

APPENDIX NINETEEN

Extracts From Dr. R. Cottrell's Presentation Loma
Linda, February, 1980

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Twenty-five years ago I became acquainted with Des Ford when he was a student at the theological seminary which was located in Washington, D.C., at that time, and I was working on the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. He requested an opportunity to dialogue with me about the sanctuary and the subjects that he has been interested in here recently and which we will be discussing here tonight. We spent many hours talking about these things together. My comments tonight are a severely condensed version of three addresses that I gave at Andrews University on October 20, the weekend of October 20, just one weekend before Des Ford made his address at PUC.

The slides that I will use during the second half of the program tonight are ones that I made a little bit more than 10 years ago for a small study group that we had in Washington, D.C., composed mostly of editors at the Review and the GC, and a few other friends as well. I might add that Des Ford has seen these slides and we have talked together about the things we will talk about tonight. A few weeks ago, Dr. Hammill and a number of the chairmen of the advisory committee that the GC set up to work with Des Ford, and several of the members of his committee, have seen these slides and have heard this presentation also. I have presented them to the combined religion faculties of Loma Linda and La Sierra. I might say that heretofore, I have limited my personal discussion of this subject to scholarly circles which I have felt for a number of years has been appropriate, but in view of the fact that these problems have entered the public domain, I think it would not be responsible on my part to continue to be silent.

Interestingly, on the very same day that I received the tapes of Des Ford's address at PUC, I received a letter from Harry Lowe, who was chairman of the committee on problems in the book of Daniel. I will quote just one sentence from that letter — a very short one. "Ford's presentation dealt with nothing we did not discuss on the problems in the Daniel Committee twenty years ago." So it is nothing new in scholarly circles.

I would like to say again that nearly all of our Bible scholars in the church — perhaps all of them — recognize the reality of the problems we will be presenting tonight, but there is no consensus on the solutions to these problems. It has been the policy of certain persons to prevent a discussion of this for the past 10 years or so, and to think of some, even in scholarly circles who commented on the subject as sort of dangerous liberals who were a threat to the church. But I would like to submit that this attitude of no discussion, of silence, has really been responsible for escalating the problems to the state that it is in today, because it has prevented our Bible scholars from sitting down together and working on the problems and coming up with a satisfactory solution. The tree of silence never bears the fruit of peace. It is best to face things directly and to work with them honestly. And only fair-minded, responsible discussion can accomplish that objective. It is more than a little that the last ten years or so that it has not been possible to do that. [Sentence on tape not clear.]

Seventh-day Adventists have always thought of themselves, appropriately, as people of the Book, meaning the Bible, of course. And it has ever been our intention to believe the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth as set forth in the Bible. In telling about the Sabbath conference at Volney, New York, Ellen White relates that of the 35 people present at the conference, hardly two agreed. Some were holding serious errors, and each strenuously urged his own views, declaring that they were according to the Scripture (*Life Sketches*, p. 110). I would like to ask why such a situation prevailed when these were all honest people? I

think: They all loved the Lord. They loved the truth. They studied the truth as best they could in the Scriptures. But when they came together hardly two of them, as Ellen White said, agreed. Why was there this disunity?

I would like to submit that the answer was that they were using what we refer today as the proof-text method of Bible study. And inasmuch it was the proof-text method of Bible study that created the problem that we encounter in our interpretation of Daniel 8:14, it is important that we understand what this method is and how it operates. I will briefly mention 5 points. We might mention more.

The proof-text method thinks of the Bible correctly as God's message to us today, but it forgets that the Bible was also originally God's message to people in the time in which it was written. 1 Cor. 10:11 for instance.

Second, the proof-text method pays minor, if any attention, to the historical setting to which the messages of the Bible were originally addressed, or to the intentions of the inspired writers. It construes the words and statements of the Bible often in the sense that only the modern reader would be inclined to place upon them. As a matter of fact, in the proof-text method of Bible study each person's presuppositions and biases — mine, if I am engaging in proof-text theology — these presuppositions and biases tend to determine what a person concludes when he reads a passage of Scripture, setting out with an idea his study of the Bible consists essentially in a search for statements that seem to support his idea. And interestingly as it may seem, as the recent spate of conferences in righteousness by faith have indicated, all sides can quote Ellen White and both sides can quote the Bible. Of course, we might not agree on the use that each person makes of that; but it is a fact that in the proof-text method a person's personal pre-suppositions and biases in large measure determine the conclusions that he arrives at.

Third, the proof-text method usually accepts an English translation of the Bible as its ultimate authority of what the Bible means. No special training is necessary to engage in the proof-text method of Bible study. It is a sort of do-it-yourself method in which anyone can engage, depending upon his own level of ability. Reasonable ability to read the King's English in the King James Version of the Bible, to make use of the marginal references, the English concordance, and to define Bible words by looking them up in a modern dictionary, and sometimes with referring to other English translations are the principal requisites that a person engaging in proof-text Bible study at its best will need.

Fourth, the proof-text method makes indiscriminate use of the analogy of Scripture. That is, comparing Scripture with Scripture, find a certain word like sanctuary in Dan. 8:14, the same word in Lev. 16, the same word in Heb. 7, 8, 9 and so on, finding the same word, the person using the proof-text method concludes that they are all talking about the same thing, approximately. But there is an effect that comes in here in this rather indiscriminate use of the analogy of Scripture, the result being that a text is often out of context to mean something quite different than the original writer intended. And it tends to be unaware that many Bible words, expressions and statements conveyed entirely different concepts to the writer, to his original audience, than they do to us today.

Fifth, anyone can use the proof-text method. One person's opinion is just about as important and as valuable as another person's opinion. And there is no real way to determine which interpretation is right. The proof-text method offers no certain way to do that, and as a result there is a very considerable diversity of opinion on the part of the Christian world today, and

in fact, most of the differences of opinion amongst the churches and most of the differences of opinion that occur even in our own church are the result of using this method.

Well, let us make no mistake. There is nothing whatever wrong in E.G. White's use of the Bible when we understand how and why she uses it as she does. That is a considered conclusion after many years of study. But there is something grievously wrong about us, the church, when we begin to make use of her writings in the interpretation of the Bible, and the way some of us continue to use her writings in the exegesis of Scripture. I would like to suggest that this egregious error on our part coupled with the continuous use of the proof-text method by many has been the root of practically every theological problem that has confronted the church over the past 65 years since the death of E.G. White. For example, the problems posed by Conradi, Fletcher, Snide, Grieve, Houteff, and the Shepherds Rod, Robert Brinsmead, Ron Numbers, Walter Rae, and others. The problem is basically the relationship of E.G. White's writing to the Bible.

This lethal combination of the proof-text method and the way in which we have used E.G. White is at the root of our theological problems.

As long ago as 1871 Ellen White herself wrote, "If you had made God's Word your study with a desire to reach the Bible standard and reach Christian perfection, you would not have needed the testimonies." That is an interesting thing from E.G. White. "You would not have needed the testimonies." That is Volume 2, page 605.

Also, at various times E.G. White reproved the brethren — told them not to use her writings in settling doctrinal matters. So with this group of Bible teachers, and later others, learning how to go to the Bible directly for the first time, there were some who could carry out E.G. White's instruction and go to the Bible and find out what it said.

In sharp contrast with the proof-text method of Bible study, this method which is commonly known as the historical-linguistic-contextual method, or more simply the historical method came into increasing use in the church. Its aim is to ascertain as accurately as possible what the Bible writers really meant by what they wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and how they intended their readers to understand what they wrote. This method of Bible study takes each passage of Scripture in its historical setting, each word in the original language in order to determine its meaning in a particular context, and each statement in its own context and perhaps also the author's purpose in writing.

Now under the proof-text method the living presence of E.G. White had been essential in order to confirm the true meaning of Scripture from the study of the Bible. But with the historical method it became possible to go to the Bible directly. Likewise under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be sure and listen to God's voice speaking to us today. Clear consensus was not possible with the proof-text method without the living presence of E.G. White, but it is possible with the historical method of interpretation. A high degree of accuracy and reasonable consensus can be attained.

In bringing this part of our study to a close, I would like to suggest that the Bible scholars of the church have been well aware of these problems of interpretation in Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9 for many years. Individuals have attempted to correlate Adventist teachings on the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, and 1844 with these passages of Scripture on the basis of recognized principles of interpretation. Several solutions to these problems have been proposed but over the past 10 years this obscurantist policy has prevented them from working effectively together and from reaching a consensus. And that is why there are differences of

opinion on the solution just as Des Ford is demonstrating at the present time. Had it not been for this moratorium on study by our Bible scholars during the past 10 years particularly, the church would probably, by now, have reached clear consensus on these matters and the present rather critical situation might have been avoided.

So that the context in our historic interpretation or application of these verses leaves us in very considerable trouble because it isolates verse 14 from its context and makes it refer to an entirely different set of things.

The Adventist interpretation is based upon certain assumptions.

1. That the 2300 evenings-mornings stand for 2300 24-hour days.
2. That the day-for-year principle is inherent in symbolic prophecy. That is, that the 2300 days represents 2300 literal years that began in 457 B.C. and ended in A.D. 1844.
3. That because the temple was permanently destroyed in A.D. 70 the sanctuary to be cleansed in 1844 for that very reason must be the one in heaven. That is reasonable.
4. That the KJV "cleansed" is the correct rendering of the Hebrew word *nitsdaq*. You are going to hear this word again, *nitsdaq* simply means cleansed, or in the RSV, restored to its rightful state. That the cleansing referred to is an antitypical cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary on an antitypical Day of Atonement from the confessed sins of God's contrary people of all ages, and that this cleansing constitutes an investigative judgment of their fitness for heaven.

When I found it impossible to reconcile the Adventist interpretation with the context of verse 14, I went to Elder Nichol, who had been our editor-in-chief on the *Commentary* of course, and rather shepherding Don and me as we did our work on revising *Bible Readings* so that it would correspond with the *Commentary*. In the early spring back there in Washington, we had seen so little sunshine and so much snow that I often worked out on the roof for hours at a time, and Elder Nichol came out for a few minutes to talk some things over. Well, I went to him with this problem in Daniel 8 and asked his counsel. He asked me, "What do the Bible teachers have to say?" I said, "We have been working on the *Commentary* for several years, 14 hours a day." (By the way, we began work at 4:30 each morning, six days a week, except for Sabbath, and worked all day long. There wasn't much time for anything else.) I said, "I don't know because I haven't had an opportunity to talk with them for a number of years." He said, "Well write them a letter." So I wrote a letter with six questions in it:

1. What linguistic basis is there for translating *nitsdaq* as cleansed?
2. Why did the translators of the Septuagint render *nitsdaq* as *katharizo*, which does mean cleansed in Greek?
3. What is the relation of *nitsdaq* to its context in verses 9 to 13?
4. How would you render *nitsdaq* in terms of its context?
5. What linguistic or contextual reasons can you suggest for applying *nitsdaq* to the services of the Day of Atonement, and thus to the Investigative Judgment beginning in 1844?

6. What reasons other than language and context would you suggest for applying *nitsdaq* to the services of the Day of Atonement and thus to the Investigative Judgment beginning in 1844?

This questionnaire was sent out to eight teachers of Hebrew — all of the people in all of our colleges who were teaching Hebrew at that time, to every head of a college Bible department, to several other experienced Bible teachers with whom I was personally acquainted, to four former Bible teachers who were in administrative or editorial work. Here are their names, the ones at the Seminary. Some of these, of course, were teaching Hebrew. In addition to these, Otto Christiansen, Graham Maxwell, Richard Litke, Sakai Kubo, the department heads listed here — some of those were teaching Hebrew also — and Dr. Hammill, who at that time was in the GC Dept. of Education, but he was and is a Bible scholar; Elder Jemison, who was working on a textbook on Bible doctrines; and Don Neufeld and myself, who had been working on the *Commentary*. I thought that it was appropriate that I should reply and enter my considered judgment on the subject, along with the others. In due time all of these responded to the questionnaire and here are their responses tabulated.

1. The linguistic basis for translating *nitsdaq* as cleansed. 21 of the 27 said that there is none or they didn't offer any. Five said that it is meagre evidence. And one had a very interesting reply that I thought was worthy including: The possibility of an incorrect Hebrew translation from an unknown Aramaic original. I thought that was some basis on which to base an important teaching such as 1844.
2. Why did the Septuagint translators render *nitsdaq* as *Katharizetai*? Fourteen said that they had no suggestion to offer. Eight said, well, they applied Daniel 8:14 to Antiochus. Two, they followed a putative, that is an imaginary Hebrew text, that did read cleanse. Two said that the translators of the Septuagint understood the heavenly sanctuary. (That is giving them quite a bit of credit.) One said that they had some pre-conceived theological opinion. (Well, maybe they did.) And one said it was a fortunate accident. (How do you like to have an important point of faith based upon a fortunate accident? Is that the way God works? I don't think so.)
3. The relation of *nitsdaq* to its context in verses 9 to 13. Nineteen of the 27 said that it has no relation to its context or offered no suggestion. Four said it refers to a restoration to damage done from the little horn. That is correct, of course. Four said it refers to the re-discovery of the sanctuary truth obscured by the papacy as the little horn.
4. The proposed translation of *nitsdaq* in terms of its context.
5. What linguistic or contextual reasons for applying Daniel 8:14 to the antitypical Day of Atonement, the Investigative Judgment, can you suggest? And notice that every one of them gave no linguistic or contextual reasons for the Adventist interpretations.
6. Do you have any other reasons for so applying Daniel 8:14? Thirteen said that there is no other basis or they didn't offer any basis. Seven said it is by analogy between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. (That is correct, of course.) Five said that the Spirit of Prophecy so applied it. Two said that it is a fortunate accident in translation. (And I shiver at thinking of my faith being based upon a fortunate accident.)

Well, as a result of this I went back to Elder Nichol with the results of the poll and didn't get any help. He took the results of the questionnaire, without the names attached to any particular responses, to Elder Figuhr, who was GC President. As a result Elder Figuhr and the

officers of the GC set up the Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel. Here are the members of the committee, with Elder Harry Lowe as chairman. In addition to the regularly appointed members, the committee invited several people to sit with us and they were with us most of the time. It was appointed in the autumn of 1960, met first on January 4, 1962. There is quite a long interim there, but anyway that is the case. Here are the other times that we met, for a total of 16 days, in Takoma Park and Berrien Springs. I don't expect to read this through. Here is a list of the 45 papers that were presented by various members of the committee. Interestingly, Des Ford submitted some papers, although he was in Australia, and the committee considered them. Here are three of them. Then on the next page I think you will find his name occurring again at that point.

Now I would like to examine and summarize the committee's work from 1961 to 1966, when it finally adjourned *sine die*. TH stands for traditional hermeneutic. That is the historic Adventist interpretation. RH stands for re-interpretation hermeneutic. (I will explain that a little later.)

But basically, even though there was a variety of opinion on this committee, there were two fundamental points of view that came to stand out finally.

1. The majority held to the traditional hermeneutic.
2. The minority held to the re-interpretation hermeneutic.

One, the majority said Daniel 8:14 is a contextual island, that is, it has no connection with its context and is not to be interpreted in terms of its context, but by the analogy of Scripture, that is, in terms of Lev. 16, Hebrews 9, and so on. The minority said that the verse is an integral part of its context and is to be interpreted in harmony with its context, both literary and historical, with application beyond its own historical context to be made by later inspired writers.

Two, some on the committee suggested that Daniel 8:14 is apocalyptic. Well, we all agreed that Daniel 8:14 is apocalyptic, but there was a difference between the majority and minority as to the effect of apocalyptic on interpretation. The majority said that apocalyptic is not susceptible to interpretation by the usual linguistic, grammatical, contextual, historical norms. The minority of us said that these norms are as valid and necessary in dealing with apocalyptic as with other literary forms, but of course, we didn't stop there.

Three, that Daniel 8:14 is eschatological. I can hear that word ringing through the committee again and again. Well, we all agreed that Daniel 8:14 is eschatological but differed as to the nature of eschatological prophecy and its interpretation. The majority said that Old Testament eschatological prophecy was not relevant to the people or historical situation of Old Testament times, but was addressed across the centuries to God's remnant people in our times and is to be understood exclusively from our historical perspective. The minority said that Old Testament eschatological prophecy, including that of Daniel, was originally addressed to ancient Israel as the covenant people and was to have been fulfilled to them, but was later transferred, in principle, though not necessarily in every detail, to the Christian church along with the other covenant privileges, responsibilities and promises.

Four, the 2300 evening-mornings and the sanctuary in heaven. The majority finds the heavenly sanctuary in Daniel 8:14, so it seemed to me, and this is my opinion, by a process of circular reasoning that anticipates its conclusion by postulating the key factor in its conclusion, a priori, as its basic assumption. The minority of us accepted the heavenly

sanctuary as set forth in Hebrews and Daniel 8:14 as applicable to that sanctuary on the authority of a later inspired writer. In other words, we all came to the same conclusion, but we differed as to how we thought we could get there.

Five, as to the meaning of *nitsdaq* — cleansed or restored to its rightful state — the majority defends the KJV rendering “cleansed” as the true meaning of *nitsdaq*, despite the fact that the word is never used in that sense in all Hebrew literature, Bible or anything else. The minority accepted the meaning of *nitsdaq* as reflected throughout the Old Testament would concede perhaps “cleansed” for point of argument, but point out that this still leaves us in as much trouble as ever with the context.

Six, some on the committee emphasized what they referred to as the larger view, that is, interpretation by analogy, bringing in sanctuary in various other places in Scripture. The majority assumed that the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 is the same described in the book of Hebrews. Defines its cleansing by analogy with the Day of Atonement ritual in the ancient sanctuary in Lev. 16. The minority recognizes the validity of analogy, but affirms that the analogous character of another passage of Scripture must first be established on the basis that the context in both instances justifies that analogy.

Seven, predictive prophecy and the divine purpose. The majority assumed divine foreknowledge and/or foreordination as the basic elements of predictive prophecy and reasoned that such predictions are therefore absolute, unconditional and not subject to modification under changed historical circumstances. We suggested that we assume that predictive prophecy is a function of the divine purpose. It is not a categorical prediction of the future, but it is a statement, a declaration of the divine purpose, that God's ultimate purpose is unconditional, but that His intermediate purpose with respect to the people through whom, the means by which the time when His ultimate purpose will be accomplished are always conditional upon the response and cooperation of those whom He calls into covenant relationship with Himself.

Last of all, How did the committee summing up its discussions relate to the exegetical problems? The majority said that the Adventist interpretation can be established satisfactorily on the basis of the assumptions mentioned and that problems, if any, should be forgotten and that the committee should prepare a report that will strengthen the faith of our people in the traditional interpretation. Now I am not putting words in anybody's mouth, but several on the committee expressed that and I am simply quoting the majority of the committee here. The minority said that to ignore the problems would be a tacit admission that we had no answers for them. Remember that the name of the committee was the Committee on Problems in the Book of Daniel, and the majority was suggesting that we forget the problems and not say anything about them, and make the committee appear naive and foolish to knowledgeable SDAs and biblically literate non-SDAs.

We made four different suggestions as to a report that we would feel clear about. The majority wanted us to sign our names to a report that wouldn't even mention the problems in the book of Daniel and we couldn't conscientiously do that.

Well, our first suggestion was that we deal fairly with the problems and set forth both points of view. Well, the majority didn't want that.

So we came up with a second suggestion that the report of the committee be published without the names of the committee members attached to it. Well, they didn't want that. They wanted our names attached to it.

Three, we suggested that members submit their papers for publication under their own names only. OK.

Four, the minority should be permitted to withdraw from the committee in order that the majority may issue a unanimous report in keeping with its wishes. We offered to step outside the door while they took a vote so that it could be unanimous. Or, if they insisted, we were ready to withdraw from the committee completely.

Well, none of these suggestions were acceptable to the majority so the committee adjourned *sine die* and made no report after working for five full years on the subject.

Let's look at the problem in Daniel 8:14 and bring it into sharp focus.

1. Contextually, the evenings and mornings are the evening and morning continual burnt offerings or regular daily ritual services of the sanctuary, not the light and dark parts of the day. With two such services conducted each day, one in the morning and one in the evening, the 2300 of them would span 1150 twenty-four hour days. Not 2300!
2. Nowhere in Scripture is the day for a year concept either stated or implied as a norm for interpreting prophetic time periods. The two texts that we usually refer to are in no way analogous to Daniel 8:14. I will explain on the slide why. In numerous time prophecies the context specifies literal time. There is no indication in Scripture of the day-year principle. In fact, the first time that we come to it in all literature, so far as I know, is the Jewish scholar Maimonides about the 13th century who comes up with that idea. In chapter 9 the angel tells Daniel that the decree initiating the 70 weeks went forth when he began to pray, verse 23. Chapter 9:23. Furthermore, chapter 9 assigns the little horn to the 70th of the 70 weeks of years and locates the omission of the 2300 evening and morning sacrifices within the 1260 days of the last half of the 70th week.
3. The key assumption that the 2300 days reached far beyond the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, thus justifying a transition from the earthly to the heavenly sanctuary is without Biblical validity. Inspiration placed the prophetic messages of Daniel within the context of the historical portion of the book with ancient Israel as the chosen people. If indeed, inspiration intended a different application in verse 14, why is there no clear positive statement to this effect anywhere in the Bible? To have given Daniel this prediction within the historical context to which it did not apply, with no warning that it was to meet its fulfilment far beyond that historical context would inevitably mislead and confuse the Jewish reader. The Old Testament knows nothing of a sanctuary in heaven. And it is not valid exegesis to read the New Testament concept of a heavenly sanctuary back into the Old Testament historical context with its earthly sanctuary.
4. *Nitsdaq* does not mean cleansed and never occurs in this sense in all Hebrew literature. Furthermore, it is never used in connection with the daily ritual service, the Day of Atonement ritual service or the remission of sins. The concept that the ancient Day of Atonement ritual has a counterpart in the heavenly sanctuary — that Daniel 8:14 envisions the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, and an antitypical Day of Atonement by removal of the confessed sins of God's contrite people, the final act in an Investigative Judgment is based upon an analogy the inspired Bible writers themselves never draw, either explicitly or implicitly.

The context of Daniel 8:14 attributes the defiling of the sanctuary to the little horn. SDA's interpretation attributes it to the transfer of confessed sins to the heavenly sanctuary by the

priestly ministry of Christ. To pretend to ourselves that the SDA interpretation reads Daniel 8:14 in context then would thus be to identify the little horn as Christ. In other words, we can't have both context and the Adventist interpretation in so far as the Bible itself is concerned. Similarly in chapter 9:27 we attribute the cessation of sacrifice in offering to Christ's death on the cross. Whereas context equates it with the little horn taking away the continual burnt offering in chapter 8:11-13.

By this time you are wondering if I am a Seventh-day Adventist? I would like to affirm right now that I am a fourth generation SDA. I believe in the Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, so we are not through quite yet.

5. Christ and the New Testament writers re-interpret Daniel. And we could take a study of Daniel 24 and show that Christ is not simply applying what Daniel wrote. He is re-interpreting in a new historical situation.
6. Ellen White re-interprets Daniel for our time. And because I fully believe and am convinced that God spoke to and through Ellen White, and I accept her writings 100%. I accept her re-interpretation, her approval of the Adventist interpretation of the heavenly sanctuary, the Investigative Judgment, 1844, because I accept her as an inspired writer. And so Daniel is very closely related to the Advent message and we can have full confidence both in the contextual facts in the book of Daniel and their application to the Jewish people in ancient times as God's purpose would have been worked out had they been faithful. But because Christ didn't come and His kingdom has not been set up and we believe that it will yet be set up at the coming of Christ, obviously there must be some fulfilment in the future, and Ellen White points out to us what that fulfilment will be, and so we recognize both the contextual interpretation and the re-interpretation by New Testament writers and Ellen White bringing to us what God would have us understand in our time.

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It should not be assumed that Dr. Cottrell agrees with everything Desmond Ford has said or written on Dan. 8:14. He does not. In general, he probably agrees with most of what Ford has set forth regarding the problem, but chooses a different solution. Similarly, it must not be assumed that Ford interprets the Scriptural passages identically to Dr. Cottrell. — (D. Ford.)

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