

## **47. The Prophetic Gift**

“WE believe that any church claiming to be a true church must have manifested in it the gift of prophecy. We believe that Mrs. White had the gift of prophecy, and that her writings are given (as she herself explicitly states) to lead the church back to the Bible, with its complete revelation of the will of God, and that her writings are not in any sense to take the place of the Bible, or to be considered as a part of or an addition to it.” - A. L. Baker, in Bible Truth Series, No. 45.

“Perilous times are before us. Every one who has a knowledge of the truth should awake, and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide-awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. 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 that 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?’” - 8T 298.

### **SELECTED REFERENCES**

LS 17-31; LS 64-73; MB 208-210; [1] Pages 201-215; [5] Pages 261-288.

Memorize: Isaiah 8:20.

### **A. HOW THE GENUINE GIFT IS TESTED**

1 Thessalonians 5:19,23; 1 John 4:1.

#### **1. Speaks according to the law and the testimony. Isaiah 8:20; 1 Corinthians 14:37.**

“First of all let it be said that the writings of this gift have not been set forth in place of the Bible or as an addition to Holy Scripture. Seventh day Adventists adhere to the Bible as the rule of faith and duty. They have ever stood with the historic declaration of the Protestant princes at Spire, setting forth the Bible as ‘the sure rule of all doctrine.’ In 1854 James White, one of the pioneer organizers of the movement, wrote: ‘Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts.’” -Review and Herald, Oct. 3, 1854.

“This position was set forth in the writings of the gift itself. In the first little book ever published by Mrs. White, issued in 1851, she said: ‘I recommend to you, dear reader, the word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that word we are to be judged. God has, in that word, promised to give visions in the “last days,” not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.’” - EW 78.

“This lifting up of Holy Scripture as supreme was the keynote sounded through this gift of the Spirit of prophecy to the very end.”-W. A. Spicer, in “Certainties of the Advent Movement,” pages 201, 202.

“No Christian teacher in this generation, no religious reformer in any preceding age, has placed a higher value on the Bible. In all her writings it is represented as the Book of all books, the supreme and all-sufficient guide for the whole human family. Not a trace of higher criticism, new thought, or skeptical, destructive philosophy can be found in any of her writings. Those who still believe that the Bible is the inspired, infallible word of the living God will value most highly the positive, uncompromising support given this view in the writings of Mrs. White.” - Review and Herald, Aug. 5, 1915, page 7.

“Critics have criticized and multitudes have ridiculed any idea of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy in the modern church. But none of the critics ever produced the remotest approach, measured by any spiritual standard, to the kinds of volumes that have come pouring forth from the pen of that woman who at seventeen years of age was called in human weakness to bear her part in the advent movement. The writings themselves are their own witness. Their ministry of blessing has gone to the ends of the earth in many languages, and still this ministry goes forward. . . .

“As to method of work, the author made it known that while depending on God for aid in telling faithfully the messages presented to her by the Spirit of prophecy, she wrote by no verbal inspiration,

unless, on occasion, specific words were spoken in vision to be repeated. ‘The words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own,’ she says, ‘unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.’ - Review and Herald, Oct. 8, 1867.’ - W. A. Spicer, in “Certainties of the Advent Movement,” pages 208-211. (There are thirty-seven current volumes in English, besides earlier editions.)

**2. Confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. 1 John 4:2-6.**

“The practical theme found in all the writings of Mrs. White is the necessity of Christ as an indwelling Savior if we would make any advancement in the heavenly way. Her writings teach the necessity of Christ first, last, and all the time.”-J. N. Loughborough, in “The Great Second Advent Movement,” page 303.

**3. Does not exalt self, but Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5; examples: Jeremiah 1. 4,9, etc.**

“In my second vision, about a week after the first, the Lord gave me a view of the trials through which I must pass, and told me that I must go and relate to others what He had revealed to me. . . . After I came out of this vision I was exceedingly troubled, for it pointed out my duty to go out among the people and present the truth. My health was so poor that I was in constant bodily suffering, and to all appearance had but a short time to live. I was only seventeen years of age, small and frail, unused to society, and naturally so timid and retiring that it was painful for me to meet strangers. For several days, and far into the night, I prayed that this burden might be removed from me, and laid upon some one more capable of bearing it. . . . I coveted death as a release from the responsibilities that were crowding upon me. At length the sweet peace I had so long enjoyed left me, and despair again pressed upon my soul.” “But the light of duty did not change, and the words of the angel sounded continually in my ears: ‘Make known to others what I have revealed to you.’” - LS 69, 70.

“Through all the years the agent chosen was faithful to the task. Human, fallible, often bearing witness to her own need of forgiving grace and keeping power,’ the instrument did yield itself for service. There was nothing in the life strained or unnatural, though the working of the gift itself and the fruitage of it bore constant witness to the supernatural. Like many another, Mrs. White was in personal life a good mother in Israel. There was no lifting up of self, no assumption of leadership in the movement, but a faithful bearing of messages as the Lord sent counsel and light.”-W A. Spicer, in “Certainties of the Advent Movement,” page 206.

“When the critic has found all the fault possible with the human agent and her work and claims, he has not explained the product of that gift in the advent movement nor its influence upon hearts in all the world. The more the critic lowers the human agent in the estimation of his hearer, the more he magnifies the working of the gift that has produced this character and volume of spiritual help and inspiring instruction and counsel in Christian service.” - Id., page 213.

**4. Does not flatter, but reproves the sinner. Jeremiah 23:16, 17.**

“The Savior said that one purpose of the Spirit of God was to reprove sin. The Lord promised the church the gift of the Spirit, but this blessed unction was not to operate in just one way. (See 1 Corinthians 12.) God had various methods through which the Spirit would indicate sin, but when the sin was shown, it would be apparent that the work done in pointing it out came from the Holy Ghost. Through Mrs. White, upon whom God laid such heavy burdens in building up His work in the church, sin was frequently pointed out. It took great courage and fortitude to do it, for so much was involved. It is but a repetition of the work the Holy Spirit did through Peter, as recorded in the fifth chapter of Acts.” -F. C. Gilbert, in “Divine Predictions Fulfilled,” page 122.

**5. Has visions and dreams. Numbers 12:6.**

“There are many dreams arising from the common things of life, with which the Spirit of God has nothing to do. There are also false dreams, as well as false visions, which are inspired by the spirit of Satan. But dreams from the Lord are classed in the word of God with visions, and are as truly the fruits of the Spirit of prophecy as visions. Such dreams, taking into the account the persons who have them, and the circumstances under which they are given, contain their own proofs of their genuineness.” - 5T 658.

“Where did Mrs. White get her information in 1848? How did she know at that time what the most learned scientists knew nothing of? How was she able to tell such wonderful things about the heavenly bodies so much in advance of the most thorough investigators of the stellar heavens? It was in the year

1910, about sixty years after she made the statement about the ‘open space in Orion,’ that Professor Lucian Larkin, by the aid of his photographic plates, discovered this interesting information that has added such useful astronomical knowledge to the world’s scientific information. Who revealed Orion to Job? Who told Amos about Orion? We believe the Spirit of God revealed the information to Mrs. White in the year 1848. Of a truth it can be said that God gave to her this great light, and certainly this prediction she made is of divine origin.” - F. C. Gilbert, in “Divine Predictions Fulfilled,” pages 142, 143.

#### **6. Known by their fruits. Matthew 7:15,20.**

The test of “by their fruits” is of highest importance. It is not difficult to observe the character of the product of a tree, or of a life’s work and teaching. Among the fruits of the gift, given the church through Ellen G. White, may be seen the many volumes of her written works. These teach not a word but of the most lofty Christian nature and deeply devotional vein, they are altogether elevating and in perfect accord with the Holy Scriptures.

The New York Independent, a leading religious journal, bore witness to the Spirit of prophecy and the Adventist teachings: “Of course, these teachings were based on the strictest doctrine of inspiration of the Scriptures. Seventh day Adventism could be got in no other way. And the gift of prophecy was to be expected as promised to the ‘remnant church,’ who had held fast to the truth. This faith gave great purity of life and incessant zeal. No body of Christians excels them in moral character and religious earnestness.”

After referring to the rise and growth of this movement, and to the number of publishing houses, colleges, schools, and health institutions in all parts of the world, the Independent concluded: “In all this, Ellen G. White has been the inspiration and guide. Here is a noble record, and she deserves great honor. Did she really receive divine visions, and was she really chosen by the Holy Spirit to be endowed with the charism of prophecy? Why should we answer? One’s doctrine of the Bible may affect the conclusion. At any rate, she was absolutely honest in her belief in her revelations. Her life, was worthy of them. She showed no spiritual pride, and she sought no filthy lucre. She lived the life and did the work of a worthy prophetess.” - August 23, 1913, page 250.

#### **7. Prophecy, “the acid test,” must be of practical value, and must come true. Deuteronomy 18:21, 22.**

a. Publishing. In the year 1848 Mrs. White told of the beginning of the publishing department of the movement:

“After coming out of vision, I said to my husband: ‘I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper, and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.’” - LS 125.

How is it today? Outside observers have said again and again, “How do they do it?” An authority on Chinese Christian publications has said: “Of the denominations, the Seventh day Adventists are making the largest use of the press as a means of propagating their own views of truth.... They have therefore established their own printing works, and have at present a larger output than any other denomination.”- George A. Clayton, “The Survey of Christian Literature in China,” *The International Review of Missions*, July, 1919, page 374.

“Another missionary organ says:

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only one that has in the past made adequate provision for the handling of its literature.”

“The leading organ of the United Mission Societies in one of the greatest mission fields has said:

“ ‘The Seventh day Adventists have been more efficient so far as I know, than any others in getting their literature out. They have put more brains into it than any other group.’ “ - W. A. Spicer, in “Certainties of the Advent Movement,” page 217.

(Look up the latest world report of literature sales.)

b. Medical and health work. ‘It was at the house of A. Hilliard, at Otsego, Michigan, June 6, 1863, that the great subject of health reform was opened before me in vision.’ Shortly afterward her pen began writing upon this topic of health, and then came the burden to urge the people of this movement to establish their first health institution, or sanitarium, in Battle Creek, Michigan. . . . Books from that pen have come forth, dealing especially with the subject, such as ‘Christian Temperance,’ ‘Ministry of Healing,’ ‘Counsels on Health,’ and other works.” - Id., page 222.

(Look up the latest world medical missionary report.)

c. Educational. “These messages from the first laid special emphasis upon industrial training as a

very part of the training of the mind. The threefold ideal was pressed upon the minds of the educators; the education of the heart, of the mind, and of the hand.

“In the ministry of this gift in educational lines various books were issued, as ‘Education,’ ‘Counsels to Teachers,’ ‘Fundamentals of Christian Education.’ These volumes and a great mass of other counsels that never appeared in books have been a great blessing to the educational leaders in the movement. . . .

“It is fitting to recall the summons that came, in 1844, to a young woman without education, without training, at the age of seventeen, to begin the bearing of messages sent of God to help in the up building and guidance of the advent movement. So through the years instruction has come to workers in all departments; books for their guidance in spiritual life and in service have been issued for the ministers, such as ‘Gospel Workers,’ and ‘Testimonies to Ministers,’ books that search the very souls of men called to the ministry. “-Id., page 223.

d. Mission work. “In my very girlhood the Lord saw fit to open before me the glories of heaven. I was in vision taken to heaven, and the angel said to me, ‘Look.’ I looked to the world as it was in dense darkness. The agony that came over me was indescribable as I saw this darkness. Again the word came, ‘Look you.’ And again I looked intensely over the world and I began to see jets of light like stars dotted all through this darkness; and then I saw another and another added light, and so all through this moral darkness the star like lights were increasing. And the angel said: ‘These are they that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and are obeying the words of Christ.’ . . . I saw then these little jets of light growing brighter, shining forth from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and lighting the whole world.” - GW 378, 379, old edition.

“Some of the opponents of this work have tauntingly said, ‘If it was not for the visions of Mrs. White, which you have among you, your cause would have gone to pieces long ago.’ It is replied, ‘That is true; because from that source the Lord has given counsel, caution, and light, and thus dissensions have been removed, and the work has prospered.’ So what they designed as a thrust against the gift is in reality testimony that its fruit is that of the true gift of prophecy.”-J. N. Loughborough, in “The Great Second Advent Movement,” page 310.

## **B. MANY FALSE PROPHETS TODAY DECEIVE MULTITUDES.**

### **1. Warning. Matthew 24:24.**

John (1 John 4:1-6) gives us a warning against the false prophets that it were well for all to heed. For they, being inspired of Satan, arise in unsuspected times and places, and among seemingly sincere and humble Christians. They will be a counterfeit made so very close in likeness to the genuine, by the supernatural power of Satan, that only by a close personal acquaintance with the genuine gift can they be discerned to be false. Christ made prominent as a sign of the end, the rising of false prophets. The fact of an existing counterfeit infers the true. Upon applying the seven tests studied under section A, we would find some to be very similar, but others clearly the reverse. Miracles of various kinds may or may not be present. Miracles are no final test. John the Baptist did no miracles. John 10:41. But false prophets will. Revelation 19:20; 13:14.

### **2. Description.**

The following Biblical description, however, will no doubt more or less fit the modern product of Satan. They say, “Let us follow ‘new light,’ other gods.” (See Deuteronomy 13:1-4.) They preach a “gospel” not according to Christ (Galatians 1:8), frequently based on the “inherent good in man” to be cultivated without divine aid. They prophesy “smooth things” easily received, comforting to an abused conscience, involving no sacrifice or cross. Isaiah 30:8-10. Predictions cunningly worded may be explained to fit the event, or fail altogether. Deuteronomy 18:21,22; 13:1-3. They perform signs and wonders (Matthew 24:24) for self -aggrandizement and gain, having no practical value to others in Christian living, leading away from the Bible and Christ. 2 John 7. They speak peace to the sinner while in his sins, without peace. Ezekiel 13:10.

“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21.

### **KEY TEXTS**

Isaiah 8:19, 20

Numbers 12:6

Matthew 7:15-20

1 John 4:1-3

Jeremiah 23:16,17

Deuteronomy 18:21, 22

### **THOUGHT QUESTIONS**

1. What relation have the works of Mrs. White to the Bible?
2. Do the seven rules of Lesson One apply in any measure to the study and reading of the Spirit of prophecy of today?
3. List at least twenty-five standard publications given the church through Mrs. E. G. White.
4. Is the gift of prophecy given for the benefit of the church only?
5. Of what value has the gift been to the church and to individuals?

### **TEST QUESTIONS**

Answer With Ample Bible Proof

1. What tests does the Bible give us that we may know the true prophet?
2. How may false prophets be recognized as such?
3. What may we look for in the messages themselves that reveal their origin?
4. What prominent characteristics of the modern gift identify it with the same used in the hands of God in ancient times?
5. By the use of six texts show the grounds for the belief that Mrs. E. G. White had the testimony God had promised to the remnant.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES**

Tributes of Leaders

“As to the Christian character of Sister White, I beg leave to say that I think I know something about it. I have been acquainted with Sister White for eighteen years . . . I have been in their family time and again, sometimes weeks at a time . . . I know Sister White to be an unassuming, modest, kindhearted, noble woman. These traits in her character are not simply put on and cultivated, but they spring grace fully and easily from her natural disposition. She is not self-conceited, self-righteous, and self-important, as fanatics always are.... Any one, the poorest and the humblest, can go to her freely for advice and comfort without being repulsed. . . . I have never formed an acquaintance with any persons who so constantly have the fear of God before them. Nothing is undertaken without earnest prayer to God. She studies God’s word carefully and constantly.” - D. M. Canright, in *Review and Herald*, April 26, 1877, page 132.

“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. . . . 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. . . .

“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. . . . 2. They lead us to Christ. Like the Bible, they set Him forth as the only hope and only Savior of mankind. . . . 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.... 4. They have brought comfort and consolation to many hearts. They have strengthened the weak, encouraged the feeble, raised up the despondent. . . . 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 immorality. No one of their adherents has ever been led by them into path of transgression and sin.” - Uriah Smith, in “The Visions of Mrs. E. G. White,” 1868 ed., pages 5-7.

“From 1853 to 1868 there was no minister in our ranks who traveled from State to State with Brother and Sister White more than myself, and I had the privilege of seeing Sister White in ‘open vision’ more than forty times. I have kept count of more than one hundred important predictions made by Sister White that have been accurately fulfilled.” - J. N. Loughborough, in “Divine Predictions Fulfilled,” compiled by F. C. Gilbert, P. 27.

“After over sixty years’ study of Mrs. White’s writings with the Bible, we can truthfully say that we know not of one Bible test of a true prophet but has been most literally fulfilled in her writings and in her character.” - S. N. Haskell; Id., Page 33.

“Miss Ellen Harmon seemed to be endowed with a deeply religious nature. In early youth she experienced a keen realization of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel charmed her, and for it her whole heart and soul seemed to yearn. . . . Taking the Bible as the

supreme guide of her life, she became fully convinced by its teaching that the Second Coming of Christ was near at hand. On this point she never wavered. And believing it with her whole soul, she felt that the supreme purpose of every Christian at this time should be to live a blameless life in and with Christ and to devote every resource at command to the salvation of the lost.” - A. G. Daniells, in the Review and Herald, August 5, 1915.

True prophetesses of the Bible: Exodus 15:20, Miriam; Judges 4:4, Deborah; 2 Chronicles 34:22, Huldah; Luke 2:36, Anna; Acts 21:9, daughters of Philip. A false prophetess: Noadiah. Nehemiah 6,14,