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Vol. 55, No. 5

THE
TESTIMONY
OF
JESUS

*How God Sees
Things Today*

Scriptural Visions / Identifying True & False Prophets / The Straight Testimony

the REFORMATION herald

Volume 55, Number 5

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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action." — *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 488.

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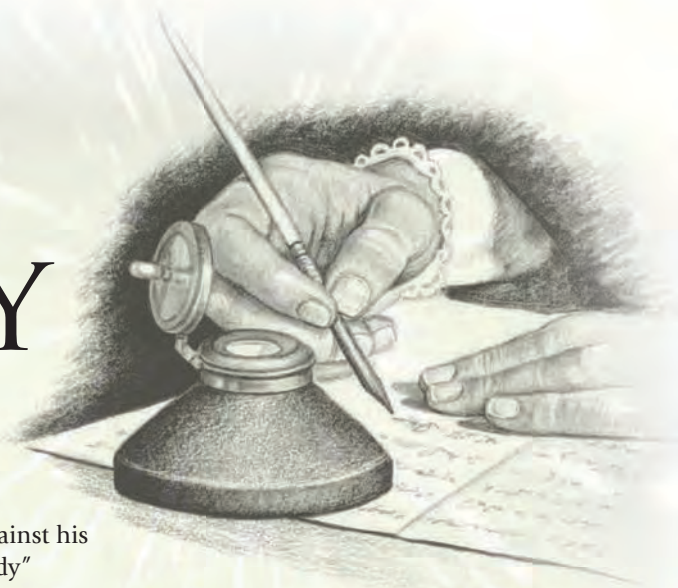
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THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY



Let's imagine a clock or a watch without the hour hand, minute hand, or second hand. Have you ever seen a clock or a watch like that? Would you use it for telling time? Of course not!

In one of his illustrations, one of our pioneers tried to illustrate a Bible without prophecy. It would still be a wonderful book, but without prophecy we could not know the time. As a matter of fact, the Bible prophecies give strong support for the authenticity of Scripture.

Hosea wrote: "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (12:13). Solomon declared: "Without prophecy the people become demoralized" (Proverbs 29:18, NAB).

Now let's imagine a Bible without prophecy or a church without the Spirit of Prophecy.

The disastrous captivity that came upon the Israelites was due in great part to their rejecting the prophets. "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until

the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chronicles 36:15, 16).

Why did they reject the Messiah? Because of their spiritual pride, they had rejected and misapplied the prophecies. For instance, Isaiah 53 describes the true Messiah as a suffering Servant who had not come according to their expectations.

The apostle Peter, an eyewitness of Christ (since he lived 3½ years with Jesus) gave more importance to the prophecies than to his own personal testimony about the Saviour. He declared: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

"For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **And this voice which came from heaven we heard**, when we were with him in the holy mount. **We have also a more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any

private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:16–21, emphasis added).

God has richly blessed His people with the gift of prophecy, but we can receive no benefit from it if we do not take seriously its messages of warning, reproof, counseling.

"We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church, and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer?"¹

Before winning a great victory upon his enemies, King Jehoshaphat addressed the people of Judah and Jerusalem: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20).

Here is the basic condition for our spiritual prosperity as individuals, as families, and as a church. Are we willing to fulfill this condition? May the Lord give us grace for that! *R*

Reference

¹ *Gospel Workers*, p. 308.

"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

The Prophetic Gift in History

By A. Balbach



After our first parents had yielded to the temptation of Satan, they could no longer see the Lord face to face, and they were driven from the Garden of Eden. God would continue to communicate directly with individuals through various means, other than by using an audible voice. The interception of the original method of open and direct communication between God and humans gave rise to a completely new method. Henceforth, God decided to also reveal His will to sinful human beings through a system which became known by the name of the gift of prophecy.

This change was confirmed by Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, when, used by the Holy Spirit, he said:

“[The Lord God of Israel] spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies. . . . That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:70–75).

Through the ministry of the prophets, the Lord has revealed to us the plan of redemption. For the sake of convenience, it may be helpful to divide history into four periods and observe the gift of prophecy in each period:

- The patriarchal period: from Adam to Moses.
- The Hebrew period: from Moses to the advent of the Messiah, the promised Deliverer.
- The apostolic period: from the birth of Jesus to the Protestant Reformation.
- Present period: from the days of the Protestant Reformation to the present.

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT

In the days of the patriarchs

Enoch: Hebrews 11:5; Jude 14, 15.

“He was one of the holy line, the preservers of the true faith, the pro-

genitors of the promised seed. From the lips of Adam he had learned the dark story of the Fall, and the cheering one of God's grace as seen in the promise; and he relied upon the Redeemer to come. But after the birth of his first son, Enoch reached a higher experience; he was drawn into a closer relationship with God. He realized more fully his own obligations and responsibility as a son of God. And as he saw the child's love for its father, its simple trust in his protection; as he felt the deep, yearning tenderness of his own heart for that first-born son, he learned a precious lesson of the wonderful love of God to men in the gift of His Son, and the confidence which the children of God may repose in their heavenly Father. The infinite, unfathomable love of God through Christ became the subject of his meditations day and night; and with all the fervor of his soul he sought to reveal that love to the people among whom he dwelt.

"Enoch's walk with God was not in a trance or vision, but in all the duties of his daily life. He did not become a hermit, shutting himself entirely from the world; for he had a work to do for God in the world. In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast, unwavering servant of the Lord.

"His heart was in harmony with God's will; for 'can two walk together, except they be agreed?' (Amos 3:3). And this holy walk was continued for three hundred years. There are few Christians who would not be far more earnest and devoted if they knew that they had but a short time to live, or that the coming of Christ was about to take place. But Enoch's faith waxed the stronger, his love became more ardent, with the lapse of centuries.

"Enoch was a man of strong and highly cultivated mind and extensive knowledge; he was honored with special revelations from God; yet being in constant communion with Heaven, with a sense of the divine greatness and perfection ever before him, he was one of the humblest of men. The closer the connection with God, the deeper was the sense of his own weakness and imperfection.

"Distressed by the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, and fearing that their infidelity might lessen his reverence for God, Enoch avoided constant association with them and spent much time in solitude, giving himself to meditation and prayer. Thus he waited before the Lord, seeking a clearer knowledge of His will, that he might perform it. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul; he lived in the very atmosphere of heaven.

"Through holy angels God revealed to Enoch His purpose to destroy the world by a flood, and He also opened more fully to him the plan of redemption. By the spirit of prophecy He carried him down through the generations that should live after the Flood and showed him the great events connected with the second coming of Christ and the end of the world."¹

Noah: Hebrews 11:7. "God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Genesis 6:13).

"Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest. Surrounded by popular contempt and ridicule, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness. A power attended his words, for it was the voice of God to man through His servant. Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power, while for one hundred and twenty years his solemn voice fell upon the ears of that generation in regard to events, which, so far as human wisdom could judge, were impossible."²

The Spirit of Christ used Noah as a mouthpiece to preach the gospel to the antediluvians, who were "dead in sins" (Ephesians 2:5), as prisoners of Satan (Isaiah 42:7; 61:1; 2 Timothy 2:26), calling them to repentance. But they did not respond.

"For Christ also . . . went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

"For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6).

Abraham: Genesis 15:1; 18:17.

"Abraham had honored God, and the Lord honored him, taking him into His counsels, and revealing to him His purposes."³

Abraham's sense of righteousness and his love for his fellow humans were tested. Would he reveal indifference? Or would he plead for justice and mercy? Abraham said to the Lord:

"Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:23-25).

Superficially, these last words of Abraham looked like sheer presumption. Upon close examination, however, we see that there was not the slightest trace of arrogance in his question. The announcement made to Abraham had a purpose: Should the destruction come without an explanation on the part of God concerning the true situation, and without an assurance that, if there were any righteous, they would be spared? If so, Abraham and other God-fearing men would begin to question the righteousness of the Ruler of the universe. But the Lord has a special way to reveal facts to humans. Oftentimes, He first allows His servants to be involved in deep perplexity, making them feel a desperate need for answers, so they can properly understand His love, His mercy, His righteousness. Then He reveals to them His special providences and vindicates His actions. Thus He acted with Abraham, with Moses (Exodus 32:9-11; 33:13, 14), with Joshua (Joshua 7:7-15), with Gideon (Judges 6:12-16), with Elijah (1 Kings 19:13-18), and with others. God wanted to give Abraham the clari-

fication for which he pleaded, but, before giving it to him, God wanted to make him so anxious for it that he would start asking for it. As far as His righteousness is concerned, the Lord wants us to be fully convinced, and He is willing to answer our questions and remove our doubts. As creatures made in the image of God, we have hearts and minds which demand that things be right, and we should also be satisfied that God's actions are right.

In line with this thought, the following question must have arisen in the minds of some people: Why does a God who knows everything need an investigative judgment about which we read in the Bible? I myself asked this question sixty years ago and received the following explanation: God actually does not need such a judgment, but we do. So that we may be able to examine the records of the lives of some of our good friends and relatives whom we expected to see in heaven but who will not be there, God transparently gives us a right to be satisfied concerning His righteousness.

The Lord revealed to Abraham that, had there been ten righteous people in Sodom, He would spare the city for the sake of those ten. At this stage, let us humbly understand that, in many cases, human beings (individuals, families, villages, towns, and so on) are protected from calamities without the intervention of the police, or the fire department, or a special rescue team. Even a city may be preserved because of the righteous people, the "salt of the earth," living there. (Read Acts 28:18-25). Consider the following example:

Paul Harvey, the famous American radio commentator, described a miracle that happened in Beatrice, Nebraska, on March 1, 1950. A lady who was always punctual for church called her daughter: "It's 7:15 p.m. Choir practice is at 7:30 p.m. Let's go." But the girl was asleep. The mother ran upstairs to wake her up. By the time she got ready to leave, it was evident that they would be late—for the first time. The mother was the choir director, and the daughter was the pianist. But these two participants were not the only ones

who were late that evening. The pastor and his wife had always been on time for choir practice but not that evening. There were eighteen members in the church choir, and all of them, for one reason or another, were late for choir practice that very same night. No one showed up at 7:30 p.m. This had never happened before.

At 7:30 p.m. a gas leak in the basement was ignited by the furnace that was directly below the choir loft. And there was an explosion which demolished the church—at 7:30 p.m. But the merciful hand of God intervened to cause all those eighteen choir members to arrive after 7:30. Was this a coincidence or a miracle? You decide.

During the Mosaic Period

Moses and Aaron, and others: Exodus 3:10; 5:1; Numbers 11:25, 26.

The prophetic gift was manifested in a great measure through Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. The same gift was bestowed also upon Joshua.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient" (Numbers 27:18-20).

During the long period of the Mosaic dispensation, the people of Israel received messages, instructions, and were rebuked through God's prophets. Jeremiah said:

"Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers" (Jeremiah 7:25, 26).

During the Apostolic Period

Paul says that, among the spiritual gifts bestowed on the church, the spirit of prophecy is included.

"When [Christ] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave

gifts unto men." "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:8, 11).

We see this fulfilled in the apostles and others of their time.

In the Days of the Reformation

Many of God's servants in the time of the Old Testament were used by God as He spoke to them in dreams and visions. They were men of God—seers, prophets, divine messengers. Arthur G. Daniels explains:

"[These men of God] were given messages ... which led them to meet the purpose of God in the gospel. Not all were called to foretell events or to work miracles. To them were revealed the purposes of God not known to others. Their mission was to bear these messages to their fellow men.

"John the Baptist was brought into the world to bear a new message to the human race—to herald the advent of the Son of God. He recognized God's purpose, he understood the mission of his very existence, and performed it exactly as God had planned. This is true greatness as God estimates greatness. The Saviour declared that there had been no greater prophet than John.

"The great Reformation was in the purpose and plan of God. He allowed the apostasy to come, but He did not intend that it should forever fully eclipse the light of His glorious gospel. He did not intend that His light should shine no more, that the human race should end in the midnight blackness of papal ascendancy. Therefore, in His own time and way He visited men, spoke to them, illumined their minds, gave them messages to bear to their fellows, and inspired them to carry out His purposes and plans. Such a glorious company of messengers was raised up in the early part of the sixteenth century. Says Wylie:

" 'One thing has struck all who have studied, with minds at once intelligent and reverent, the era of which we speak, and that is the contemporaneous appearance of so many men of great character and sublimest intellect at this epoch. No other age can show such a galaxy of illustrious names' (James A.

Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, vol. 1, book 8, chapter 1, p. 410).⁴

The Place of the Gift of Prophecy in the Church Today

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

From the earliest promise of God (Genesis 3:15) calculated to bring hope to mans fallen in sin, to the glories of redemption in the earth renewed, prophecy was the comforting and enlightening channel of God's promises. The first advent of Christ was the climax of the long held prophetic hope for Israel, and we look forward to the second advent of Christ as the consummation of our highest hope at the end of the same prophetic line.

When we understand the comprehensive nature and meaning of the prophetic gift, it becomes clear to us that prophecy is not wholly confined to foretelling future events; it is also given for the elevation of heavenly principles. Forecasting is comparatively a small part in the work for the people of God, whereas revival and reformation is a constant need in every generation.

Belief in the spirit of prophecy as God's method of communication with His people is one of the marks of identification of the remnant church.

In the Old Testament we read about priests, scribes, and prophets contributing in various capacities to the organized church. Then, in the New Testament, we again have a similar set of offices fixed into the administrative machinery of the church. Christian stewardship included "the word of wisdom, . . . the word of knowledge, . . . the gift of healing, . . . the working of miracles, . . . the gift of prophecy," and so on. All were encouraged to make conscientious application of their loaned talents, to ensure harmony and success. Whatever the reason for the decrease of the prophetic gift, the need of wisdom, knowledge, exhortation, and the like, continued during the history of the prophetic churches.

Warnings against deceptions were given as safeguards for the truth. Paul said: "For I know this, that after my

departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). Also we have the warning of Peter: "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20).

It is in this area—interpretation of the Scriptures—that endless divisional difficulties have originated. Honesty and sincerity are not enough to safeguard against prejudices, circumstances, education, and experience leading us to the misinterpretation of Scripture. Rejection of God's commands or disrespect for the spirit of prophecy will lead us to misunderstand God's Word. Dependence on the interpretations of other humans (no matter how useful these may be in suggesting various ways to understand God) will also lead us astray. We will learn of God's will for us when we approach His Word with sincerity, a belief in the consistency of the teachings of God, a determination to understand His Communication for ourselves firsthand, and a willingness to obey.

Compelled to Speak

Whether their messages were accepted or rejected, the messengers have always had to speak. Jeremiah is one example. He explained:

"For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jeremiah 20:8, 9).

Each succeeding period of the church of God was blessed with increased instruction in the will and purpose of God. Prophetic revelation has always been a connected system of progressive instruction. Some prophets introduced outlines of events that were to take place, and others followed adding further information for their times. Christ and the disciples amplified the important prophetic writings which were already recog-

nized as the voice of God. Amplification of predictions or instructions is part of the prophetic gift.

Thousands of religious leaders, scholars, and exegetes have categorically opposed the messages of the Advent Movement, because they fail to recognize that this movement is a prophetic increase in knowledge and experience of "the everlasting gospel." How sad is it to witness the same disposition today among those who are endeavoring to relegate the servant of God and her writings to some nonexistent classification of half-inspired. Many of the Jewish leaders and scholars relegated the prophet Daniel to a decreased level of inspiration and did not place him on the same level as others, simply because his messages contained severe and straight rebukes for them. Daniel's testimony loses none of its truth or authority just because someone do not like what it says.

Repeatedly, it is quoted that the Bible is an anvil upon which hammers have been worn. The same could be said about the Testimonies also. Whether we accept or reject the urgent calls for reformation that the prophetic gift continually brings, they still remain. The prophets make no apologies or retractions. Who would dare to question the will of God? No church or organization needs to recommend, or argue over, the merits of the messages of God; they have their own inherent value. Apostasy of the professed people of God does not stop the reforms for which His messages were sent. Explanations and excuses made to placate derogatory criticism by those who are courting the popularity of the enemies of the truth, do not dull the luster which flashes from the gems of truth in the inspired messages of God. The clear ringing voice still calls, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established, believe in his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20). *R*

References

¹ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 84, 85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 96.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁴ Arthur G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (1936), p. 222.

New Testament Prophets

By D. P. Silva



The presence of the Spirit of Prophecy in God's church is an absolute necessity. In the list of gifts presented by Paul in Ephesians we have: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Scripture reveals that the very characteristics of God's church include this great blessing. John declares: "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." And the same apostle registered the words of the angel addressed to him: "**The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy**" (Revelation 12:17; 19:10, emphasis supplied).

About five years ago, my wife and I were traveling to Lubango, Angola, to hold a seminar at the missionary school, when, half an hour after departing, we were told that our aircraft had to return to the airport of origin. Upon landing again at the point of origin, we were informed that the Global Positioning System (GPS) of the aircraft

was not working. Many passengers then abandoned their plan to travel, terrified at the idea of flying in an airplane without direction. On that same day, an Air France plane had fallen in the Atlantic Ocean with more than 200 passengers who lost their lives.

A church without the Spirit of Prophecy is like an aircraft or a ship without a GPS, being devoid of accurate knowledge of location or destination.

Through the prophet Hosea, God declared: "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (12:13).

Solomon, the wise man, wrote: "Without prophecy the people become demoralized" (Proverbs 29:18, The New American Bible).

The divine guidance of the Old Testament church through the prophets has been repeated in the Christian church during the New Testament era.

Examples at the time of Christ

The manifestation of the prophetic gift was made evident during the presentation of Jesus a few days after His birth.

"Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was

one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:25-38).

"The spirit of prophecy was upon this man of God [Simeon], and while Joseph and Mary stood by, wondering at his words, he blessed them, and said unto Mary, 'Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'

"Anna also, a prophetess, came in and confirmed Simeon's testimony concerning Christ. As Simeon spoke, her face lighted up with the glory of God, and she poured out her heartfelt thanks that she had been permitted to behold Christ the Lord."¹

The very founder of the Christian church, Jesus Christ, was the Prophet foretold by Moses. In his defense before the Sanhedrin, Stephen declared: "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:37, 38).

Other prophets in New Testament times

Besides Christ, the Prophet, God sent other mouthpieces to warn, guide, and comfort His people.

In his book of Acts, Luke mentions several prophets by name: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul" (Acts 13:1).

In his trip to Jerusalem, Paul met with the brethren in Caesarea, where he "entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven". "The same man had four



daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Luke also mentions that "there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, name Agabus" (Acts 21:8-10).

As we see, the early Christian church was richly blessed with the presence and work of several prophets.

"[After the ordination of the seven deacons], later in the history of the early church, when in various parts of the world many groups of believers had been formed into churches, the organization of the church was further perfected, so that order and harmoni-

ous action might be maintained. Every member was exhorted to act well his part. Each was to make a wise use of the talents entrusted to him. Some were endowed by the Holy Spirit with special gifts—"first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:28). But all these classes of workers were to labor in harmony."²

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:4-12).

Throughout the entire history of God's church on earth, the Lord has guided His people by means of the Spirit of Prophecy. As long as the door of grace is open, He will continue utilizing this method of communication for the protection, guidance, and correction of His people in order to perfect them and present them as a holy body to represent His character before the world and the universe. ❧

References

¹ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 55.

² *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 91, 92.

A woman in a black dress with a white collar and cuffs stands on the left, her arms outstretched as if pointing towards a glowing map of the United States. The map is set against a dark night sky with stars and a bright light source on the right, creating a dramatic, ethereal atmosphere. The title 'SHE WAS Called' is written in large, white, serif and cursive fonts across the top of the image.

SHE WAS *Called*

By T. Stockler

One of the great truths that helped cause the Protestant Reformation was that God is willing and able to communicate directly with each one of us. He does not speak to us through a pastor or priest or ecclesiastical institution. He speaks directly to each one of us through our reading of the Bible (and the Spirit of Prophecy) and through the prompting of the Holy Spirit that we recognize by their harmony with these inspired writings. Jesus is the only mediator between God and each one of us.

Satan hates any direct communication between God and an individual. He is constantly trying to distract us as humans from listening to God. Satan will try to get us to listen to other humans or our own imaginations rather than to God.

We are each sinful human beings, who hardly know God and are easily distracted by Satan. We have trouble recognizing that Divine voice and developing a strong bond with the God who speaks with us.

Knowing our human weakness, God provides human help. Naaman, the leprous Syrian general, was convinced to trust God and submit to Him, not by his Jewish slave, nor by the prophet Elisha, but by his own traveling assistants. We have no record of them being church-going men, but these men were used by God as His spokesmen to reason with Naaman.

Esther would appear to us today as a queen, an elite politician, and perhaps not one we would expect or even invite to church. But God used her as His voice in this world. God chooses individuals to provide encouragement and guidance to others of us, not in place of talking directly to us, but in addition.

But there are individuals asked by God to do a greater work than merely encourage and persuade. Their service to God becomes a sign post for changes in our world. These people stand out and point people in a clear direction, the right direction. Were it not for them, humanity might easily lose sight of God and lose our way in the world. Their responsibility is not merely to encourage, but to communicate essential information necessary for making critical choices in situations that are filled with confusion by Satan.

One of the first of these great servants of God was Moses. He served to communicate on behalf of God to the leadership of the greatest nation on earth at that time, Egypt. Moses was given messages from God directly for Pharaoh, messages that would not have reached the monarch another way.

*God asks some to do a greater work than
merely encourage and persuade.
Their service to God becomes
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God "hired" the nation of Abraham's descendants to tell the whole world about Him. These Hebrew individuals, like God's people throughout human history, were to appreciate our Creator, develop a strong relationship with our Deliverer, and spread the good news of our Redeemer. Taking a group of half-educated slaves to do this work required God to provide a good deal of education for them.

God took up the education of the new nation of Israelites, personally. In the first educational communication with His new evangelistic "hires," God chose to talk directly to each one of them from the top of Mount Sinai. Jesus' voice thundered the Decalogue out over the congregation. Far more intimidating than when Jesus taught on the hills of Galilee, His voice in the desert was just as much God talking to humankind. But the average Israelite preferred to hear messages through Moses than to hear God directly. These Hebrews negotiated an arrangement that would last until our own time. God would send His most important messages through a human voice. Moses was God's mouthpiece, His communications director, His public relations agent to humankind.

The work of Moses did not replace direct communication with God. Moses wanted every Israelite to communicate with God (Numbers 11:29). The millions of Hebrews were still to pray to God and listen for His voice. But some of the truths God had for His people to master and provide the entire world needed to be set down, so to speak, in stone, so that people could refer to the same ideas over and over again.

These "writings" became the foundational text of our modern Bible, the first revelation of God to humans written down and handed from generation to generation. These early written books gave the truths of God more accurately than the customary (at the time) story telling that other cultures and religions used to maintain a knowledge of their "truth."

This pattern continues throughout human history. At moments when

God chooses to change the direction of events, God also raises up public prophets. Moses stood in an age when it seemed the whole world had lost sight of God and raised up a body of knowledge we now call the Pentateuch, as a guide to all of humanity in how to recognize and obey God. The work of these men was more than just encouragement. It was their task to provide a public knowledge of a forgotten God and entrust a particular nation with that knowledge.

The major and minor prophets were called and commissioned to provide more knowledge about this same God at a time when the nation of Israel was changing. For centuries, Israel had the opportunity to stand as God's witnesses in the world. But their tendency was to use the blessing God gave them to benefit themselves only. So God changed the arrangements. Instead of asking His people to demonstrate a working model of heaven while on earth (which they generally did not do), He permitted them to be taken captive and spread throughout the civilized world as individual witnesses for Him. Isaiah through Malachi served as messengers to give guidance through this otherwise confusing change.

The transition from a nation asked to present the knowledge of God to a voluntary association of people, a church, preserving a knowledge of the true God was completed during the apostolic ministry. Jesus personally and through His disciples provided guidance in this evolution of church administration.

So God has provided a human agent to give instruction about the direction of His work on earth at each major change. "For the Lord God shall not make a word, no but he show his pri-

vate to his servants (the) prophets. (For the Lord God shall not do anything, unless first he tell his secret, or his private, plans to his servants, the prophets.)" Amos 3:7, Wycliffe Bible. "When the Lord God decides to do something, he will first tell his servants, the prophets" (Easy-to-Read English Bible).

Most recently, there was a great change once again in the world. Out of the great Reformation Protestantism took the lead in the educated world. Repeatedly, Protestant individuals discovered great scientific truths and offered intellectual breakthroughs. Western culture was largely dominated by the influence of these people that loved and feared God. But humanity rarely continues in the direction of truth indefinitely.

A great crisis came. The once predominately Christian western culture rejected the God that was leading them out of darkness. In rejecting the soon coming of Christ preached in the early 1800s, society rejected Jesus Himself. They would continue to use His name but reject a real relationship with Him. Not all would reject, and many would continue to prosper in the glow of God's leading in the past. But the educational and intellectual development of society would now come from those that in many cases rejected God openly.

In this once again confusing environment, God sent a prophet to do the customary prophetic work of personal encouragement and reproof. Hundreds of "testimonies" were offered to various of her contemporaries. But the work of Ellen White was more than just encouragement and reproof. She wrote on education, health, church administration, parenting, character development, and other important issues. Her work was truly to provide a clear sense of direction in a world of confusion.



In doing this, she did not introduce any truth that was new. She spoke and wrote the great truths revealed by God over millennia. But she brought fresh emphasis and clarity to these old subjects. She pointed us toward God.

The ministry of Ellen Gould (Harmon) White was never to stand between us and God but to assist us in finding God for ourselves.

How did God choose this frail woman out of the seventeen million

Americans in 1844? And why did He choose an American rather than someone from another continent and country?

God did not call to work for Him one of the graduates of the universities of the day. Ellen Harmon was not a student or graduate of Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, or William and Mary. She did not grow up in a rich home, or have connections with the rich and powerful. She was not praised for her literary or musical talent. Ellen was remarkable for something else. She was a faithful student of God.

At the age of nine, the studious future prophet suffered a broken nose and a concussion when a schoolmate threw a stone at her. The doctors of the time could do nothing to help her or improve her looks. This accident would end her education in books and begin her education as a person who was a social outcast. Children did not want to play with her because she looked strange. For Ellen's sensitive and sympathetic per-

Excerpts from an EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

All we ask is that people shall be reasonable. We are prepared to support by hundreds of living truthful witnesses all that we shall claim, so far as facts are concerned, of the manifestation itself, for this thing has not been done in a corner. For nearly thirty years past these visions have been given with greater or less frequency and have been witnessed by many, oftentimes by unbelievers as well as those believing them. They generally, but not always, occur in the midst of earnest sessions of religious interest while the Spirit of God is specially present, if those can tell who are in attendance. The time Mrs. White is in this condition has varied from

fifteen minutes to one hundred and eighty. During this time the heart and pulse continue to beat, the eyes are always wide open, and seem to be gazing at some far-distant object, and are never fixed on any person or thing in the room. They are always directed upward. They exhibit a pleasant expression. There is no ghastly look or any resemblance of fainting. The brightest light may be suddenly brought near her eyes, or feints made as if to thrust something into the eye, and there is never the slightest wink or change of expression on that account; and it is sometimes hours and even days after she comes out of this condition before she recovers her natural sight. She says

it seems to her that she comes back into a dark world, yet her eyesight is in no wise injured by her visions.

While she is in vision, her breathing entirely ceases. No breath ever escapes her nostrils or lips when in this condition. This has been proved by many witnesses, among them physicians of skill, and themselves unbelievers in the visions, on some occasions being appointed by a public congregation for the purpose. It has been proved many times by tightly holding the nostrils and mouth with the hand, and by putting a looking glass before them so close that any escape of the moisture of the breath would be detected. In this condition

sonality, social rejection was unusually traumatic. In her frustration and emotional agony, she turned to God to help her.

"This misfortune, which for a time seemed so bitter and was so hard to bear, has proved to be a blessing in disguise. The cruel blow which blighted the joys of earth, was the means of turning my eyes to heaven. I might never have known Jesus, had not the sorrow that clouded my early years led me to seek comfort in Him.

"I have read of a little bird that while his cage is full of light never sings the songs his master would teach him. He will listen and learn a snatch of this, a trill of that, but never a separate and entire melody. But the master covers his cage, and then, in the dark, he listens to the one song he is to sing. He tries and tries again to sing that song, until it is learned, and he breaks forth in perfect melody; and then the cage is uncovered, and ever after he can sing it in the light. Thus God deals with His creatures. He has

The work of Ellen White came at the moment that was most needed, . . . leading us to God and the Bible in our Christian experience.

a song to teach us, and when we have learned it amid the deep shadows of affliction, we can sing it ever afterward. . . .

"It has been my lot to be chastened by affliction, which has had a softening and subduing influence, removing enmity from my heart, and filling it with sympathy and love. My life of bereavement, pain, and suffering has not been without precious revealings of the presence of my Saviour. My eyes have been attracted to the heavens that shine in beauty above us; I have obtained glimpses of the eternal world and of the exceeding great reward. When all has seemed dark, there has been a rift in the clouds, and sunbeams

from the throne have dispersed the gloom. God would not have any of us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up to catch the rainbow of promise and reflect light to others."—*The Review and Herald*, November 25, 1884.

The work of Ellen White came at the moment that was most needed. It came to assist us in the way we would expect God to assist us. Her writings and influence provide us with a clear direction in our modern, confusing world, leading us to God and the Bible in our Christian experience. Thank God for her work. *R*

she often speaks words and short sentences, yet not the slightest breath escapes. When she goes into this condition, there is no appearance of swooning or faintness, her face remains its natural color, and the blood circulates as usual. Often she loses her strength temporarily and reclines or sits; but at other times she stands up. She moves her arms gracefully, and often her face is lighted up with radiance as though the glory of heaven rested upon her. She is utterly unconscious of everything going on around her while she is in vision, having no knowledge whatever of what is said and done in her presence. A person may pinch her flesh, and do things which would cause great and



sudden pain in her ordinary condition, and she will not notice it by the slightest tremor.

There are none of the disgusting grimaces or contortions which usually attend spiritualist mediums, but calm, dignified, and impressive, her very appearance strikes the beholder with reverence and solemnity. There is nothing fanatical in her appearance. When she comes out of this condition, she speaks and writes from time to time what she has seen while in vision; and the supernatural character of these visions is seen even more clearly in what she thus reveals than in her appearance and condition while in

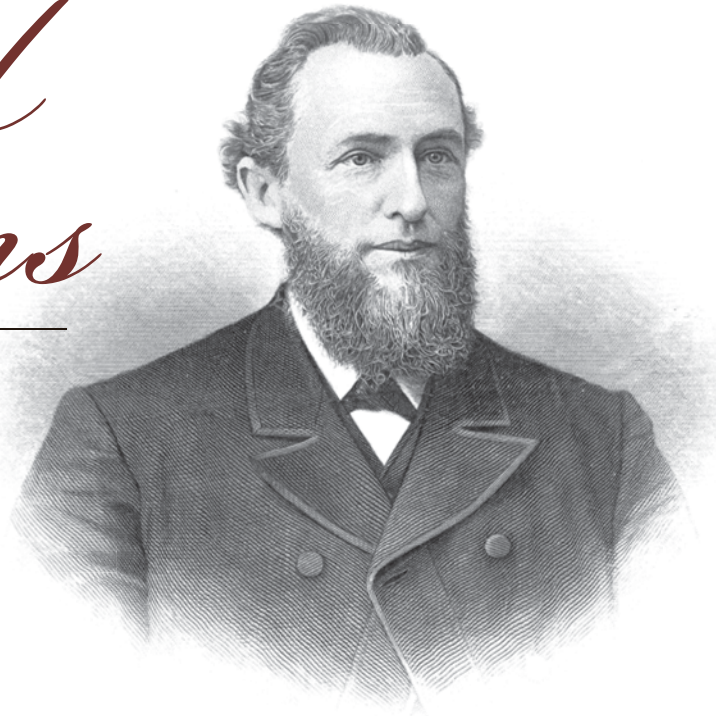
vision, for many things have thus been related which it was impossible for her to know in any other way.

Peculiar circumstances in the lives of individuals, whom she never before had seen in the flesh, and secrets hidden from the nearest acquaintances, have been made known by her when she had no personal knowledge of the parties other than by vision. Often has she been in an audience where she was wholly unacquainted with the individuals composing it, when she would get up and point out person after person whom she never had seen before, in the flesh, and tell them what they had done, and reprove their sins. I might mention many other items of like nature, but space forbids. These things can be proved by any amount of testimony, and we confidently affirm that they are of such a character that they could not be accomplished by deception." (George I. Butler, *The Review and Herald*, June 9, 1874). *R*

Scriptural Visions

By Uriah Smith

An excerpt from *The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White, a Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts According to the Scriptures*, pp. 4–17.



To [Seventh-day Adventists], the doctrine of Spiritual Gifts, as set forth in the chapters referred to [*Spiritual Gift*, vol. 1, pp. 5–16, and in *Miraculous Powers*, pp. 11–44), is as much a special doctrine of Revelation, as is the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, the State of the Dead, or the Second Advent. Taking the Scriptures to be in deed and in truth the word of God, they cannot reject it. They can as easily explain away the Sabbath, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and many other prominent and scriptural doctrines, as the doctrine of Spiritual Gifts, and hence believe that to reject it is to be guilty of error, and that to receive it is essential to the unity of the faith.

In addition to this theoretical view of the subject, and in addition to the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God, they believe that they have in their midst a special manifestation, answering to one at least of these gifts which have been placed in the Christian church. This is found in the visions of Mrs. E. G. White, as published in the works entitled *Experience and Views*, with Supplement, *Testimonies to the Church*, and *Spiritual Gifts*, Vols. 1–4.

Every test which can be brought to bear upon such manifestations

proves these genuine. The evidence which supports them, internal and external, is conclusive. They agree with the word of God and with themselves. They are given, unless those best qualified to judge are invariably deceived, when the Spirit of God is especially present. They are free from the disgusting contortions and grimaces which attend the counterfeit manifestations of Spiritualism. Calm, dignified, impressive, they commend themselves to every beholder, as the very opposite of that which is false or fanatical. The instrument is herself above jugglery or deceit.

The influence is not mesmeric; for this people, reprobating the use of that agency, studiously refuse to learn the principles of its application, or to have aught to do with its practical workings; besides, the hallucinations of a mesmerized subject embrace only such facts and scenes as previously exist in the mind of the mesmerizing power; but the visions take cognizance of persons and things, and bring to light facts known, not only by no person present, but not even by the one through whom the visions are given.

They are not the effect of disease; for no disease has ever yet been known to

have the effect of repeatedly suspending the functions of the lungs, muscles, and every bodily sense, from fifteen to one hundred and eighty minutes, while in obedience to some influence which evidently has supreme possession of the mind, and in obedience to that alone, the eyes would see, the lips speak, and the limbs move.

Further, their fruit is such as to show that the source from which they spring is the opposite of evil.

1. They tend to the purest morality. They discountenance every vice, and exhort to the practice of every virtue. They point out the perils through which we are to pass to the kingdom. They reveal the devices of Satan. They warn us against his snares. They have nipped in the bud scheme after scheme of fanaticism which the enemy has tried to foist into our midst. They have exposed hidden iniquity, brought to light concealed wrongs, and laid bare the evil motives of the false-hearted. They have warded off dangers from the cause of truth upon every hand. They have aroused and re-aroused us to greater consecration to God, move zealous efforts for holiness of heart, and greater diligence in the cause and service of our Master.

2. They lead us to Christ. Like the Bible, they set him forth as the only hope and only Saviour of mankind. They portray before us in living characters his holy life and his godly example, and with irresistible appeals they urge us to follow in his steps.

3. They lead us to the Bible. They set forth that book as the inspired and unalterable word of God. They exhort us to take that word as the man of our counsel, and the rule of our faith and practice. And with a compelling power, they entreat us to study long and diligently its pages, and become familiar with its teaching, for it is to judge us in the last day.

4. They have brought comfort and consolation to many hearts. They have strengthened the weak, encouraged the feeble, raised up the despondent. They have brought order out of confusion, made crooked places straight, and thrown light on what was dark and obscure. And no person, with an unprejudiced mind, can read their stirring appeals for a pure and lofty morality, their exaltation of God and the Saviour, their denunciations of every evil, and their exhortations to everything that is holy and of good report, without being compelled to say, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil."

Negatively, they have never been known to counsel evil or devise wickedness. No instance can be found in which they have lowered the standard of morality. No one of their adherents has ever been led by them into paths of transgression and sin. They do not lead men to serve God less faithfully or to love him less fervently. They do not lead to any of the works of the flesh nor make less devoted and faithful Christians of those who believe them. In not a single instance can any of the charges here mentioned be sustained against them; and, concerning them, we may emphatically ask the question which Pilate put to the Jews in reference to the Saviour, "Why, what evil hath he done?"

Yet with all this array of good fruit which they are able to present, with all this innocency of any charge of evil that can be brought against them, they everywhere encounter the bitter-

est opposition. They are the object of the blindest prejudice, the intensest hate, and most malignant bitterness. Worldlings and formal professors of all denominations join in one general outcry against them of vituperation and abuse. Many will go a long distance out of their way for the purpose of giving them an uncalled-for and malicious thrust. And false-hearted brethren in our own ranks make them the butt of their first attacks, as they launch off into apostasy and rebellion. Why is all this? Whence all this war against that of which no evil can be said? From the example of Cain who slew his brother, of the Jews who clamored for the blood of the innocent Saviour, of the infidel who storms with passion at the very name of Jesus, and from the principle of the carnal heart which is at enmity with everything that is holy and spiritual, we leave the reader to answer.

Some of those who so strenuously oppose the visions have a series of objections which they offer in justification of their course. But before we look at these, let us for a moment survey the field, that we may, if possible, take in at a glance the cause, object, and aim of this contest, and so be better prepared to put a just estimate upon the motives and efforts of the opposition. We believe, love, and defend the visions on the grounds above set forth, their unvarying tendency to good, and because they so admirably answer the purpose for which the Scriptures assure us that the gifts were set in the church, namely, to comfort, encourage, and edify the saints, and bring them to the unity of the faith. On what ground can they be objected to? What is there in fact that a person among Seventh-day Adventists, a sincere Christian, has visions and has published them to the world, to excite all the stir and opposition that is everywhere raised over them? They do no hurt; what is the matter? They injure no one; then why not let the person enjoy her gift undisturbed, and those who choose to believe in it, believe in it in peace?

But no! This work, innocent as it is of all evil, fruitful as it is of all good, must not be suffered to go on in peace. And again we ask, Why? We wish the

reader carefully to consider this question. If we look at those who oppose this work and consider the ground they occupy, we shall be able to define pretty accurately the motives from which they act. There are two classes which may be described, with the motives that govern them, as follows:

The first class is composed of those who believe, or did believe at the time their opposition commenced, the views held by Seventh-day Adventists, but in whom, or in someone with whom they sympathized, wrongs were pointed out and reprovved by the visions. These same individuals had no doubt often prayed, Lord, show us our wrongs. The Lord answers their prayers in His own way, and chooses to point them out in vision. Now if they object to this, they show at once that there was no sincerity in their petitions; for they cannot sincerely wish to know their faults, if they are not willing to have them pointed out except in a way of their own choosing. They should rather be grateful that they are made known to them in any manner, and that time and opportunity are given them to put them away before it is too late. But here too many rebel; and here comes in the first class of objectors to the visions. Not being dead to sin, they give way to the promptings of their still dominant carnal heart, and set to work, not to repent of their wrongs which they cannot deny, but to break down that which has kindly, yet plainly, pointed out their wrongs, that they may see and put them away before the Judgment. They would prefer that the church should be without eyes, rather than that any of their wrongs would be seen and exposed.

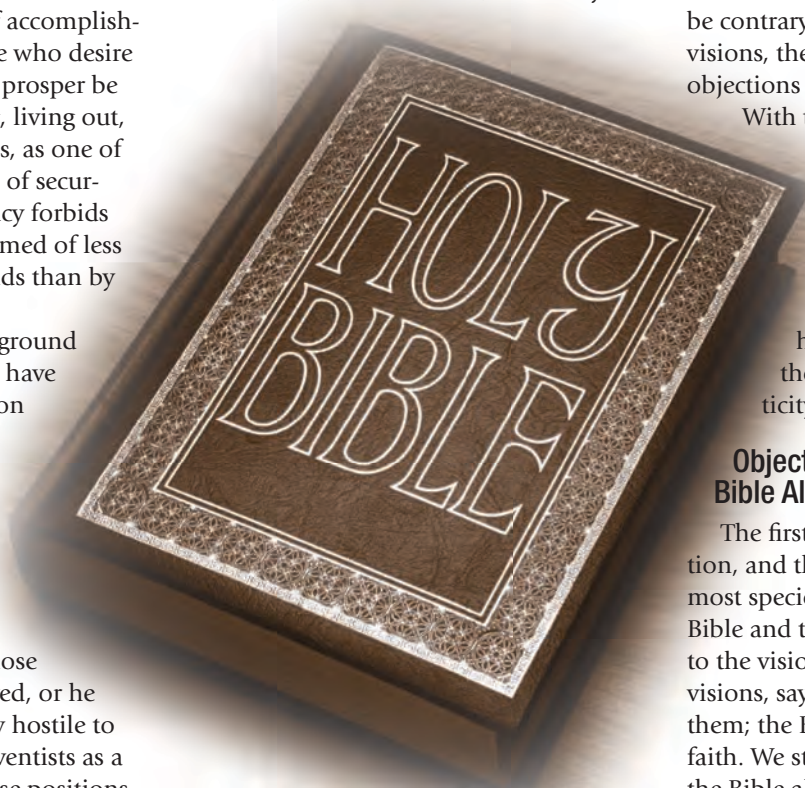
The other class consists of those who are the avowed and open opponents of all the distinguishing views held by Seventh-day Adventists. Their opposition springs from a different motive from that of the first class. Not having been reprovved themselves by the visions, they have no ground for opposition in this respect; but they hate that system of truth with which the visions stand connected, and they attack the visions as the most sure and effectual way of hindering the progress

of that truth. In this they acknowledge the efficiency of the visions in advancing this work. They know them to be one of the great elements of its strength and prosperity. And do they not by such a course plainly tell us, who love the truth, how we should regard the visions? If the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of the light, so the opponents of the truth are wiser than some of its professed friends. The old adage, "It is lawful to learn even from an enemy," may be put in practice by us here. If those who would gladly see this work come to nought, attack the visions as the most effectual way of accomplishing this, should not those who desire the work to advance and prosper be equally zealous in loving, living out, and defending the visions, as one of the most effectual means of securing this result? Consistency forbids that they should be esteemed of less importance by their friends than by their foes.

This covers the whole ground of the opposition; for we have never known any objection to arise which could not be traced to one or the other of these two sources. The opposer is always a person who has either been reprovved for wrongs himself, or is in sympathy with those who have been so reprovved, or he is a person who is openly hostile to the positions of S. D. Adventists as a whole. But neither of these positions is, in our mind, very well calculated to enlist the sympathy of any sincere lover of honesty and uprightness, or any true friend of the cause.

Having thus seen who oppose the visions, and why they do it, we are prepared to look at the objections, through which they would fain exhibit some shadow of a foundation for their incessant and zealous warfare. But a singular fact meets us at the outset: At one time the opposers of the visions cry out against them as presenting nothing new. They are, it is claimed, in the main, in harmony with a previously-received theory or impres-

sion. The view is first decided upon, and then the visions fall in with it. And this is urged as proof that they are dependent on human opinion, and hence are of human origin. At another time they accuse them of leading out and adding to the word of God. So that, as presented by the objector, the matter stands thus: At one time the visions contain nothing new, and then they are founded on human opinion; at another time they do present new things, and then they are an addition to the word of God. At one time the theory is first formed, and the visions fall in, or, in other words, are led by



human opinion; at another time they determine the theory, and we are a deluded, vision-led people. So they will not be satisfied either way. But these two claims devour each other; for if the visions are determined by preconceived views, we lead them, not they us. But if they lead us, as they are more commonly accused of doing, then they are not governed by any predetermined opinions or views. Now our opponents would greatly oblige us by deciding which of these two positions they will take. They cannot retain them both; and when they determine which they will surrender, we are ready

to enter upon the work of answering the other.

But we proceed to a more particular examination of the objections offered. In these the objectors everywhere betray a consciousness of a painful scarcity of material; and hence there is throughout a labored effort to make the most of every little point that can be seized upon, and present it in a greatly magnified or perverted light. And finding even these limited, to make their objections appear respectable as to numbers, they go still further, and finding acts in the course of individuals which they construe to be contrary to the testimony of the visions, they incorporate them in as objections to the visions themselves!

With this class of objections, of course, we have nothing to do, in answering objections to the visions; for though every believer in them should grossly violate their teaching, it would have no bearing whatever on the question of their authenticity.

Objection 1: The Bible and the Bible Alone

The first and most general objection, and the one which contains the most specious fallacy, is the cry of "The Bible and the Bible Alone," as opposed to the visions. We do not receive the visions, say they; we have no need of them; the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith. We stand upon the Bible and the Bible alone. Such declarations, in connection with outspoken denunciations of the visions, are most effectually calculated to warp the judgment of the unguarded, and fasten upon their minds the impression that to receive the visions is to reject the Bible, and to cling to the Bible is to discard the visions. A greater fallacy never existed. Look at the fields which they respectively occupy. The Bible is able to make us wise unto salvation and thoroughly furnish us unto all good works. Do the visions propose to invade this field, and erect a new standard, and give us another rule of faith and practice? Nothing of the kind. On the contrary,

they are ever in harmony with the word, and ever refer to that as the test and standard. To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

But by taking our stand on the Bible, and the Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive all that it teaches, and to acknowledge every agency which it assures us that God has placed in the Christian church. Now the Bible has something to say on the subject of visions. It tells us that the present dispensation is the "dispensation of the Spirit." It assures us that during this time, the Comforter, or Spirit of truth, would be with the true church, to lead them into all truth. The prophecy to be fulfilled during the same time is given us in these words: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." It tells us that this Spirit has certain distinct and definite channels through which it will operate; and that under its influence there will be manifestations of wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. And hence when the prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit in this dispensation is announced, it is immediately added, "And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." "And also," continues Joel, "upon the servants and upon the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my Spirit," and Peter adds, as if it were an unfailing consequent, "And they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:16-18). Here are set before us the operations of the Spirit of God, and in these it is declared that the daughters as well as the sons, the handmaids as well as the servants, are to participate.

In making us wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnishing us unto all good works, the Bible is thus careful to instruct us as to the place which the Spirit of God is designed to fill, and the part which it is to act. It declares that the means by which the saints are to be perfected, the work of the ministry

The visions tend to the purest morality, they lead us to God and the Bible, and have brought comfort to many hearts.

performed, and the body of Christ edified, till we all come into the unity of the faith, are these various operations of the Spirit of God, in connection with the word. Now is there any such thing as standing upon the Bible and the Bible alone, and yet rejecting these agencies? There certainly is not. Those who reject these things and deny that God has made any provision for the instruction of His people in these days through the gifts of visions of prophecy in the church, just so depart from their doctrine of the Bible and the Bible alone, and deny the Bible itself.

If any should say that they do not deny the doctrine of spiritual gifts as a Bible theory, but do not believe that the manifestations we now have are genuine, then this objection of the Bible and the Bible alone, is abandoned as opposed to the visions, and objections against them must be based on other grounds. Inasmuch as the Bible expressly provides for visions, no objections can be raised against any visions on the ground of the Bible and the Bible alone. It is all a fallacy. The only ground upon which any of them can be rejected is to bring them to the word, the test, and show that their characteristics are not such as were to attend the genuine manifestations. And of this test we invite an application to the visions received among Seventh-day Adventists.

Objection 2: Adding to the Bible

It is objected again to the visions that they are an addition to the work of God, and hence come under the fearful denunciation of Revelation 22:18, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part

out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Those who raise this objection place themselves under obligation to show that the visions are an addition to the word of God; an obligation which they have never discharged. Whenever they will carefully consider the language of the text above quoted, they will see that it has reference to the book of Revelation alone. That book was given when the Mystery of Iniquity was already at work. A time of apostasy and forgery was immediately to succeed. And it was to guard the purity of this book that this caution was given. Whoever shall endeavor to foist sentiments of his own into the book of Revelation, and palm them off upon the people as a part of the book of Revelation itself, he should be subject to the plagues written therein. And on the contrary, whoever should attempt to suppress any part of the testimony which God had placed in that book as His genuine word his name should be likewise taken from the book of life. But any subsequent instruction given by the Lord to His people through visions, dreams, tongues, or any of the operation of His Spirit, would no more be an addition to the book of Revelation, than the Revelation was an addition to the book of Daniel. If any think it would, they will please account for the fact, in harmony with their view, that the Gospel of John was written by inspiration at a later date than the book of Revelation; for this is a fact which can be most conclusively proved. In harmony with the principle here advocated, we are expressly told in some of Paul's instruction, which has undoubted reference to the last days, not to despise prophesying, which does not mean the prophecies, but prophesying, or the exercise of the gift of prophecy, in the present tense (1 Thessalonians 5:20). *R*

IDENTIFYING True & False Prophets

*A compilation from the
Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy,
with comments
by A. C. Sas*



There are some distinctive points of identification to determine whether a prophet is true or false.

To accept the teaching of a false prophet is just as dangerous as to reject the message of the true one. Both true and false prophets may appear in the church (2 Peter 2:1), and we are duty-bound to put them to the test of the Bible.

One of the first signs of the false prophets is when they claim the title of "prophet." They boast of their position as being called of God, when He has never really called them. They do not take notice of the date and time when they supposedly received revelations, nor do they have witnesses to verify them. The following points identify false prophets:

1. THEY DO NOT SPEAK ACCORDING "TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY" (THE WORDS OF ALL TRUE PROPHETS). THE SCRIPTURES WARN US: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

"Jesus has told us that 'false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many.'

But we need not be deceived; for the Word of God gives us a test whereby we may know what is truth. The prophet says, [Isaiah 8:20 quoted]."¹

"Satan . . . works miracles in the sight of false prophets, in the sight of men, claiming that he is indeed Christ Himself. Satan gives his power to those who are aiding him in his deceptions; therefore **those who claim to have the great power of God can only be discerned by the great detector, the law of Jehovah.**"²

"How shall we distinguish God's true servants from the false prophets who Christ said should arise to deceive many? There is only one test of character—the law of Jehovah."³

2. THEY SPEAK, OR PROPHECY, THINGS WHICH DO NOT HAPPEN.

"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

3. WHEN A FALSE PROPHET SPEAKS AND THE THING HAPPENS, BUT HE TEACHES DISOBEDIENCE

TO THE LAW OF GOD, HE MUST BE FACED AND HIS MESSAGE NOT BE ACCEPTED.

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

"Those who prophesy lies encourage men to look upon sin as a small matter."⁴

Identifying true prophets

There are clear evidences that show when a messenger with a message is a true prophet:

1. TRUE PROPHETS NEVER CLAIM TITLES, EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY BE TRUE PROPHETS:

a. John the Baptist:

"[John the Baptist] said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John 1:23).

"After the disciples of John had departed, Jesus addressed the multitude concerning John, . . . 'what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet' (Matthew 11:9)."⁵

b. E. G. White:

"I said that I did not claim to be a prophetess. I have not stood before the people claiming this title, though many called me thus. I have been instructed to say, 'I am God's messenger, sent to bear a message of reproof to the erring and of encouragement to the meek and lowly.' With pen and with voice I am to bear the messages given me."⁶

"Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. My Saviour declared me to be His messenger. 'Your work,' He instructed me, 'is to bear My word. . . . In the true eloquence of simplicity, with voice and pen, the messages that I give shall be heard from one who has

never learned in the schools. My Spirit and My power shall be with you.'"⁷

2. TRUE PROPHETS ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO WHICH THEY ARE CALLED BUT WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE:

a. Moses:

"Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11).

b. Jeremiah:

"The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, . . . I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child" (Jeremiah 1:4-6).

c. Elijah:

"To Elijah, in his place of hiding, the Lord said, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' (1 Kings 19:9). I sent you to Samaria with a message to Ahab; I sent you to the brook Cherith, and afterward to the widow of Sarepta. I commissioned you to return to Israel and to stand before the idolatrous priests on Carmel; and I girded you with strength to guide the chariot of the king to the gate of Jezreel. But who sent you on this hasty flight into the wilderness? What errand have you here?"⁸

d. E. G. White:

"I knew that if I in any way became exalted, God would leave me, and I should surely be lost. I went to the Lord in prayer and begged Him to lay the burden on someone else. It seemed to me that I could not bear it. I lay upon my face a long time, and all the light I could get was, 'Make known to others what I have revealed to you.'

"In my next vision I earnestly begged of the Lord that, if I must go and relate what He had shown to me, He would keep me from exaltation. Then He showed me that my prayer was answered, and if I should be in danger of exaltation His hand should be laid upon me, and I would be afflicted with sickness."⁹

3. PREDICTIONS OF TRUE PROPHETS ARE FULFILLED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORDS:

a. Agabus:

"And there stood up one [prophet] of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar" (Acts 11:28).

b. E. G. White:

The San Francisco earthquake was foretold in 1902:

"Well-equipped tent meetings should be held in the large cities, such as San Francisco; for not long hence these cities will suffer under the judgments of God. San Francisco and Oakland are becoming as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord will visit them in wrath."¹⁰

World War I was predicted:

In 1890: "The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions."¹¹

In 1904: "The time of trouble, which is to increase until the end, is very near at hand. We have no time to lose. The world is stirred with the spirit of war."¹²

In 1910: "Soon strife among the nations will break out with an intensity that we do not now anticipate. . . . Something great and decisive is about to take place, that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis."¹³

In 1913: "If the times in which we are living fail to impress our minds seriously, what can reach us? Do not the Scriptures call for a more pure and holy work than we have yet seen?"¹⁴ *R*

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¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 951.
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³ *The Review and Herald*, February 6, 1900.
⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 174.
⁵ *The Review and Herald*, March 4, 1873.
⁶ *Ibid.*, January 26, 1905.
⁷ *Ibid.*, July 26, 1906.
⁸ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1913.
⁹ *Early Writings*, pp. 20, 21.
¹⁰ *Evangelism*, pp. 403, 404.
¹¹ *The Signs of the Times*, April 21, 1890.
¹² *The Review and Herald*, November 24, 1904.
¹³ *Ibid.*, November 17, 1910.
¹⁴ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 514.



Building Up the Believers

*A compilation from the
Bible and the Spirit of
Prophecy, with comments
by K. Clark*

Introduction

When we use the verb “build” we think of the raising of something upon a support or a foundation. And the stability of this structure depends on whether or not the foundation is solid. In the second chapter of Ephesians is mentioned the building of the household of God with Jesus as the chief cornerstone. That building is fitly framed and built together to be the dwelling of God (verses 19–22).

In order for something to be built, there must be a builder, someone who is willing to follow the blueprint, or instruction sheet, regarding that which is to be built. Throughout the Bible we find examples of those people who were dedicated to following the leading of God in the building of not only physical structures but also the building up of the followers of God, teaching them and imparting to them the knowledge which He had given them through inspiration from His Spirit.

The foundational credentials

The “testimony of Jesus” and the commandments of God are credentials which are designated as the identifying marks of God’s remnant church. We read in 2 Peter 1:21 that “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” We read in Revelation 19:10 that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

When a witness is brought before the magistrate in a court scene, he or she gives a testimony regarding what transpired in whatever case is being tried; this testimony consists of the words coming from one who has sworn to tell the truth. In much the same way, the testimony borne by the prophets of God were His words which were to be borne to the people. Thus were God’s words given to the people through inspiration of the prophets, or the servants of God.

There is a firm and broad foundation contained in the Bible upon which God would again speak to His people in this same way in the last days, so that His remnant

church would receive guidance from Him. Thus we can see how God has worked through His prophets in times past and will again work through inspired human lips for these last days of earth’s history.

This established method of instruction, which God has used for His people, can be trusted to be the truth from Him to His church. He has provided this sure word of prophecy as an infallible guide, available to all.

As we, in this article, probe into two important aspects of those people who will be among the saved when Jesus returns to earth, we will search for the information which God has given through His word—the scriptures—and through the inspiration of His messenger for this time. We know that His church must be **purified** as well as **edified**, or lifted up in Christian knowledge. Let us prayerfully search for that which He has made known for us.

Purification

We know that the Lord is waiting for a purified church that He can come to redeem. The term “to purify” means to remove pollution and defilement; the act of removing or separating anything foreign. The cleansing from guilt and sinfulness; the extinction of sinful desires, appetites, and inclinations are also among the definitions. Fire is known as an excellent purifier; perhaps this is the reason that God will use this method by which all sin will be eradicated from the earth when it is to be made new again.

Just why is it necessary for the church to be purified? Is it not already following the leading of the Lord in the way of truth? The servant of the Lord was deeply troubled when she contemplated the condition found within the

body as a whole. “For weeks I have not been able to sleep after half past three o’clock. My mind is deeply exercised in regard to our condition as a people. We ought to be far in advance of any other people on the earth because we have greater light and greater knowledge of the truth, which lays us under increased accountability to advance that light and not only to profess to believe the truth but to practice it. When we do practice the truth we are then following Jesus, who is the light of the world; and if we as a people are not constantly elevating, becoming more and more spiritual minded, we are becoming like the Pharisees—self-righteous—while we do not the will of God.”¹

In these words which were penned many years ago, the messenger of the Lord was concerned that the element of self-righteousness was present in the church rather than the practical following after the way of truth and right. Those who professed the truth were found guilty of not being in communication with heaven. They were neglecting the use of prayer, although the ministering angels are always ready to bring answers to those prayers that ascend from faithful, believing souls.

“While presenting an appearance of sorrow for their sins, [the Israelites in the days of Isaiah] were cherishing pride and avarice. At the very time when they were showing such outward humiliation, they would exact hard labor from those under them or in their employ. They placed a high estimate on all the good that they had done, but a very low estimate on the services of others. They despised and oppressed the poor. And their fasting only gave them a higher opinion of their own goodness.

“There are sins of this same character among us today, and they bring the rebuke of God upon His church. Wherever such sins are found, seasons

“The Lord has specified the fast He has chosen, . . . which bears fruit to His glory, in repentance, in devotion, in true piety.”

“If we represent Christ to the world, we shall be pure in heart, in life, in character; we shall be holy in conversation; there will be no guile in our hearts or upon our lips.”

of fasting and prayer are indeed necessary; but they must be accompanied with sincere repentance and decided reformation. Without such contrition of soul, these seasons only increase the guilt of the wrongdoer. The Lord has specified the fast He has chosen, the one He will accept. It is that which bears fruit to His glory, in repentance, in devotion, in true piety.”²

God is very specific in the instruction which He gives to His followers. We read in Isaiah 58:6, “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?” He knows what is the right thing for us to do in all circumstances. He desires that we be free from every yoke of bondage, from that which would enslave us.

As the prophets of God’s choosing were called into this service for Him, each of them experienced different circumstances. Some were willing, some were humbled and fearful that their ability would not be sufficient to do this special work to which they were being called. Such an one was Isaiah:

“The young man went into the Temple and while there God opened his eyes and gave him a vision of the throne of God and the angels about that throne, which seemed high and lifted up. Isaiah caught that vision of God in all His glory and celestial majesty. Immediately he felt his own *humiliation* and sensed his unworthiness. He would flee from the presence of such awful holiness and grandeur, but the Lord took a live coal from off the altar and, as it were, placed it upon his lips and said, ‘Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged’ (Isaiah 6:7). *Purification* made him ready to be God’s servant and God’s messenger.

Then in response to the call, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Isaiah in his youth responded, ‘Here am I; send me’ (verse 8).

“Isaiah, as God’s chosen mouth-piece, became the gospel prophet of the Old Testament and has left for the Christian world a piece of literature of surpassing beauty. The testimony of Jesus through Isaiah is an example of the prophetic gift in sublime and powerful action.”³

In the foregoing experience of Isaiah is an example of the importance of purification among the people and servants of God. The live coal symbolizes purification. Isaiah had his iniquity taken away and his sin purged, and by this act of purification he was made ready to go and speak for the Lord.

But what about the condition of the church as a whole, in the daily routine of life? The “church” consists of its membership, the people, individually and as the collective whole. Each member goes to make up the body. What is the process which God uses to bring about the purification of the “church” so that it will consist of those faithful ones who will be ready to enter into the heavenly reward when Jesus appears to claim His own? Here again we may look to the Lord’s messenger for insight which has been supplied by God Himself.

“How few are aware that they have darling idols, that they have cherished sins! God sees these sins to which you may be blinded, and He works with His pruning knife to strike deep and separate these cherished sins from you. You all want to choose for yourselves the process of purification. How hard it is for you to submit to the crucifixion of self; but when the work is all submitted to God, to Him who knows our weakness and our sinfulness, He takes the very best way to bring about the desired

results. It was through constant conflict and simple faith that Enoch walked with God. You may all do the same. You may be thoroughly converted and transformed, and be indeed children of God, enjoying not only the knowledge of His will, but, by your example, leading others in the same path of humble obedience and consecration. Real godliness is diffusive and communicative. The psalmist says: ‘I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation’ (Psalm 40:10). Wherever the love of God is, there is always a desire to express it.”⁴

“The work of purification is an individual work. No one can do this work for another. ‘If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use’ (2 Timothy 2:21). The Spirit of God will work through sanctified human agencies, leading them to work aright. Ability and grace will be provided. Men will be filled with an earnest desire to preach the truths of the gospel, firmly, decidedly, and in a clear manner.”⁵

“We are in a world that is opposed to righteousness, or purity of character, and especially to growth in grace. Wherever we look, we see defilement and corruption, deformity and sin. How opposed is all this to the work that must be accomplished in us just previous to receiving the gift of immortality! God’s elect must stand untainted amid the corruptions teeming around them in these last days. Their bodies must be made holy, their spirits pure. If this work is to be accomplished, it must be undertaken at once, earnestly and understandingly. The Spirit of God should have perfect control, influencing every action.”⁶

It is by these messages of truth, the principles in which we must recognize the process of our becoming purified, to be without spot or wrinkle, that we are to examine ourselves. We indeed need to surrender all to Him so that we may be sure that we have no hidden or secret idols in our life or heart which would stand between Him and us.

We must be willing to suffer whatever persecution may come upon us, remembering that Jesus suffered much in our behalf. It should be natural that we speak freely of Him and of His love for us, so that other people may see His reflection within our life.

Trials designed for our purification

The messenger of the Lord for our day bore her personal testimony regarding trials: "Some have said to me, 'Do you not get discouraged at times when you are under trial?' And I have answered, 'Yes, if by discouragement you mean sad or cast down.' 'Didn't you talk to anyone of your feelings?' 'No; there is a time for silence, a time to keep the tongue as with a bridle, and I was determined to utter no word of doubt or darkness, to bring no shade of gloom upon those with whom I was associated. I have said to myself, I will bear the Refiner's fire; I shall not be consumed. When I speak, it shall be of light; it shall be of faith and hope in God; it shall be of righteousness, of goodness, of the love of Christ my Saviour; it shall be to direct the minds of others toward heaven and heavenly things, to Christ's work in heaven for us, and our work upon earth for Him.'"⁷

Oh, that this could be the testimony that each of us bears when in the presence of others. We do have a Friend who understands all of our problems, for He has passed this way before us. Each trial has its purpose.

"The refining furnace is to remove the dross. When the Refiner sees His image reflected in you perfectly, He will remove you from the furnace. You will not be left to be consumed or to endure the fiery ordeal any longer than is necessary for your purification. But it is necessary for you, in order to reflect the divine image, to submit to the process the Refiner chooses for you, that you may be cleansed, purified, and every spot and blemish removed—not even a wrinkle left in your Christian character. May the Lord help you . . . to choose to have the will and work of God accomplished in you. . . . Look up! Jesus lives. Jesus loves. Jesus pities, and He will receive you with all your burden of care and trouble if you will come to Him

and lay your burden upon Him. He has promised He will never leave or forsake those who put their trust in Him."⁸

Edification

The process of edifying is to build up in Christian knowledge, to improve the mind, to build, to make, to instruct. I Thessalonians 5:11 reads thus: "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." This verse of Scripture gives to the body of Christ, the church members, the admonition that each one needs to give to one another the encouragement needed for the uplifting and strengthening of the other. The purpose of the church on earth is to know the truth, maintain it, and give it to others. In Matthew 5:14, 15 we read, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house."

With this very important purpose for us to exist, how can any of us decline to let our light shine, to be seen by all humanity! "It is not to be looked upon as a trifling matter to have the light of present truth, and yet to be noncommittal. It is no trifling thing to say by attitude and sentiment, even though that sentiment is not expressed in words, 'My Lord delayeth his coming.' The spirit and influence of the peace and safety sentiment is in our very midst, and the very atmosphere that surrounds the soul of many who profess to be believers in the soon coming of Christ is of a malarious character, calculated to soothe the very ones who would be stirred if we showed zeal and determination and stood at our post of duty to warn men of the speedy advent of our Lord. . . . We must speak forth the truth, we must let our light shine forth in clear, steady rays, lest some soul shall stumble and fall because our light is eclipsed."⁹

There may be many things found among the believers that need correcting if each one is to fully be representative of the character and work of Christ. When these things are detected, we are admonished to exhort the erring ones, prayerfully and

tactfully, that they may see their need of reform. "Brethren, in your dealings with the Lord's household, 'follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify [build up] another' (Romans 14:19). Speak no words of censure. Lay no blame on this one or that one. There is need now of the help that all can bring. Seek to heal the breach that has been made. Do it cheerfully. Do it nobly. Come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."¹⁰

We must remember that all that we do is being recorded in the books of heaven. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

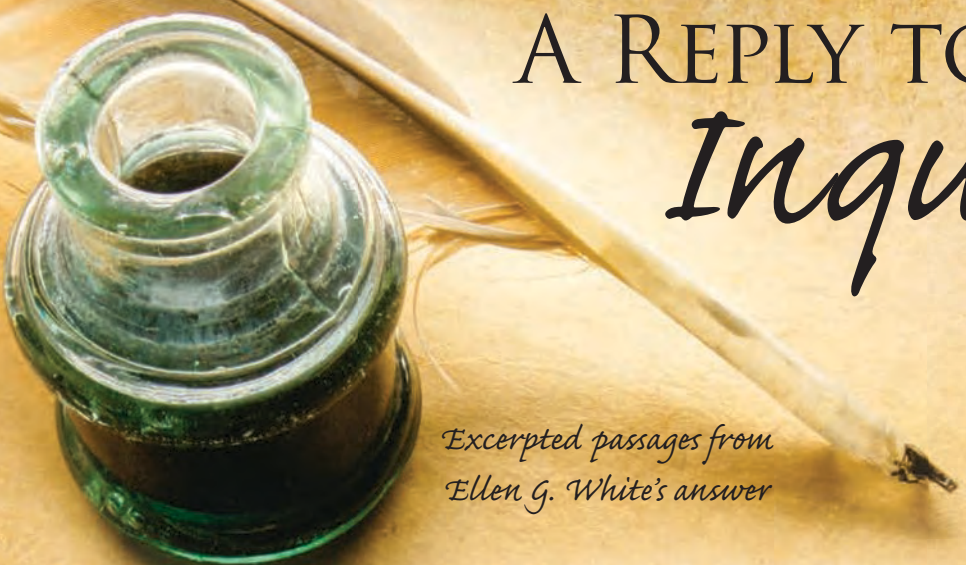
"If Christ is indeed abiding in our hearts, we shall love God, we shall love to obey all His commandments, and this love will continually deepen and strengthen. If we represent Christ to the world, we shall be pure in heart, in life, in character; we shall be holy in conversation; there will be no guile in our hearts or upon our lips. Let us examine our past life and see if we have given evidence of our love for Jesus by seeking to be like Him, and by working, as He worked, to save those for whom He died."¹¹

An appeal to each one of us

As we contemplate the purpose and work that the church is here to do, may we be determined to do all that we can to cooperate with the powers of heaven to build up and strengthen our brethren and our own characters, so that we may faithfully bear the responsibility placed upon us. AMEN. ❧

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- ⁶ *Counsels on Health*, p. 20.
- ⁷ *Our High Calling*, p. 312.
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A REPLY TO AN *Inquirer*

*Excerpted passages from
Ellen G. White's answer*

Dear Brother: Your letter came to me while in southern California.

For some weeks the consideration of matters connected with the development of our sanitarium work there, and the writing out of the views given me regarding the earthquake and its lessons, have taken my time and strength.

But now I must respond to the letters received from you and others. In your letter, you speak of your early training to have implicit faith in the Testimonies and say, "I was led to conclude and most firmly believe that *every* word that you ever spoke in public or private, that every letter you wrote under *any* and *all* circumstances, was as inspired as the ten commandments."

My brother, you have studied my writings diligently, and you have never found that I have made any such claims, neither will you find that the pioneers in our cause have made such claims.

In my introduction to "*The Great Controversy*," pages c and d, you have no doubt read my statement regarding the ten commandments and the Bible, which should have helped you to a correct understanding of the matter under consideration. Here is the statement: "The Bible points to God as its Author; yet it was written by human hands;

and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God' (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.

"The ten commandments were spoken by God Himself and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (John 1:14).

"Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by

another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony. As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind—a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. And the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life.

"God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the

testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth."

In perfect harmony with this are my statements found in the article, "The Testimonies Slighted," written June 20, 1882, and published in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, No. 31, pages 62-84. From this I quote for your consideration, several paragraphs:

"Many are looking with self-complacency upon the long years during which they have advocated the truth. They now feel that they are entitled to a reward for their past trials and obedience. But this genuine experience in the things of God in the past, makes them more guilty before Him for not preserving their integrity and going forward to perfection. The faithfulness for the past year will never atone for the neglect of the present year. A man's truthfulness yesterday will not atone for his falsehood today.

"Many excuse their disregard of the testimonies by saying, 'Sister White is influenced by her husband; the testimonies are molded by his spirit and judgment.' Others are seeking to gain something from me which they could construe to justify their course or to give them influence. It was then I decided that nothing more should go from my pen until the converting power of God was seen in the church. But the Lord placed the burden upon my soul. I labored for you earnestly. How much this cost both my husband and myself, eternity will tell. Have I not a knowledge of the state of the church, when the Lord has presented their case before me again and again for years? Repeated warnings have been given, yet there has been no decided change. . . .

"Yet now when I send you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion

of Sister White. You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested Himself through the Spirit of prophecy. Past, present, and future have passed before me. I have been shown faces that I had never seen, and years afterward I knew them when I saw them. I have been aroused from my sleep with a vivid sense of subjects previously presented to my mind and I have written, at midnight, letters that have gone across the continent, and arriving at a crisis, have saved great disaster to the cause of God. This has been my work for many years. A power has impelled me to reprove and rebuke wrongs that I had not thought of. Is this work of the



last thirty-six years from above, or from beneath? . . .

"When I went to Colorado, I was so burdened for you, that, in my weakness, I wrote many pages to be read at your camp meeting. Weak and trembling, I arose at three o'clock in the morning, to write to you. God was

speaking through clay. You might say that this communication was only a letter. Yes, it was a letter, but prompted by the Spirit of God, to bring before your minds things that had been shown me. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper, expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne. . . .

"What voice will you acknowledge as the voice of God? What power has the Lord in reserve to correct your errors and show you your course as it is? What power to work in the church? If you refuse to believe until every shadow of uncertainty and every possibility of doubt is removed, you will never believe. The doubt that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to faith. Faith rests upon evidence, not demonstration. The Lord requires us to obey the voice of duty, when there are other voices all around us urging us to pursue an opposite course. It requires earnest attention from us to distinguish the voice which speaks for God. We must resist and conquer inclination, and obey the voice of conscience, without parleying or compromise, lest its promptings cease, and will and impulse control. The word of the Lord comes to us all who have not resisted His Spirit by determining not to hear and obey. This voice is heard in warnings, in counsels, in reproof. It is the Lord's message of light to His people. If we wait

for louder calls or better opportunities, the light may be withdrawn, and we left in darkness. . . .

"It pains me to say, my brethren, that your sinful neglect to walk in the light has enshrouded you in darkness. You may now be honest in not recognizing and obeying the light;

the doubts you have entertained, your neglect to heed the requirements of God, have blinded your perceptions so that darkness is now to you light, and light is darkness. God has bidden you to go forward to perfection. Christianity is a religion of progress. Light from God is full and ample, waiting our demand upon it. Whatever blessings the Lord may give, He has an infinite supply beyond, an inexhaustible store from which we may draw. Skepticism may treat the sacred claims of the gospel with jests, scoffing, and denial. The spirit of worldliness may contaminate the many and control the few; the cause of God may hold its ground only by great exertion and continual sacrifice, yet it will triumph finally.

"The word is: Go forward; discharge your individual duty, and leave all consequences in the hands of God. If we move forward where Jesus leads the way we shall see His triumph, we shall share His joy. We must share the conflicts if we wear the crown of victory. Like Jesus, we must be made perfect through suffering. Had Christ's life been one of ease, then might we safely yield to sloth. Since His life was marked with continual self-denial, suffering, and self-sacrifice, we shall make no complaint if we are partakers with Him. We can walk safely in the darkest path if we have the Light of the world for our guide. . . .

"When the Lord last presented your case before me, and made known to me that you had not regarded the light which had been given you, I was bidden to speak to you plainly in His name, for his anger was kindled against you. These words were spoken to me, 'Your work is appointed you of God. Many will not hear you, for they refuse to hear the Great Teacher; many will not be corrected, for their ways are right in their own eyes. Yet bear to them the reproofs and warnings I shall give you, whether they will hear or forbear.' . . .

"Our people are making very dangerous mistakes. We cannot praise and flatter any man without doing him a great wrong; those who do this will meet with serious disappointment. They trust too fully to finite man

and not enough to God, who never errs. The eager desire to urge men into public notice is an evidence of backsliding from God and friendship with the world. It is the spirit which characterizes the present day. It shows that men have not the mind of Jesus; spiritual blindness and poverty of soul have come upon them. Often persons of inferior minds look away from Jesus to a merely human standard, by which they are not made conscious of their own littleness, and hence have an undue estimate of their own capabilities and endowments. There is among us as a people an idolatry of human instrumentalities and mere human talent, and these even of a superficial character. We must die to self and cherish humble, childlike faith. God's people have departed from their simplicity. They have not made God their strength, and are weak and faint, spiritually. . . .

"I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies has been steadily increasing as the people backslide from God. It is all through our ranks, all over the field. But few know what our churches are to experience. I saw that at present we are under divine forbearance; but no one can say how long this will continue. No one knows how great the mercy that has been exercised toward us. But few are heartily devoted to God. There are only a few who, like the stars in a tempestuous night, shine here and there among the clouds. . . .

"Many have exalted science and lost sight of the God of science. This was not the case with the church in the purest times.

"God will work a work in our day that but few anticipate. He will raise up and exalt among us those who are taught rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the outward training of scientific institutions. These facilities are not to be despised or condemned; they are ordained of God, but they can furnish only the exterior qualifications. God will manifest that He is not dependent on learned, self-important mortals."

In connection with these quotations, study again the article *The Nature and Influence of the "Testimonies,"* in volume 5, No. 33, pages 654–691.¹

Conclusion

The statement which you quote from "Testimony," No. 31, that "in these letters which I wrote, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne," is correct. It is true concerning the articles in our papers and in the many volumes of my books. I have been instructed in accordance with the Word in the precepts of the law of God. I have been instructed in selecting from the lessons of Christ. Are not the positions taken in my writings in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ? If not, point it out to me.

To some of the questions you have asked, I am not to answer Yes or No. I must not make statements that can be misconstrued. I see and feel the peril of those who I have been instructed were endangering their souls at times by listening to deceptive representations regarding the messages that God has given me. Through many twistings and turnings and false reasonings on what I have written, they seek to vindicate their personal unbelief. I am sorry for my brethren who have been walking in the mist of suspicion and skepticism and false reasoning. I know that some of them would be blessed by messages of counsel if the clouds obscuring their spiritual vision could be driven back, and they could see aright. But they do not see clearly. Therefore I dare not communicate with them.

When the Spirit of God clears away the mysticism, there will be found just as complete comfort and faith and hope in the messages that I have been instructed to give as were found in them in years past.

Truth will surely bear away the victory. One who gave His life to ransom man from the delusions of Satan is not asleep but watching. When His sheep turn away from following the voice of a stranger whose sheep they are not, they will rejoice in the life of Christ.² *R*

References

¹ *The Review and Herald*, August 30, 1906.

² *Ibid.*, September 6, 1906.



THE STRAIGHT *Testimony*

By Homero Paredes

When reviewing the records of the kings that occupied the thrones of Israel and of Judah we find the extraordinary history of Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa. Without a doubt, Jehoshaphat was one of the nation's most faithful kings and one who was determined to guide the whole nation of Judah to a work of reformation. His unflinching faith in the true God, his obedience to His Word, and his unfailing trust in His mighty power is a legacy worthy of imitation. The Holy Scriptures reveal the time when Jehoshaphat, after careful consultation with the God of heaven, conducted the people of Judah to a battle against the great army of the people of Moab and the children of Ammon. The records tell us that he and people of Judah "went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles

20:20). What a wonderful appeal from a ruler to his people! He faithfully declared that to believe the Lord God and His prophets is the secret of the establishment and prosperity of a nation.

But Jehoshaphat's faithfulness to God was, in my estimation, the result of the good training he had received in his childhood. His father Asa, to whose throne he was the successor, had made great efforts to separate the people of Judah from the widespread idolatry. "And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron" (2 Chronicles 15:16). The firm determination of Jehoshaphat to keep Israel from idolatry was inherited and cultivated from his godly father, Asa. He had learned by experience the secret for the prosperity and for the establishment of any individual or a nation. "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto

Baalim; but sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel. Therefore the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance" (2 Chronicles 17:3-5).

A man of action

During his reign Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with only verbal appeals to believe the Word of God and His prophets. He rather endeavored to make more diligent and practical efforts on behalf of the people of Judah. "In the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests. And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and

Belief without reformation in the life is a dangerous deception. The Christian life is not a modification of the old but a transformation of the entire being.

went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people” (verses 7–9).

On one occasion Jehoshaphat visited Ahab, the king of Israel in Samaria, who had developed some type of affinity with him due to the marriage of his son with Ahab and Jezebel’s daughter. “And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Enquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today. Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king’s hand” (2 Chronicles 18:3–5).

These 400 prophets who unanimously declared that God would deliver Ramoth-gilead into Ahab’s hand were the prophets of Baal that Elijah killed on Mount Carmel for driving Israel into the most degrading idolatry. After listening to their testimony and not being satisfied with their prophecy, the Jewish King endeavored to inquire at the source of all knowledge: “Jehoshaphat said, is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may enquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so” (verses 6, 7).

The servant commissioned to bring the Lord’s prophet to the king, and with the best of the intentions he tried to persuade him to do like the other

400 and to speak smooth, pleasing things to Ahab. But “Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak” (verse 13). Here we find the difference between the true and the false prophets.

True versus false prophets

The false prophets are always ready to say what is pleasing to the ears. The true prophets are compelled to present the straight truth, just exactly as the Lord reveals it. This is precisely one of the great crises affecting the so-called Christian world today; people want to hear what is pleasing to their ears, not necessarily the truth. Even among those who preach the Word of God in the pulpits there is a desire to interpret the Bible in a way that will be comfortable to the majority. And sad to say, in most cases the great majority of churchgoers are not willing to reform their life.

The popular preachers misuse the Word of God just as Satan used it against Christ in the wilderness of temptation. It is rare to hear the straight truth that will compel the people to fall upon the Rock and to be broken. What is hard for the people of this generation is not to accept the theory of the message of salvation, but rather to practice the true principles of Christianity. Those who, like Micaiah, are commissioned to present the final warning found in the book of Revelation will be hated and put into prison just as God’s prophet was jailed by the wicked Ahab.

Through Micaiah the Lord revealed the warning of the consequences of going into battle against the Syrians, which, had it been heeded could have saved the king from death. Micaiah declared, “I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that

have no shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? (verses 16, 17). The result was exactly the same as it was revealed through the faithful prophet. The people of Israel returned safe from the battle except the master or the shepherd—which was King Ahab. “And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed himself up in his chariot against the Syrians until the evening: and about the time of the sun going down he died” (verse 34).

A lesson for us today

Belief in the Lord God and His prophets is the secret for the safety of any enterprise or for any individual. Here our eternal destiny is decided. But to believe is not an emotional sentiment or a mere theoretical knowledge. To believe is to act based on the Word of the Lord and to practice its principles without adding or taking anything away. As faith without works is dead, belief without reformation in the life is a dangerous deception. The Christian life is not a modification of the old but a transformation of the entire being. There is in humanity a tendency to modify, twist, exaggerate, or take away from the truth.

There is in these last days an increasing tendency to adapt the Word of God to our own sinful, unconverted nature. The apostle Paul in his last letter written before his execution in Rome said: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:2–4). “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8).

Some preachers have come to the conclusion that a portion of the Bible

is done away and does not apply to us because we live in a different generation. But the wise man says: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5, 6). Among the great principles of the reformation taught by Christ, and one that should be seen in the life of His messengers, is the principle of true communication. Christ said: "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matthew 5:37). "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:19). Those who have been ordained as teachers of the Word of God must be faithful to their sacred trust; they must be careful how they teach, for any deviation or unfaithfulness in this respect can bring terrible consequences.

Christ also declared: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matthew 7:15, 16). The key to identify the false teachers is by their fruits. Many make great pretensions, and just as Christ said, they come to you in sheep's clothing; and unless we exercise spiritual discernment it is impossible to know them. But Christ assures us that we can know them by their fruits, and the Word of Christ never fails. What type of fruit are we to look for in order to identify the false prophets of this evil generation? The same Christ that many years before had inspired Jeremiah the prophet to say: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord" (23:16).

Beware of tainted fruit

According to Jeremiah 23:16 just quoted above, among the fruits

that we are to watch out to identify true versus false people are those prophets that "make you vain." They preach exciting messages that lead to false expectations and do not move the people to confession and deep repentance. Very few parishioners are encouraged to feel sorrow for their sins and to turn away from them. This is the sad reality of today. But "we are near the end of time, and the message is, Clear the King's highway; gather out the stones; raise up a standard for the people. The people must be awakened. It is no time now to cry peace and safety. We are exhorted to 'cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins' (Isaiah 58:1)."¹

Because knowledge is increased, false teachers are also multiplied, and unless we study the Word of God by ourselves and seek to apply the true principles of Christianity in our daily life, we will be deceived. The warning against this danger comes from the apostle Paul when he said: "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification" (1 Corinthians 14:10). If the reason to believe the teaching of a preacher is only because he is eloquent or because his teachings makes sense, we are in great danger.

Human beings have always found it so hard to understand their own nature. Many make great efforts to justify the cold, world-loving attitude of the great majority of professed Christians. In the last book of the New Testament, the Faithful and True Witness declares that these conditions lead only to eternal destruction. For those who are carnally secure in this last generation, the warning is: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need

of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:14-18).

The servant of the Lord was given a vision of the separation that took place among the believers in Adventism when the message to Laodicea was declared to be applicable for them. She wrote: "I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people."²

A question for us right now

Are we going to develop the same hatred against the Lord's servant as Ahab did against Micaiah because the truth revealed to us is against our own unsanctified will? Or are we willing to listen and obey the straight testimony just as it has been received from the Lord?

God's servant writes: "I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded. This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it and be purified."³

I hope that, instead of rising up against the straight testimony of the True Witness and rejecting the final warning, we may be moved to deep repentance and to a thorough reformation. *R*

References

¹ *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 410.

² *Early Writings*, p. 270.

³ *Ibid.*



Russia

*Missionary outreach
in Moscow.*

U.S.A.

*Annual camp meeting
in Shohola, July
2014 (middle).*

*Health Summit in
Moriah Heights,
California, August
2014 (bottom).*



Greece

*A group of brethren,
sisters, and friends.*

Germany

*Believers participating
in the outreach in
Berlin, September
2014 (middle).*

U.S.A.

*Combined GC
administrative and
doctrinal Councils in
Roanoke, VA, October
2014 (bottom).*



MOVING? Please let us know.



CHILDREN'S
CORNER

SEEING WHAT'S *Ahead*

By B. Montrose



People have always been curious about the future. After all, doesn't it help to know what's coming before it happens?

We can be so thankful that the merciful, loving God of heaven says, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). We see here that important secrets are revealed to the servants of God—His prophets must

be people who serve Him. That means they obey Him and live for Him, not for selfishness.

For example, the Bible tells us about Joseph, the faithful young man who served God from his childhood. The Lord gave him a special gift that most of us do not have. Joseph had dreams that showed the future, and he was also able to interpret the prophetic dreams of others.

(The details of these true stories are found in Genesis 37:1–11; 42:3–20; 40:1–22; 41:1–36.)

The Bible also speaks of the history of Daniel, another youth who was also given this gift. In Daniel chapters 2 and 7, we read of this young man foreseeing the future of the

world in an amazing way.

Knowing the blessing that such a gift can offer, there are many other people who try to claim this kind of ability. But they are coveting it for their own pride and glory—not really in genuine service to God. Sometimes the ability they brag about even comes from Satan. Today these people might go by names such as "fortune tellers," "psychics," or many other titles.

God knew all this would happen, so that's why in Deuteronomy 13:1–5 and 18:19–22 He warns us that we need to be able to recognize false prophets. Also, in Deuteronomy 18:10–12 and Isaiah 47:8–15, serious warning is given against sorcerers, wizards, witches, astrologers, magicians, and all who think they can speak with the dead. Only people who are far away from God would seek such counterfeit guidance. We are told, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word [the Bible], it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Instead, we should learn about the future only from the real prophets who pass all the biblical tests of being true prophets. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper [that is, do well!]" (2 Chronicles 20:20). May God help us to be faithful in our choices, and we will be blessed! *R*