

The Inter-relationships Between A. G. Daniells and E. G. White During Their Years in Australasia

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Introduction

It is the purpose of this paper to study the interchange of letters between Mrs. E. G. White and Pastor A. G. Daniells between the years 1892 and 1900, which represents the years they were in Australasia. This comprises forty-eight letters from the pen of Pastor Daniells and thirty-three from Mrs. White.

During the 1890's colonial Australia was the arena in which Mrs. White and Pastor Daniells pioneered together. Mrs. White was already a recognized church leader in America prior to her work in Australia. Daniells, whose leadership qualities were forged in New Zealand and Australia was, by comparison, relatively unknown until his return to America, when he was elected General Conference President in 1901. During their years in Australasia they corresponded frequently, counselled together, confided in one another, established church institutions, and preached at the same conventions. Daniells was a man in his mid-thirties. Mrs. White was in her mid-sixties. Did Daniells see in her a mother-image? Were their dealings with one another always cordial? To what extent did Mrs. White foster the growth of leadership qualities in Daniells? Did Daniells influence the attitudes of Mrs. White? What was the nature and extent of the inter-relationship between these two people who remain household names in Seventh-day Adventist homes?

It would appear to be a fruitful exercise to read the exchange of letters as the primary source of information, noting the significant events in the developing scenario and how the two personalities related to one another.

Dr. Arthur White wrote the most definitive source on the term of service in Australia of his grandmother Mrs. E. G. White (*The Australian Years: 1891-1900* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1983]) but his general biography did not analyse in depth the specific interactions between persons discussed by him. Similarly, John J. Robertson's book on A. G. Daniells, while making use of Daniells' extensive letter collection from the 1890s to the 1920s, only occasionally made reference to the E. G. White collection. He apparently did not intend to study in depth the inter-relationship between E. G. White and A. G. Daniells.

The farmlands of north-east Iowa provided Arthur Grosvenor Daniells, Senior, his childhood memories. He was born at West Union, September 28, 1858. Two years later, twins Charles and Jessie, were added to the little family. His father, Dr. Thomas

Grosvenor Daniells, a graduate of the University of Vermont, died prematurely in 1863, while engaged in the American Civil War. Throughout life Arthur carried little more than a genetic legacy from his natural father.

Poverty forced his mother, Mary Jane (McQuillian) Daniells, then only twenty-eight years of age, to place her three little ones in a nearby orphanage until, in 1865, she remarried and the children were reunited with her once again. For Arthur, the experience was undoubtedly not without its moments of trauma being such a tender-aged personality. The speech impediment of his pre-preaching days may be attributed to adverse childhood circumstances.

Arthur's new home provided mixed happiness. In mid-life he reflected on those years saying, "My mother was a good woman but my step-father was bad."¹ His step-father was a local West Union farmer, a Mr. Lippincott. Arthur, Charles and Jessie, all retained the surname of Daniells.

Throughout his life Arthur held a deep respect for his mother. It was about the time of her remarriage that she became a Seventh-day Adventist. Not long after, Arthur, "at the tender age of ten . . . was converted to Christ." As a youth he did what he could to help his elderly and ailing step-father work the farm, but he grew restless for some further education. At the age of seventeen he left the farm home.

With the help of odd jobs and the little finance his mother could send, Arthur managed study for a spartan year or two, one being at Battle Creek College. At the age of nineteen he married Mary Ellen Hoyt whom he had known since childhood. They returned from Battle Creek College to teach public school for one year in home-town West Union.

At the end of his first year teaching public school Daniells experienced the growing conviction he should enter denominational work. He applied to the Iowa Conference executive committee for ministerial work but was rejected, perhaps because of his speech impediment. Undeterred, he paid his fare to Texas in order to work as tent-master for Elder R. M. Kilgore, who was preaching at Rockwall, just north-east of Dallas. His wife joined him a little later.

While engaged in the tent-mission work a significant experience, albeit brief, occurred in Daniells' life. In December, 1878, James and Ellen White, with their helpers, joined the preaching team in Texas. Arthur and Mary lived in the Whites' home for six months, assisting where needed. It was the beginning of a close association between the two families. Fourteen years later Daniells recalled affectionately:²

The fact is I would like to be back in that pleasant time. I shall remember my pleasant stay with you always. I have not had a mother since I was a lad, and it seemed the most like having a mother and sisters of any experience since I was small. But there was a hallowed sacred influence that did not pervade my home when a child.

Daniells' two-year stint in Texas was followed by a return to Iowa, where, this time, he was accepted as a preacher and was ordained in 1882. Four years later, he and Mary sailed for New Zealand as pioneering evangelist-missionaries. Pastor Daniells' ill-health prompted a transfer to Australia in 1891. He was at the Sydney dockside among the welcoming party when Mrs. White, her son W. C. White, and their assistants, arrived to supplement the missionary work-force. The Whites stayed briefly in Daniells' Darlinghurst home before travelling on to Melbourne.

Throughout the following nine years their paths would cross many times in the

Australian colonies, or they would frequently be brought together at church camp meetings and worship services. More often than not, however, they were living, working and travelling in different localities. Letter communication bridged this gap. From the extant letters something of the inter-relationship between the two personalities can be deduced.³

Scenarios: 1892-1900

When Daniells was elected President of the Australian Conference in 1892 he began to communicate regularly with E. G. White. Initially, this was not for the purpose of soliciting advice from her. It was simply to keep her informed of committee decisions and sundry news reports. After he returned home from his first council meeting he wrote, "As you are deeply interested in all the plans . . . I will tell you of our decisions. . . ." There follows then a detailed report of plans for the forthcoming Week of Prayer and Conference Sessions, together with the decision not to hold a camp meeting in the near future.⁴

In the plans for the Week of Prayer Daniells was appointed to go to Adelaide to lead in special meetings. He first journeyed to Adelaide to organize the forthcoming programme. On his return he wrote to Mrs. White, reporting snippets such as school principal L. J. Rousseau's eye malady caused by studying at night by lamplight, and the crowds on the Adelaide to Melbourne train who stood in the pouring rain the following day to watch the Melbourne Cup. More importantly, the letter contains a touch of diplomacy. Apparently it was Mrs. White's desire to have Pastor G. B. Starr transfer from his Bible teaching at the Melbourne School to pastor the Adelaide Church. Daniells reported he had shared these thoughts with W. C. White and Starr but these two men thought Rousseau could not do without such help at the school. Instead, Starr remained at the school. Daniells felt he had discharged his obligations in the matter and the responsibility for the decision rested with the other two men themselves. Daniells concluded the letter with the affectionate words, "I hope and pray that you will be kept from harm and pain and that your heart will be full of the good Spirit of God. I would like to be with you."⁵

At the conclusion of the Week of Prayer meetings Daniells wrote from Adelaide to report they were well attended. Among other readings he had read to them an article written by Mrs. White entitled, "The Source of the Church's Power." He lauded the merits of the article but then deplored the condition of the church members in relation to the standards established in it. "They don't truly repent of sin," he wrote. "They do not die to self. They cherish their darling idols and they are trying to exercise faith to have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them while self lives and the heart is full of sin. But I do not believe God will cover anyone with his robe of righteousness while their hearts are corrupt. . . . I know for a fact that the masses of our people are strangers of real Bible study and communion with God. Like most European Christians they depend on Sabbath sermons."⁶

In her reply Mrs. White chided him for striking such a gloomy note. "You are in danger of judging persons and things too strongly . . . Never carry the whip. Never try to drive. . . . Never leave in spirit, in word, in testimony, the impression that the Lord is not full of goodness, compassion, tenderness and love." She suggested he speak kindly and lift up Jesus Christ.⁷

On receipt of this letter Daniells was contrite. He immediately dashed off a page saying, "I am glad to receive any words of warning you may have for me. I know very well that my labours are defective and many times I fear that they are well nigh useless,

but I desire to know where the fault is and correct it as far as it is possible." He concluded by wishing her bon voyage for her journey to New Zealand.⁸

While E. G. White was in New Zealand throughout much of 1893, Daniells continued to communicate news items to her in his letters. He speaks of improving the spiritual tone among workers at the Echo Publishing Company by conducting mid-day prayer meetings in the print shop.⁹ He reports on church happenings in South Australia and Tasmania, and especially his own public meetings in Sydney, particularly those at Parramatta. He said he was holding Bible studies with new interests in the Newtown area, and kept busy assisting with Tract Society business and the ship mission work in Sydney harbour.¹⁰

In May, 1893, he received a letter from Mrs. White which activated his self-defence. Her assessment of his earlier work in New Zealand was that he ought to preach less and personally visit the people in their homes more frequently, rather than sending his wife or others adept at giving Bible studies. She wrote, "Here in New Zealand you, my brother, and others who have laboured here, have failed. We must get acquainted with the people in their homes. You can never supply this by proxy."¹¹

Daniells waited some weeks before he replied. "At first I hardly knew what to say. . .," he began. He had read counsels of this nature in the *Testimonies*, but confessed "I have not carried this knowledge out as I should. . . . I have at times failed to do the visiting that I should have done and that I had a desire to do." He claimed he had made a self-examination of his work in New Zealand, saw his failures, and had already rectified the problem since transferring to Australia. Also, he felt the new light which had since come to him about the righteousness of Christ had given him fresh hope. He concluded the matter courteously by saying, "I am thankful for your interest in me and shall try to take kindly any reproofs the Lord may send me. While I cannot undo the past, I know that I can by God's help do a better work in the future."¹²

Mary Daniells, in her customary postscript, offered a further explanation of Daniells' poor work record. The illness which Daniells suffered in New Zealand was basically a dental problem. "I am glad to tell you that Arthur has not been so well in years as he is now," she wrote. "He found out it was his teeth that made his face ache and he had one filled and another pulled and now his face ache has all disappeared, and this climate up here [in Sydney] is building him up. He is of good courage all round, and so am I."¹³

For the following twelve month period, that is from June 1893 to June 1894, there is only one extant letter from Daniells to Mrs. White. In it he shares news items, wishes he had some good advice about purchasing a suitable tract of land to establish a school (they were in the throes of a vast search for such), and mentions the upcoming camp meeting. It was to be the first camp meeting held in Australia, December 30, 1893, to January 15, 1894, at Brighton, Victoria. "If you have any light for us on this matter I shall be so glad to get it," he wrote.¹⁴ This is the first occasion he departs from his news writing to call for her advice on a specific problem. No advice was forthcoming because apparently there was no reply from Mrs. White prior to the camp meeting. Later, occasional advice did come for the 1897 camp meetings.

Mrs. White arrived back in Melbourne from New Zealand in time to attend the Brighton camp meeting and remained there until her transfer to Sydney, 26 March 1894. Just before leaving Melbourne, while staying in the Bible School premises, she wrote three letters of criticism to Daniells and his wife, and Mrs. Emma Rousseau. Another in a similar vein was addressed to Daniells shortly after her arrival in Sydney. A

total of thirty-eight pages were despatched on the subject in the space of a month.

The letters were prompted by the fact that during the Brighton camp meeting Mrs. White had apparently spotted some Adventist ladies inside and outside the main tent doing "common work" while the meetings were in progress. While staying at the school she had also become aware of friction between Mrs. Starr and her two contemporaries, Mrs. Daniells and Mrs. Rousseau. (Mrs. Starr, Pastor G. B. Starr's wife and formerly Nellie Sisley, had grown up in Battle Creek with Mrs. White's own children and was then acting as matron at the Melbourne Bible School.)

This group of letters was aimed especially at Mrs. Daniells and Mrs. Rousseau. Mrs. White did not spare her words in denouncing the conduct of these two women. She called on them to stop their criticisms of Mrs. Starr. She deplored the influence Mary had on Arthur's judgment of matters and warned him of this. She spoke against the "idolatrous love" and "sickly sentimentalism" which Mary had towards her husband, Arthur. Once again, she told Daniells himself not to be too critical of his fellow-workers, especially Joseph Rousseau, who was over-burdened with work. She also lamented the fact that Mrs. Rousseau had, at times, not supported school discipline standards by voicing leniency in social relationships between the school youth.¹⁵

There is no known written response to this group of letters. The fact that Mary thereafter wrote no more postscripts on Arthur's letters to Mrs. White may be explained by the fact that Miss Anna Ingels had by that stage largely taken over the secretarial work for Daniells. Daniells' June and July letters immediately after these reproofs carry merely news items from Melbourne and Adelaide churches and no references to the reprimands. However, the reprimands may partly explain the negative attitudes Daniells and Rousseau adopted throughout the remainder of 1894.

Prior to Daniells' 19 September 1894 letter, Mrs. White had written another (not extant) to Arthur Daniells and Joseph Rousseau but it was no doubt about a new issue—the choice of the Brettville (or Avondale) Estate for the permanent training school for church workers. Much of significance had occurred in the interim. Both Mrs. White and Daniells had visited the estate in May, 1894. With some misgivings, aroused in part by a government agriculturalist's unfavourable soil report, the decision was made nevertheless to buy it.¹⁶ In a 10 June 1894 letter to the Foreign Mission Board in America, W. C. White shared his misgivings and triggered a negative response from the Mission Board. The response reached Australia in August and served to heighten the misgivings, especially those of Daniells and Rousseau.¹⁷ Plans were virtually thrown into neutral until the matter could be fully discussed at the Ashfield camp meeting in October/November, 1894.¹⁸ Just before leaving for that meeting Daniells wrote to Mrs. White, "We are expecting to leave for Sydney early next week and we trust by that time we shall know better what to say with reference to the school question."¹⁹ The matter did receive extensive discussion at the camp meeting, resulting in a vote to go ahead and purchase the estate.²⁰ However, lingering doubts persisted as evidenced by the fact that in December, 1894, Mrs. White herself, son W. C. White, Rousseau and others were still searching for better land near Penrith.²¹ Three months later Daniells wrote:²²

Since the Ashfield camp meeting my mind has been exercised almost daily with reference to the matter you read to me on the camp ground, and which was forwarded to me by post a few weeks later. I have desired to write to you, but my reason for not doing so is that I have not known what to write. I have been tempted to feel that you have little confidence in me, and that any thing I might say would lead to more severe criticism. But I believe that all this is from Satan, and I had de-

sired to say nothing until the Lord had delivered me from wrong thoughts and put into my mind right views of this matter. . . .

I have read the testimony which you sent me many times, and have endeavoured to do so with a prayerful heart. Some portions I do not as yet understand. Other parts are plain. I do not cast any of it aside, but pray the Lord to help me to be admonished by it all. Some of the points I would like to write about, but I do not know as it would be right to do so. I am sorry that I have not counselled with you more about the perplexities of my work, but at first I thought you would not care to be troubled with me. But I feel that my course has increased your burdens, and now if you are willing I feel that I should like to write you freely with reference to the plans we are trying to carry.

These are the words of a man groping his way back from a fractured relationship. Previous reprimands had shaken him. He admits his uncertainty, his despondency, his struggling within his own soul. And the words, "Some portions I do not as yet understand," could even be a euphemism for his feelings that some of the criticisms were unjustified. We can only guess the exact nature of these criticisms. The immediate contention, of course, concerned the choice for school land, but that may only have been the cap-stone in a build-up of previous issues. Not for another two years did Daniells seek reconciliation on the school land issue, and in the interim there was another period of almost twelve months (i.e. April 1895 - March 1896) when apparently no communications were exchanged between them, Daniells preferring instead to write news reports to W. C. White and assuming these letters would be passed on to Mrs. White.²³

Finally, while Daniells and S. N. Haskell were in Adelaide, in 1897, dealing with the defection of two ministers, Daniells wrote to Mrs. White:²⁴

I have felt for a long time that I would like to tell you of the change in my feelings with reference to some features of the school. At the Adelaide camp meeting [October 1896] I was led to see that my attitude on this question had not been right in all respects. I have reviewed the matter from time to time. I have seen more and more that I have not viewed things in their true light. This has opened my mind to doubts and fears about the outcome, and this has weakened my hands, and this again has prevented me from being the help to you and Brother White that I should have been in the past trying times. It has thrown heavier burdens on each of you, and increased the perplexities. I feel very sorry about this, and have asked to be forgiven. But as I feel that I have injured you, the Lord's servant, I ask your forgiveness.

The 1 June 1896 letter of Mrs. White broke a fifteen month's silence in her letters to Daniells. A crisis at the Echo Publishing Company, Melbourne, prompted her to write to Daniells and two other members of the company's Board condemning them for their treatment of W. H. B. Miller and J. H. Woods, leading printers in the establishment.

Apparently the previous eight months of business showed a loss. The manager, W. D. Salisbury, had called everyone together to explain the financial difficulties. Miller and Woods were led to believe it was largely their poor handling of things and so they offered to leave. They, together with two other workers, did leave and began to set up their own printing business.²⁵

Mrs. White, who had donated fifty pounds towards Miller's fare to America in order for him to learn more of the church's printing operations, felt keenly about the loss. To Daniells and W. A. Colcord she wrote, "If, when cramped for means, you let your competent workers go, to set up business for themselves, you will in a short time

wish you had them back." It would be better, she advised, to persuade all the workers to accept less wages rather than let key workers go.²⁶

Daniells' reply in the next mail was defensive, explaining the circumstances and justifying his conduct of the matter. "I sincerely wish we had heard from you earlier," he lamented. It was his conviction that printing jobs accepted from outside the church were the non-profitable ones and they also crowded out the church work. He explained Miller and Woods' suggestion to leave was really held in abeyance by the Board until advice from Mrs. White and her son could be received. Then Daniells and Salisbury had dashed off to Adelaide and while there they both agreed to offer the two men other church work, but when they returned to Melbourne they found the men had already set up their own printing business. Daniells scrambled to repair the problem, but without success.²⁷

Later, Mrs. White wrote that all parties were at fault in the fiasco—Miller and Woods robbed God of their talents by leaving church employ, the company's manager was wrong for not suggesting lower wages all round, and executives such as Daniells were wrong for relinquishing the printers without offering some better alternatives.²⁸

Six months after it all began Mrs. White wrote again to Miller and Woods asking them to return, outlining steps and conditions for their re-employment. Daniells was skeptical about a favourable response²⁹ but was delighted when the two men wrote asking to come back.³⁰ They returned on February 8, 1897.³¹ Additional men had already been engaged to fill the gap left by Miller and Woods. To avoid discharging them Daniells, who had previously highlighted the unprofitable nature of "outside" printing jobs, suggested to Mrs. White a city branch office be opened to handle these kinds of jobs. She agreed to this suggestion. Daniells wrote of the whole ordeal: "I think it will teach me a lesson that I shall not soon forget. I thank you most heartily for the warning and admonition that you have sent to us, and to me especially."³²

Interwoven throughout this drama there were other issues of perhaps less significance but all illustrative of Daniells' occasional requests for advice. He sought and received her counsel on the operation of camp meetings.³³ He grew anxious about the potential stir from other church groups in Victoria when a young Wesleyan minister, C. R. Hawkins, became a Seventh-day Adventist.³⁴ Mrs. White, preferring to leave probabilities alone, sought simply to rectify realities and sent word not to damn the Roman Catholics in the "Echo" magazine because its pages were meant to soften Catholic prejudice.³⁵

Glancing at the list of correspondence between Mrs. White and Daniells during the 1890s one cannot help but notice the bulk occurs in 1897. No doubt the reason for this was the absence of W. C. White who spent a large proportion of that year in America attending, among other work, the General Conference session. Daniells, therefore, is led to consult directly with Mrs. White rather than via her son. And Mrs. White's directions regarding church matters in Australia are channelled through Daniells.

Over the Christmas/New Year period of 1896/7 there was a crisis on the Avondale Estate. An employee, L. N. Lawrence, was suggested as a candidate for local church elder. Mrs. White regarded him as disloyal and dishonest.³⁶ Matters were brought to a head when she called a special meeting on the banks of Dora Creek to air the problem. Lawrence was not elected and soon after left the estate. Arising out of this trauma was Mrs. White's request to Daniells for Pastor S. N. Haskell to transfer to Avondale and take a supporting role with her in the establishment of the new school.³⁷

Daniells acted on the request immediately, calling for Haskell to come from New Zealand.³⁸ What Mrs. White had not told Daniells was that she had earlier written to the South African mission field requesting Miss Hetty Hurd transfer to Australia. (Haskell had confided in Mrs. White that he and Miss Hurd wished to marry.) Daniells was taken by surprise when, immediately after Miss Hurd's arrival in Australia, the marriage took place in Sydney. He had had plans for Miss Hurd to go as a Bible Worker to Adelaide, but, on learning of her marriage, was quite happy for the couple to work at Avondale as Mrs. White had requested.³⁹

Just as the Miller and Woods crisis was being resolved and frantic efforts were being made to have Avondale College open on schedule, Pastor A. S. Hickox, who was canvassing in the Riverina, left with his wife (formerly Miss Carrie Gribble) and child for New Zealand without consulting with Daniells or anyone else. Hickox owed Daniells twenty pounds, the Tract Society seventy-five pounds, and members in Adelaide various amounts. While canvassing he hoped to pay these off. His sales were good but then suddenly he decided to use much of his earnings to pay passage to New Zealand. Daniells wrote him a forthright five-page letter expressing dismay and calling for him to retrace his steps and meet his obligations.⁴⁰

When Mrs. White heard about these facts two months later she defended Hickox by writing to Daniells, instructing him once again to treat kindly those who had made mistakes in church work. "You have managed this case, from first to last, in an evidently faithless manner. Take your hands off your brother. He is God's property. He is in God's service," she said. "No man whom God has chosen to do His work is to be under the control of any other man's mind. . . . When a man is educated and trained to do as another man tells him to do, he ceases to rely on Christ." She also accused Daniells of persuading other workers in New Zealand to ignore Hickox. In her spirited protest against what she called "Pharisaism" she asked, "How do you know if it was not God's Spirit which prompted Hickox to think he could serve in New Zealand?"⁴¹

A month later Daniells replied with a masterly defense of his case, including with his letter a copy of the one he had originally written to Hickox. Referring to a testimony Mrs. White herself had written about the responsibilities of canvassers he said, "I did not dare to speak anything like as pointedly as you had written." He admitted sending to the man in charge in New Zealand a copy of his letter to Hickox, adding, "I thought it proper to let him know how he stood with us. I did not ask them to prohibit him from working in that field."⁴² Daniells' defense was apparently acceptable because the whole matter was immediately dropped.

One other matter on which Daniells received a reprimand, and justifiably so, was arranging for teacher Herbert Lacey to travel by train from Melbourne to Sydney while ill with typhoid fever. Worse still, as a penny-pinching measure, Lacey was placed in a second-class compartment with smokers and drinkers. He was near death on arrival. A. W. Semmens desperately nursed him back to health with hydrotherapy in Sydney.⁴³

At the same time Daniells was exploring ways for financially assisting students to attend Avondale. One proposal was to use some of the tithe for the Student Aid fund, but before making a final decision Daniells sought Mrs. White's counsel on the issue. She replied in the negative, suggesting instead the conference loan students their fees and these could then be repaid after their graduation and during their employment by the church. However, the suggestion of the Tract Society treasurer, Miss E. M. Graham, was followed instead—that of local churches sponsoring their own young people with sys-

tematic offerings.⁴⁴

Daniells was busy. Another problem had arisen in Western Australia. A ministerial worker, J. E. Collins, had apostatized and was disfellowshipped by the members. Pastor Robert Hare, in Perth, requested Daniells visit the West to stabilize the church. Mrs. White advised Daniells to stay, believing Hare was capable of handling the situation by himself.⁴⁵ Further, Mrs. White asked why she was not consulted before Daniells organized a petition regarding the Australian Constitution then in process of formation. Daniells pleaded urgency. "It was sprung upon us in a moment," he replied. On the matter of his suggestion to delay the opening of the Avondale School one month, Daniells acquiesced, leaving the final decision to those in charge at Cooranbong.⁴⁶

In 1897 a further crisis arose in Adelaide. Two ministers, S. McCullagh and C. F. Hawkins, handed Daniells their resignations, denounced Adventism at the tent-mission they were conducting, and began independent meetings against the church. "Their main trouble," Daniells wrote to Mrs. White, "is the Spirit of Prophecy. They utterly reject your claims to inspiration." Daniells and Colcord hurried to Adelaide from Melbourne. Daniells expressed the wish that Haskell be despatched from Cooranbong too, which he was. Daniells reported that the two men were preaching perfection, the corruptions among Adventists in Melbourne and Cooranbong, and against health and temperance, Mrs. White, and the Third Angel's Message. No doubt Daniells had in mind Mrs. White's criticisms of his handling of some previous cases because he wrote reassuringly, "I am fully resolved to manifest a tender Christian spirit." Mrs. White had little advice for Daniells in this case, apparently trusting Haskell's wisdom and experience to steer a proper course.⁴⁷

In retrospect we are left to wonder whether or not the embarrassment caused by McCullagh's defection was one reason why the miraculous healing he received at Avondale in May, 1894, did not feature in the reminiscing about the choice of the site for the Avondale School.

One intriguing sidelight which emerged from the crisis was the relationship between McCullagh and W. C. White. Daniells wrote, "I am not altogether surprised that Brother McCullagh has taken this turn. He has been at war with Brother W. C. White for a long time."⁴⁸ Mrs. White picked this point up. Lest this unresolved antagonism be blamed on W. C. White and hence McCullagh's apostasy, she replied with the observation that, in reality, Daniells himself may be to blame. She said, when the purchasing of the Brettville Estate was discussed at the 1894 Ashfield camp meeting Daniells showed partiality for Rousseau. McCullagh had complained about it to W. C. White, who, in turn, tried to pacify McCullagh. McCullagh had then turned his frustration and anger on W. C. White. Mrs. White made the point that if Daniells and Rousseau had not been such buddies to the exclusion of McCullagh and others then the antagonism would not have arisen in the first place.⁴⁹

Once the Avondale school started functioning in 1897 there arose some strained relationships between the Haskells and other members of staff. The Haskells were not trained teachers and this apparently led to an air of non-acceptance by other teachers. Haskell was, of course, really appointed principally on the recommendation of Mrs. White who envisaged him as the ideal spiritual leader for the enterprise. But the School Board, while they waited for the Hughes to arrive from America to take the principalship, had appointed Lacey as the principal. Mrs. White increasingly despaired of the way Lacey handled matters. She complained of him rushing in without forethought and

showing "a manifest lack of good judgment." He was far too "free and easy-going," "a boy among boys," and even proposed to live off campus. Haskell, too, apparently despaired at times and spoke of leaving. Mrs. White finally complained to Daniells and E. R. Palmer. "From the time Brother Lacey came," she wrote, "the Board made their decision for him to be principal of the school. Not one of these Board thought to counsel with me. . . . Brother Haskell, with his grey hairs and his long connection with the work, was not once referred to. . . . No more attention or reference was made to Brother Haskell or Sister Haskell as matron than if they were blocks of wood; not one reference made to me or my judgment or my opinion. . . . I have not wanted you to know these things, but as sure as Elder Haskell leaves I shall leave also."⁵⁰ This matter was not resolved readily. Finally, in 1899, Daniells, and then Palmer, were asked to be principals at the school to smooth the situation.

Another matter arose in 1897 which occupied Daniells in an incident for which he relied heavily on Mrs. White's advice. She wrote to him about a canvasser, Br. N. A. Davis (the letter is not extant), asking Daniells to deal kindly with him. Daniells promised to help him, knowing something of his activities since the 1894 Ashfield camp meeting. He explained to Mrs. White that recent reports about Davis borrowing money forced him to believe he was a swindler, but, wrote Daniells, "I feel I must have more counsel from you before I can take another step in his case."⁵¹ Mrs. White replied that Davis had been associated with Theosophy and Spiritism and was possessed by an evil spirit. She advised exorcism and urged Daniells to do it.⁵² She wrote a letter to Davis, sent it to Daniells and asked him to read it to Davis. On his return from Adelaide Daniells broke his journey at Ballarat and read the letter to Davis while they took a walk together. Davis confessed that for ten years he had been under the control of a lying spirit who had a white beard, wore a turban, and claimed to be an Oriental from Tibet. The spirit, he said, would often terrorise him at night and threaten to kill him. That evening, after dinner, Daniells prayed earnestly with Davis and his wife and the spirit left Davis. Later, in his letter of explanation and thanks to Mrs. White, Daniells said:⁵³

I am very glad for the instruction you gave me to deal very kindly and patiently with him. I am glad you referred me to the statements of Jude 21-25. . . . The experience was of great value to me. I have always shrunk from meeting the devil in that form, and have dreaded the idea of having to rebuke Satan. But when I saw how the mention of the name of Christ in living faith broke the power of the enemy. . . . I received new impressions in regard to meeting the power of the enemy. . . . How glad I am that we have a Saviour, who has met Satan and conquered him. In Christ we need not fear.

One more issue troubled Daniells in 1897. It concerned his public advertising for the Victorian camp meeting in Balaclava in November. Earlier he had received some advice regarding follow-up work at camp meetings, and he had read Mrs. White's advice to those who were advertising the Stanmore camp meeting to be held a month earlier. She had advised no advertising until the tents were erected and the meetings were virtually underway.⁵⁴ To Daniells this seemed a strange manner of operation. He explained at length how the Melbourne public were favourable to Adventists because of the positions they took concerning the Australian Constitution and the teaching of religion in public schools. He thought it would be advantageous to advertise widely and well before the meetings started. Three times he wrote asking whether her advice regarding Stanmore applied also to Balaclava,⁵⁵ but she did not clarify it for him in the two letters she sent in reply.⁵⁶ She tired at the Stanmore camp meetings, so, in her November letter she

seemed depressed, writing at length of troubles at headquarters in Battle Creek and using Daniells as a sounding-board for her distress of mind.⁵⁷

There are no 1898 letters of Daniells to White which are extant. However, he had asked her (whether by letter, face to face, or via W. C. White perhaps, it is not known) a question regarding a one hundred pound donation. "Should it be given to the school enterprise, health food business, or medical institutions?" he asked. She replied, "It should help to defray the school debt." "The health food and medical work were to be self-supporting," she explained.⁵⁸

With W. C. White back in Australia direct interchange of letters became less frequent between Daniells and Mrs. White. Those which were written were largely composed of news snippets about their mutual friends. Daniells reported Davis was working as the evangelist for their Helping Hand Mission in Melbourne, Mrs. Collins was in Adelaide with her three children while Mr. Collins was living with another woman in Broken Hill, and McCullagh was in Ballarat, repentant, and wishing to rejoin the church. McCullagh's daughter, Crystobel, was attending Avondale. Daniells said the parents were anxious about their daughter and did not approve of her bad attitude towards Mrs. White. (Crystobel was dismissed from Avondale a week later.) He also reported that the Ballarat mission was spoilt by rain but there was a good interest. "I urged the workers to hold fewer public meetings, and to do more house to house work," he wrote. This was reminiscent of the same advice Mrs. White had earlier given him.⁵⁹

Mrs. White's letters contained similar news snippets. She spoke of seeing the Hickox family at church services in Parramatta, that Elder Irwin was urging her to return to America, and she felt it was a pity Daniells had to leave for America just as the plans for the Wahroonga Sanitarium were coming to fruition.⁶⁰

Mrs. White returned to America in August, 1900. Daniells had left earlier that same year. He travelled via South Africa with John Wessels who was in a quandary whether he should enter into his own family's business enterprises or return to Australia and take a leading role in the Wahroonga Sanitarium as Mrs. White urged him to do. Daniells wrote to Mrs. White from South Africa saying:⁶¹

I reviewed my experience in Australia during the last nine years. I told him [John Wessels] where I had promptly responded to the light and been blessed. I also told him when and where I had swerved, and how it had hurt me and the cause. I could honestly state that in all that time—nine years—the Spirit of Prophecy had never once led me into trouble, but that I had got myself in trouble by failing to obey promptly.

CONCLUSIONS

When researching collections of personal letters the reader naturally tends to learn more about the writers—their interests, attitudes, opinions, tendencies, and manner of relating to problems and other people. The writers are often seen in times of frustration, jubilation, or despondency; unguarded moments; or when taking others into confidence. For this reason there exists a proportion of sensitive material—sensitive because it deals with the emotions and reputations of people with foibles as plentiful as our own. Nevertheless, in the interests of achieving some degree of objectivity a researcher is obliged to present an unvarnished account if the exercise is to be worthwhile. The letters of E. G. White and A. G. Daniells are no exception. They are a tableau of news but interspersed with keyhole views into the emotions, attitudes, foibles and strengths of themselves and others.

At times Daniells craved and pleaded for her advice, for example, with reference to the Davis case and also the proper manner of conducting camp meetings. On other occasions Daniells apparently set aside her advice, for instance, her suggestion regarding financial assistance for Avondale students. There were times when their relationship was cordial and he thought of her as his adopted mother. But in the wake of reprimands to his wife and himself he seemed to reel and the relationship languished and became fragile. Time, however, strengthened what had been strained and in retrospect Daniells could only sing her praises.

Did Daniells influence Mrs. White in any way? There does not appear to be any significant influence. Nowhere in these letters does she ask for Daniells' advice. She does agree to a few suggestions which Daniells brings forward, such as the city-branch office for the Echo Publishing Company, but she makes no requests of him for advice. Occasionally she uses him as a listening post for her concerns but this simply suggests a confidence in him or an appreciation of his friendship. She always adopts the position of giving advice rather than seeking it. Daniells, for his part, provides information and appeals to her years of experience and spiritual gift to give to him direction in his decisions.

Despite Mrs. White's frankness and her forthright rebukes, Daniells repeatedly expresses appreciation for her counsel. On occasions he is slow to accept it, but at other times he acts swiftly and dutifully. There is, however, no indication that he regarded her words as infallible. This is noticeable particularly in the Hickox affair. He did not cower and grovel as a lap-dog, but came to his own defense on this and other occasions. It is also noticeable that Daniells' appreciation of her counsel developed with time. His early letters are newsy and friendly, but as time goes on Daniells turns more and more to Mrs. White for counsel. Often, he is apologetic for seeking her out so much, taking her time and energies in communicating with him, and so he resorts to W. C. White as a conduit, but in the absence of W. C. White there is a heavy dependence on her counsel directly.

ENDNOTES

¹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 1 November 1892.

²Ibid.

³The introduction is based on Percy T. Magan, "Life Sketch of Arthur Grosvenor Daniells," *AUCR*, 3 June 1935; and John J. Robertson, A. G. Daniells: *The Making of a General Conference President, 1901* (Mountain View, Ca.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1977), pp. 13-23, 99.

⁴A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 7 November 1892.

⁵A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 22 November 1892.

⁶A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 30 December 1892.

⁷E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 30 January 1893.

⁸A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 2 February 1893.

⁹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 4 March, 1893.

¹⁰A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 26 April 1893.

¹¹E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 11 May 1893.

¹²A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 26 June 1893.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 10 October 1893.

¹⁵E. G. White to A. G. Daniells and Mary Daniells, 6 March 1894; E. G. White to Mary Daniells and Emma Rousseau, 7 March 1894; E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 11 March 1894; E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 4 April 1894.

¹⁶E. G. White to C. H. Jones, 9 May 1894.

¹⁷E. G. White Diary, Manuscript 77, 1894.

¹⁸W. C. White to E. H. Gates, 2 September 1894.

¹⁹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 19 September 1894.

²⁰"Report of the Thirty-third Meeting of the Australasian Union Conference," 20 November 1894; E. G.

White to S. N. Haskell, 21 November 1894.

²¹E. G. White, Manuscript 69, 1894; E. G. White to J. E. and E. L. White, 13 December 1894; W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, 9 December 1894; W. C. White to A. G. Daniells, 14 December 1894.

²²A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 3 March 1895.

²³A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 8 March 1896.

²⁴A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 15 April 1897.

²⁵A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 2 June 1896.

²⁶E. G. White to A. G. Daniells and W. A. Colcord, 1 June 1896.

²⁷A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 2 June 1896.

²⁸E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, W. A. Colcord, N. D. Faulkhead, and W. D. Salisbury, 20 September 1896.

Note: This letter was not sent until 13 January 1897.

²⁹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 5 January 1897.

³⁰A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 11 January 1897.

³¹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 8 February 1897.

³²A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 19 January 1897; E. G. White to A. G. Daniells and W. D. Salisbury, 21 January 1897.

³³A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 8 March 1896; A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 15 July 1896; A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 13 November 1896.

³⁴A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 15 July 1896.

³⁵E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 25 August 1896.

³⁶E. G. White to W. C. White, 14 January 1897; E. G. White, Manuscripts 2, 3, and 12, 1897.

³⁷E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 1 January 1897.

³⁸A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 5 January 1897.

³⁹S. N. Haskell to E. G. White, 18 December 1897; A. G. Daniells to S. N. Haskell and E. G. White, 24 February 1897.

⁴⁰A. G. Daniells to A. S. Hickox, 15 January 1897; A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 18 April 1897.

⁴¹E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, E. R. Palmer and W. A. Colcord, 12 March 1897.

⁴²A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 18 April 1897.

⁴³E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 16 March 1897.

⁴⁴A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 12 March 1897; E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 16 March 1897; A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, 6 May 1897.

⁴⁵A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 12 March 1897; E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 28 June 1897.

⁴⁶A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 24 March 1897.

⁴⁷A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 25 March 1897; A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 29 March 1897; A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 15 April 1897.

⁴⁸A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 24 March 1897.

⁴⁹E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 30 June 1897.

⁵⁰E. G. White to A. G. Daniells and E. R. Palmer, 27 June 1897.

⁵¹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 30 August 1897.

⁵²E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 31 August 1897.

⁵³A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 12 September 1897.

⁵⁴E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 31 August 1897.

⁵⁵A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 14 September 1897; A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 25 September 1897; A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 30 September 1897.

⁵⁶E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 24 September 1897; E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 28 September, 1897.

⁵⁷E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 3 June 1898; E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 13 June 1898.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 23 April 1899.

⁶⁰E. G. White to A. G. Daniells, 17 May 1900.

⁶¹A. G. Daniells to E. G. White, 17 May 1900.