

Objection 109

Seventh day Adventists have a prophet like many other of the modern isms, and they make of her writings a second Bible.

The very way in which this charge is framed would lead the ordinary reader to the conclusion that because certain modern cults have as one of their characteristics the presence of prophets whose messages certainly do not come from God, therefore any denomination possessing a prophet must be in the same class with these isms. They would have us infer that the term "prophet" should always be coupled with "false." But is this necessarily true? Because there are false prophets, does it therefore follow that all prophets are false? Because there is counterfeit money, does it therefore follow that all money is counterfeit? Certainly not. Where there is counterfeit, there is also genuine; where there is false, there is also true.

In an age when such a distorted idea possesses the minds of almost all regarding the relation of prophecy to God's plan of salvation, it is necessary that the history of the doctrine be gone over briefly in order for us to obtain a correct conception of the issue at hand. Unenlightened on it, we shall surely fall into one of two grievous difficulties: either we shall take up with anything that possesses uncanny powers, or else we shall turn down everything that claims supernatural origin. To do the first is to become hopelessly lost; to do the second is to go contrary to the divine command, "Despise not prophesyings." 1 Thess. 5:20. Instead, we should pursue the middle course, and "try the spirits whether they are of God." 1 John 4: 1.

All through the history of God's dealing with His people there have been prophets and prophetesses. From the days of Moses and Miriam, through the times of Deborah, Huldah, and Anna, a prophetess "of a great age" in the time of Christ, even to the last years of the apostolic period, when the four daughters of Philip the evangelist "did prophesy". God has seen fit to give His instruction to the church through the agency of men and women upon whom He has placed the Spirit of prophecy. (See Ex. 15:20; Judges 4:4; 2 Kings 22:14; Luke 2:36; Acts 21:8,9.) Finally, the Bible tells us explicitly that the church in the closing days of its earthly history will possess this gift. (See Rev. 12:17; cf. Rev. 19: 10.)

So necessary did Solomon regard the gift of prophecy that he wrote, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Prov. 29: 18. And there is no reason to believe that in these last days, when every kind of deception and heresy is abroad, when the very elect are in danger of being ensnared (see Matt. 24:24), the statement of Solomon should be any less applicable than in his day.

Further, it is clear that God has given instruction to His church through prophets without adding to the permanent body of Sacred Writings. Have we not many cases in the Scriptures where prophets gave messages, both written and verbal, which most certainly were inspired, but which form no part of the Bible? Assuredly. (See 2 Chron. 9:29; Acts 21:8,9)

With this foundation laid, we are prepared to draw the Scriptural conclusion that the presence of a prophet in the church need not necessarily be a sign that that denomination is false. On the contrary, it may be the best evidence possible that God is especially directing that movement. We may also conclude that one may be a true prophet of God, giving out inspired utterances without stating that which should be considered in any sense an addition to the great standard of truth, the Bible.

It is not within the scope of this short answer to prove that the writings of Mrs. E. G. White, whom we regard as having possessed the gift of prophecy, are of God. The writings themselves furnish the best proof of their divine origin. However, we do not therefore hold that these writings, though inspired, should be considered as a second Bible or an addition to it. In this we are consistent with our foregoing conclusions. "The written testimonies," it is explained in Mrs. White's published works, "are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word; yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given." - Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 605.

In closing, we desire to ask the objector two questions: If you hold that true prophets do not belong to this age, are you prepared to maintain the logical inference that God has acted partially, and has been more gracious to men in past ages than to us who live in this most perilous time of the church? But seeing that the scriptures cited in this chapter clearly show that the gift of prophecy belongs to, and will be found in, the true church in these days, how do you explain its absence from the church of which you are a member?