{xliv}Todd Miller, "Are Adventists Fundamentalists?: A Comparison of Fundamentalism with the Seventh-day Adventist Church Today" (Term paper, Andrews University, 1990), 8.
- ^{xliv}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 8.
- ^{xlvi}Blanco Michael Harry, *The Hermeneutics of the Fundamentals* (Ann Arbor, MI: U.M.I., 1990), 5.
- ^{xlvii}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 8.
- ^{xlviii}Carl Walter Daggy, "A comparative study of certain aspects of Fundamentalism with Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 1955), 22.
- ^{xlix}Blanco Michael Harry, *The Hermeneutics of the Fundamentals* (Ann Arbor, MI: U.M.I., 1990), 3.
- ^lTodd Miller, "Are Adventists Fundamentalists?: A Comparison of Fundamentalism with the Seventh-day Adventist Church Today" (Term paper, Andrews University, 1990), 11.
- ^{li}Jeffrey Gang, *F.M. Wilcox and the Spirit of Prophecy: A study of His Teachings Concerning the Authority and Role of Ellen White and the Spirit of Prophecy from 1915-1930* (Term paper, Andrews University, 1994), 1.

-
- ^{lii}F.M. Wilcox, "Apostasy in the Church," Milepost Tracks and Books (Eatonville, WA: P.O. Box 940), one page document.
- ^{liii}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 27.
- ^{liv}George McCready Price, "The Significance of Fundamentalism," *Review and Herald*, 13-14 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1927), 13.
- ^{lv}Idem, 13-14.
- ^{lvi}Ibid.13-14.
- ^{lvii}Ibid. 13-14.
- ^{lviii}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 11.
- ^{lix}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 21.
- ^{lx}F.M. Wilcox, "Forsaking the Foundations of Faith," *Review and Herald*, 28 November (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1929), 14.
- ^{lxi}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 11.
- ^{lxii}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 23.
- ^{lxiii}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 9.
- ^{lxiv}Leroy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1971), 417.
- ^{lxv}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 2.
- ^{lxvi}Idem, 9.
- ^{lxvii}Mark J. Pearce, "An examination of the Inter-Relationship between Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2000).
- ^{lxviii}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 7.
- ^{lix}Jeffrey Gang, *F.M. Wilcox and the Spirit of Prophecy: A study of His Teachings Concerning the Authority and Role of Ellen White and the Spirit of Prophecy from 1915-1930* (Term paper, Andrews University, 1994), 8.
- ^{lxx}Alberto R. Timm, "Verbal Inspiration Versus Mental Inspiration: A Historical Review of Adventist Trends from 1919 to 1997" (Paper, Andrews University, 1997), 3.
- ^{lxxi}A.C. Daniells, "Inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy as Related to the Inspiration of the Bible" *1919 Bible Conference Transcripts*, Takoma Park, D.C. : General Conference, 1919), 17.
- ^{lxxii}Idem, 1-2.
- ^{lxxiii}Idem, 7.
- ^{lxxiv}Mark J. Pearce, "An examination of the Inter-Relationship between Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2000).
- ^{lxxv}Ibid.
- ^{lxxvi}Jeffrey Gang, *F.M. Wilcox and the Spirit of Prophecy: A study of His Teachings Concerning the Authority and Role of Ellen White and the Spirit of Prophecy from 1915-1930* (Term paper, Andrews University, 1994), 21.
- ^{lxxvii}Mark J. Pearce, "An examination of the Inter-Relationship between Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2000).
- ^{lxxviii}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 6.
- ^{lxxix}C M Snow, "God's Voice or the Higher Critic," *Review and Herald* (17 February 1915), 2.
- ^{lxxx}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 27.

-
- ^{lxxxj}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 10-11.
- ^{lxxxii}Alberto R. Timm, "Verbal Inspiration Versus Mental Inspiration: A Historical Review of Adventist Trends from 1919 to 1997" (Paper, Andrews University, 1997), 3-4.
- ^{lxxxiii}Mark J. Pearce, "An examination of the Inter-Relationship between Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2000)..
- ^{lxxxiv}Idem.
- ^{lxxxv}Idem.
- ^{lxxxvi}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 11.
- ^{lxxxvii}Mark J. Pearce, "An examination of the Inter-Relationship between Fundamentalism and Seventh-day Adventism" (MA Thesis, Andrews University, 2000).
- ^{lxxxviii}Idem.
- ^{lxxxix}Alberto R. Timm, "Verbal Inspiration Versus Mental Inspiration: A Historical Review of Adventist Trends from 1919 to 1997" (Paper, Andrews University, 1997), 14.
- ^{xc}Reinder Bruinsma, *Seventh-Day Adventism and Fundamentalism* (Bracknell, Berkshire, England: Center for the Study of Religious and Cultural Diversity, Newbold College, 2006), 19.
- ^{xcj}Arnold C. Reye, "Protestant fundamentalism and the Adventist Church in the 1920s" (paper presented at the Adventist Historic Symposium, Sydney, N.S.W., 1993), 25.