

5. THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY IN THE REMNANT CHURCH

D. E. Rebok

Introduction

“Messages of every order and kind have been urged upon Seventh-day Adventists, to take the place of the truth which, point by point, has been sought out by prayerful study, and testified to by the miracle-working power of the Lord. But the way marks which have made us what we are, are to be preserved, and they will be preserved, as God has signified through His word and the testimony of His Spirit. He calls upon us to hold firmly, with the grip of faith, to the fundamental principles that are based upon unquestionable authority.” [1]

Seventh-day Adventists are a people of the Word, and like Martin Luther, they take their stand on its sure foundation. The Bible, and the Bible only, is their rule of faith and practice. That is the source of the “way marks” that have made us a people, and we shall be preserved as such only as we allow the light of God’s Word to shine upon our pathway.

Seventh-day Adventists are blessed not only with God’s Word, the Scriptures, but also with the gift of prophecy, which was placed by God in the remnant church “to bear a message of reproof to the erring and of encouragement to the meek and lowly.” [2]

Seventh-day Adventists, in common with all other Christians, have staked their hopes for the present life and the future upon five great facts, to the non-Christian mere assumptions, but to the Christian, facts of faith.

First, by faith we recognize the existence of God. Because of our implicit and unbounded faith in God, we take for granted that He is. We ask for no proof, but we simply know that God “is in his holy temple”; therefore, “Let all the earth keep silence before him” (Habakkuk 2:20), “for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he rewards them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). (See also Job 22:21, 26)

Without hesitation or a word of proof, Christ admonishes all who claim His name, “Have faith in God”; and Seventh day Adventists, nearly a million strong, from every corner of the earth declare, “Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief.”

Second, by faith we accept the whole Bible as God’s message to man. It is a revelation of His love, His will, His plan, His purposes, and His standard for men of all ages and in all climes. Paul’s counsel to Timothy is God’s word to all men who, by faith, have accepted the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

Seventh-day Adventists receive the Scriptures as the voice of God speaking directly to them. They fear and tremble at God’s Word, for to them every thought, every sentence, every verse, every chapter, is a real message from the living God given through His chosen messengers of old. Seventh-day Adventists open their hearts and their minds to receive it, for in it are God’s commands, entreaties, counsels, appeals, warnings, and promises. They accept it freely, willingly, literally, and fully as of God, and therefore not to be despised or treated lightly. They neither add to nor diminish therefrom. It is not for them to accept this and reject that according to their own whims, fancy, or convenience. It is indeed “the word of God.” (1 Thessalonians 2:11-13)

Third, by faith we acknowledge that all men everywhere have sinned and fallen short of their own ideals and of God’s ideals for them. This is a more universally accepted fact than all the others on which Christianity is based. Proof and circumstantial evidence are to be found everywhere. The assumption part has rather to do with man’s need of a Savior than with the fact of the sinfulness of the human race, for not every sinner is ready to acknowledge his need of a Savior. (Romans 3:23; 7:24)

Fourth, by faith we are convinced that Jesus Christ is man’s Deliverer and Savior. The answer to man’s desperate appeals for a Savior is found in Paul’s word to the Romans.

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh!” “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace!” Romans 7:25; 8:1-3, 6.

The sinner is saved from his sin by Jesus Christ who came from God to lead men back to God. This is a transaction based wholly on the personal faith of every individual man in Jesus as his Savior. There is no proof or explanation. It is just so. Here is another of the great assumptions which by faith becomes one of the greatest and most vital facts known to man.

Seventh-day Adventists believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their one and only Savior, and their

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faith in God and God's Word causes them to rejoice in His plan for their salvation. (John 1: 12; Acts 16:31; 1 John 1: 1-3)

As "sons of God," children in the family of God, Seventh day Adventists believe that it is their duty to begin a Christian experience, which becomes a growth in grace, a lifelong process of sanctification, leading ultimately to perfection of character and a fitness for the society of angels and the presence of God.

Salvation by faith in Jesus as the Savior is the work of a moment, but the growth in grace, a process by which "sons of God" become full-grown, mature, intelligent Christians, is the work of a lifetime. The apostle Peter describes it in His second letter (2 Peter 1: 2-9), and concludes:

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:10, 11.

Fifth, by faith we recognize that God has spoken to man by His prophets, and that this method of communication is the one used by God from the very earliest period of man's history to our own time. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." Numbers 12:6.

If by faith Christians accept the fact of God, and recognize the Bible as God's Word, then it is but natural and logical that Christians shall accept the fact of prophets as God's spokesmen. Christians will, therefore, ask for no more proof for the one great assumption than they do for the other both alike are matters of faith.

Concerning prophets the apostle Paul says: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:18-23.

Thus we see that God's message through His Word, which came by prophets as His spokesmen, is to change men and women from sinners to saints and to make them ready for the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Salvation comes through faith in the Lord Jesus. Sanctification and ultimate perfection come through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Through prophets God has set forth in the Bible and in the writings of the Spirit of prophecy a pattern of Christian living which shows us the kind of people Christians must be here and in the everlasting kingdom; for if we would be saints in the kingdom to come we must be saints in this world now. The business of Christianity is not so much how to get a man into heaven, as it is how to get heaven into the heart of a man. This is the work of prophets in both Old and New Testament times, and also in the remnant church.

Channels of Communication Between God and Man

To accept the existence of God is to accept His statement as to how He has chosen to communicate with man. It is neither reasonable nor sensible to accept God and then deny or reject what He says regarding His prophets through whom He has chosen to speak to man here on earth. The Bible offers neither scientific proof nor a well-reasoned argument for or against prophets. It simply declares that there are prophets through whom God spoke: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Hebrews 1: 1, 2.

God at Various Times Spoke by the Prophets

In Eden, God spoke directly to Adam and Eve. (Genesis 2, 3) "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Genesis 3:8. This thought is amplified by James White:

"Once, man walked with God in Eden. With open face he beheld the glory of the Lord, and talked with God, and Christ, and angels, in Paradise, without a dimming veil between. Man fell from his moral rectitude and innocence, and was driven from the garden, from the tree of life, and from the visible presence of the Lord and His holy angels." [3]

When sin came, it formed a wall of partition between God and man. But God did not discard or neglect the work of His hand. He chose to communicate with men primarily through prophets (Genesis

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20:6, 7); but also at times through priests (Genesis 14:18), and through angels (Genesis 16:7-13). (See also 2 Chronicles 36:15; Jeremiah 35:15; 2 Peter 1:21)

Ellen G. White states: “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.” [4]

The men of God chosen to do this very essential and all important work were generally known as prophets, but there are other names or titles applied to them in the Scriptures: prophet in 1 Samuel 9:9. Son of man in Ezekiel 4:1; 5:1; seer in 2 Chronicles 16:7. Messenger in Malachi 3: 1; Haggai 1:13; spokesman in Exodus 4:16; 7:1; fellow servant in Revelation 22:9; 19:10; servant of God in 1 Chronicles 6:49; man of God in 1 Samuel 9:6; 2 Peter 1:21; watchman in Isaiah 52:8.

The work of all these men, by whatever title they were known, is well stated in these words:

“From the earliest times, prophets had been recognized as teachers divinely appointed. In the highest sense the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God.” [5]

God’s Method of Transmitting His Message to Man

In Revelation 1: 1-3 we find the steps involved:

- a. God gave His message to Jesus Christ.
- b. Jesus gave that message to His angel (Gabriel).
- c. His angel “sent and signified” it to the prophet.
- d. The prophet spoke or wrote it out for the people.

Thus did the prophet bear “record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus” (Revelation 1:2). Furthermore, a blessing is pronounced upon all who read and hear the words of prophecy. This is true of all the prophecies that have come from the mind of God through His chosen channel. It is but natural that we should expect to see prophets among God’s people, and indeed there have been many who have claimed to be God’s prophets. This is in accord with Scripture, and therefore we are counseled not to “despise prophesying,” but rather to “prove all things,” holding “fast that which is good.” (1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21)

Jesus Himself, looking down to our day, said, “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets,” and they shall “show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24. Through John He adds this caution, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 John 4: 1. Somehow, it is to be expected that where the true exists there is likely to be the false; where there is the genuine, there likewise you will find the counterfeit. Our business is to try, test, and prove the prophets to find the true and reject the false.

Accepting or Rejecting the Prophet and His Message

No, the question is not whether God has ever had prophets, but rather how can we know whether those who claim to be prophets are true? The most important aspect of the question is how shall I relate myself to both the prophets and their messages? It is a matter of acceptance or rejection of the prophet and his message. This was the imperative question in ancient times, and one which applies today. (See 2 Chronicles 36:16)

However, not all of the people rejected all the prophets. True, many did reject both God and His prophets, and God perforce had to reject them. The same will be true of Christians today. May we cite but two examples in the ancient world:

- a. Jehoiakim. Jeremiah was bidden by God to write ill a scroll His words of condemnation against Israel, Judah, and the surrounding nations. There might be hope for reformation and divine forgiveness if the messages were heeded. (Jeremiah 36:2, 3) Therefore Jeremiah dictated the messages, and Baruch his secretary, wrote them out in the best language of his day. When they were read, the people, and even some of the princes, were profoundly impressed by what they heard, so much so that they thought the king himself should both see and read.

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Accordingly the scrolls were read in the king's presence as he warmed himself by the fire. As the monarch listened and gave heed to the prophet's words, he became angry, and seizing the manuscript, he cut it into shreds. Presumptuously, he cast the pieces into the fire until all the roll was consumed. The record then adds these significant words, "Yet they were not afraid." Jeremiah 36:24. Like Jehoiakim of old, many Christians and their leaders today would just as easily dispose of the message, the messenger, and the God who sends the message. Be it well remembered that neither penknife nor fire can get rid of God and God's messenger and God's message.

Though the messages were all rejected so summarily, the Chaldeans came, Judah was defeated, the city of Jerusalem was burned, and the temple destroyed. Leaders and people suffered the consequences of their rash act against God and His prophet.

b. David-King David was a man of human passions and was much like other men who do not occupy a throne. The devil caused him to commit an unspeakable outrage against Uriah and his beautiful wife. David, however, would keep the matter a secret and cover up his ignominy with subterfuge and deceit. But God's eye, looking down, sees clearly what human eyes cannot perceive. The record says, "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." 2 Samuel 11:27.

God asked Nathan the prophet to go down to King David's palace and speak a few words for Him. The man of God went forth on his mission to bear a rather unpleasant message to his king, and presented it in the form of an allegory. David did not immediately grasp the point, and was so smoothly entrapped that he declared: "As the Lord lives, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." 2 Samuel 12:5, 6.

Be it noted that Nathan asked no questions. He did not hedge or side step the issue or offer the king any alibi or sympathy. Instead, without fear he pointed his finger at the king of Israel, and delivered God's message, "Thou art the man." Suppose he had made a mistake; but then, God never makes a mistake.

What was King David's reaction? He might have flown into a rage, denied the charge, rejected the message, put Nathan to death at sunrise. But the man of God had spoken with tears in his voice, I think, but with a finality that David could not escape. Like the great man that he was, in spite of his human frailty and weakness, he admitted, "I have sinned against the Lord." The record is so brief that it probably does not tell the whole story of David's sincere repentance, confession, and restitution, but it merely closes the incident with these words, "And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also bath put away thy sin; thou shall not die." 2 Samuel 12:13.

The Call to the Prophetic Office

The call to prophetic office is in the hands of God, who knows what He wants and when, where, and why He wants it at any given time. Therefore, it is not man's responsibility to desire or direct in the choice of the prophet. This call does not come by committee action or human planning or devising. As with the priesthood, "no man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Hebrews 5:4. (2 Peter 1:11) God's men are individually chosen, prepared, called, and directed by Him, and yet it is done in such a way that the call to prophetic office comes to the individual with convincing power and sufficient evidence that both he and his associates know it for a certainty.

The call of Amos is to the point in question. "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel." Amos 7:14, 15.

Again, God's call to Isaiah was of an entirely different nature. 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 your 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."

Isaiah, as God's chosen mouthpiece, 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.

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Names Applied to the Messages of the Prophets

It is important that we find the various terms used in the Bible to designate the messages spoken or written by the prophets. In these there is a clue as to their use, application, and significance. They are as follows:

- a. Prophecy or prophecies. 2 Chronicles 9:29; 15:8; 1 Corinthians 13:8.
- b. Word of God. 1 Samuel 9:27, 1 Kings 12:22.
- c. The Lord's message. Haggai 1:13.
- d. Testimonies. 2 Kings 17:15, Nehemiah 9:30.
- e. Counsel. Isaiah 44:26.
- f. Burden. Jeremiah 23:33, 38; Isaiah 13:1; 15:1.

The word "testimony" or "testimonies" is frequently used and carries with it, among other senses, the meaning of "intentions." "The testimony of Jesus- would, therefore, be the "intentions" of God as revealed through Jesus, His angel, and His prophet to the people. The expression "the testimony of Jesus" is used but three times in the whole Bible, in Revelation 12:17 and 19:10. The Biblical meaning of the term is found in the verse, "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Seventh-day Adventists, accepting the whole Bible from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, believe in God, and in His Word as a revelation of God's "intentions," or will, as revealed through the prophets. They believe in the gifts of God as being available in this our day the same as in apostolic times.

Prophets in the New Testament Church

J. Peter Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures has this to say concerning Luke 2:26, "If the spirit of prophecy had departed from Israel since the time of Malachi, according to the opinion of the Jews, the return of this Spirit might be looked upon as one of the tokens of the Messiah's advent." [6]

Without discussing either the opinion of the Jews or the comment by Lange it is of interest to note that the apostle Luke recognizes that John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, was indeed a prophet. (Luke 1:76; 7:28) In Matthew 21:11 and Luke 7:16 it is likewise acknowledged that Jesus Himself was a prophet among men. And when He ascended to heaven He "gave gifts unto men," "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Ephesians 4:8, 11.

The objectives of these workers in the church of the early apostolic period were:

To equip His people for service; to build up the church; to help all to arrive at oneness in faith and in knowledge of the Son of God, to attain to the stature of mature men in Jesus Christ instead of remaining babes in the Christian life, and to cease being carried about with every wind of doctrine, but to hold to the truth through union with Christ. (Ephesians 4:12-15)

Paul admonished the Ephesians that Christians should no longer live as the Gentiles live, but become new men who after God are "created in righteousness and true holiness" fit for God's everlasting kingdom and for the society of angels. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

These verses, together with those in 1 Corinthians 14:3, 4, 20, 22, would lead us to the conclusion that prophets are placed in the church by God primarily for the benefit of the church itself. In Williams' New Testament we read:

"But whoever prophesies is speaking to men for their up building, encouragement, and comfort. Whoever prophesies builds up the congregation. . . . Brothers, stop being children in intelligence, but as to evil keep on being babies; and yet as to intelligence be men of maturity. . . . Prophecy is meant, not for unbelievers but for believers." 1 Corinthians 14:3, 4, 20, 22.

Thus we can emphasize this very important principle: The work of prophets is essentially for the members of the church-for reproof to the erring and for the "up building, encouragement, and comfort" of the believers. The words of counsel and instruction from God through the prophets to the believer are designed to help the spiritually newborn babe to "grow" by his use of "the sincere milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:2) "unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children" (Ephesians 4:13, 14).

The chief business of the prophets in the church has been that of guiding the believers in the path that leads to heaven, of pointing out the signposts along the way so that believers could walk and work

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intelligently. They are not saved by the signposts nor by the instruction given nor by the deeds performed along the way. There is but one Savior, for “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Therefore, there is no salvation in this historical date or that; there is no eternal destiny at stake in this or that fulfilled or unfulfilled prophecy; there is no salvation in any particular viewpoint of the purely incidental doctrines or theories, “Indefinite, frivolous questions,” “obscure, unimportant points,” “idle sophistries,” things “not essential to our salvation,” “questions not necessary for the perfection of the faith,” and “idle tales.”

We should establish clearly in our minds the fact that so far as salvation is concerned there is but one and only one fundamental doctrine—that I am a sinner in need of a Savior, and Jesus Christ is that Savior if I only believe on Him and receive Him into my heart by faith.

Surrounding that one great fundamental doctrine of the Christian church are “landmarks,” “way marks,” “blocks,” “pegs and pins,” which have made us an intelligent Seventh day Adventist Christian people. These will preserve us as a people only as we clearly understand and live by them, allowing them to mold and fashion our character and determine every detail in the habits of our daily living. Our ultimate aim is to become fit to live forever in God’s everlasting, kingdom, and to this end God has placed His prophets in the church to help in preparation for an entrance into heaven.

Prophets in the Remnant Church

One writer has stated “The Church which He [Christ] founded was a Church in which prophecy was to be a continuous possession.” [7]

Ellen G. White says: “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: . . . and he will show you things to come.’ John 16:13. Scripture plainly teaches that these promises, so far from being limited to apostolic days, extend to the church of Christ in all ages.” [8]

This is equally true of the church of God in the time of the end and in the end of time. The Bible refers to God’s chosen people of the last days as “the remnant.”

a. To identify the remnant church. The following Bible expressions identify the remnant church:

They will be gathered (Isaiah 11:11); distinguished from others (Micah 5:7,8); keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17); be saved from sin (Zephaniah 3:13); and enter the kingdom of God (Romans 9:27).

A study of church history shows that through the centuries there have always been groups of Christian people who have claimed the prophetic gift among them.

To the church waiting for the coming of the Lord, Paul wrote a message:

“That in every thing you are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge. Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that you come behind in no gift. Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ!” 1 Corinthians 1:5-8.

Mrs. White adds: “In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the Testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.” [9]

b. Seventh-day Adventists believe they are the remnant church because they comply with all the Scripture specifications for it. Among them is the gift of prophecy, or “the testimony of Jesus,” which is “the spirit of prophecy.” It is not for Christians to deny or reject or despise but rather to test and try the gift as claimed by Ellen G. White, who for seventy years spoke in the name of the Lord, and who claimed to have “visions” and “revelations” in which God revealed His “intentions” for individuals and for the church as a whole. Because of the very nature of the divine guidance given through Ellen G. White, Seventh-day Adventists esteem most highly the counsel, the admonitions, the warnings, the reproofs, the encouragement, and the comfort contained in her messages.

Now that a little more than a century has passed since the earliest manifestation of the gift of prophecy among us, Seventh-day Adventists should pause to evaluate the gift of God in the remnant church and apply the Bible tests. How does the prophet’s work stand the test of time? Has the church prospered as the result of heeding her counsel and of molding its policies in harmony with her “testimonies”? These questions are reasonable and logical and deserve a candid and unbiased answer, not so much to prove that God has chosen and used men and women as His prophetic messengers, but rather to show that Ellen G. White was one of those so chosen by God.

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God Chose Ellen G. White as His Messenger

Let us now project ourselves in imagination back to the year 1844. The Millerites were fervently preaching that the coming of Christ and the end of the world would be on October 22, 1844. Excitement ran high. Thousands upon thousands were seriously preparing to meet Christ as He would come in the clouds of heaven. Hundreds of thousands stood by a bit restless and uncertain, but hoping to make the right decision by the fateful day, afraid that He might come, and at the same time hoping that He would not come.

October 22 came and went. To the Advent believers its passing without incident was a terrible disappointment, resulting in frustration, confusion, division, fanaticism, and a sense of defeat and loneliness. This was heightened by the taunts of their enemies. Something indeed had gone wrong with the reckoning. As was to be expected, many Advent believers slipped back into the world and walked no more with God's peculiar people. Many others figured that the event was right but that the time was wrong, and formed a group that set one date after another. A very small number of Advent believers studied the question through again and concluded that the time was right but the event was wrong. And so it was on October 23 and thereafter in 1844.

The Call of Ellen G. Harmon

It was at such a time of trouble and distress among God's people that God chose to make His "intentions" and plans known through a seventeen-year-old maiden named Ellen Gould Harmon. In December of that year she had a strange and unexpected experience. Of that experience while kneeling humbly and quietly in prayer with four sisters in Christ in the home of Mrs. Haines in Portland, Maine, she says, "The power of God came upon me as I had never felt it before." [10] The in filling of power brought her first vision, in which this girl of seventeen was shown the journey of the Advent people from the disappointment in 1844 to the city of God. [11] Quickly followed the bidding that she must go and relate to others what had been revealed to her. Her feelings are pictured as follows:

"After I came out of this vision I was exceedingly troubled.... I went to the Lord in prayer and begged Him to lay the burden on some one 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.'" [12]

That young girl rose from prayer to take up the burden and to speak for God, doing so faithfully and well for seventy years. From her pen came twenty-five million words, published in forty-three books and four thousand periodical articles. Naturally there were critics of her life and her work, but their attacks made little or no impression on the great worldwide work which has grown as the result of following her counsel and revelations.

F. D. Nichol states: "After one hundred years the different Adventist bodies-other than Seventh-day Adventists-that stemmed from the Millerite movement of the early 1840's total less than 50,000 members, which is no more than the total of Advent believers in 1844. Not long ago we enjoyed a delightful fellowship of a few days with an aged, saintly leader in one of these Adventist bodies. He spoke of the expansion of Seventh-day Adventists, their schools, publishing houses, medical institutions, and then he added: 'Your men were more farsighted than ours and laid better plans.' We replied: 'No, our men were no wiser than yours, but we had a frail handmaiden of the Lord in our midst who declared that by visions from God she saw what we should do and how we should plan for the future.' No other explanation could, in truth, have been offered for the vitality, distinctiveness, and foresight revealed in connection with the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist movement over the world." [13]

This represents our attitude toward the life and work of Ellen G. White today, but it was not so easily seen nor accepted back in 1844 and 1845. Then it was merely the word of a teen-age girl claiming that God was speaking to her through His angel. It should be remembered that the leaders in the Advent Movement had counseled against fanatics and those deluded by so-called visions and dreams. In their Boston Advent Conference of May 29, 1843, they took the following action: "We have no confidence whatever in any visions, dreams, or private revelations." [14]

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Reactions of Early Pioneers to Ellen G. Harmon

How did the early pioneers and believers in general respond to the claims of Ellen Harmon and the physical evidences of her call? Did they see in her the evidence that God was again speaking through a human being the same as He had done all through the history of His people? She expected people not only to be critical but even skeptical, for they were human much as we are today.

One worker early in 1847 wrote a note to James White expressing his reaction to Ellen G. White's visions:

"I cannot endorse sister Ellen's visions as being of divine inspiration, as you and she think them to be; yet I do not suspect the least shade of dishonesty in either of you in this matter.... I think that what she and you regard as visions from the Lord, are only religious reveries, in which her imagination runs without control upon themes in which she is most deeply interested.... I do not by any means think her visions are like some from the devil." [15]

The story of the changed attitude of doubt and uncertainty concerning Ellen Harmon's visions on the part of Captain Bates to one of full faith and confidence is an impressive one. Joseph Bates entered upon his seafaring adventures at a very early age, beginning as cabin boy and advancing through various steps in responsibility until he finally became captain and owner of seagoing vessels. As such he became a sort of authority on astronomy. He read with avidity everything he could find on the subject, and was much interested in Lord John Rosse's description of "the gap in the sky" which appeared in the Illustrated London News of April 19, 1845.

Captain Bates attended a conference of the Advent believers in Topsham, Maine, in November, 1846. At that time he was still unconvinced on the matter of visions. On one occasion he took opportunity to ask Mrs. E. G. White (she had then married James White) what she knew about astronomy. He found her as ignorant as most of us are on the subject, and was disappointed that she had never read a book or an article on it. In fact she had no inclination even to hear or talk about it.

Imagine Joseph Bates's surprise one evening during that conference not only to see Ellen G. White in vision but to hear her describe what she was seeing. She began to talk about stars and the rosy-tinted belts around one of them. She said, "I see four moons." Captain Bates mused, "Oh, she is viewing Jupiter." Then she described a planet with rings changing in their colors and said, "I see seven moons." "She is describing Saturn," remarked the old sea captain. Next came a marvelous word picture of another planet and her six moons, but when she began to describe the "opening heavens" with all its beauty and immensity, Captain Bates exclaimed, "O how I wish Lord John Rosse were here to-night!" Not knowing even the name of John Rosse, Elder White asked, "Who is Lord John Rosse?" Joseph Bates told of this English astronomer and his description of the "opening" in the heavens.

That was enough for Elder Bates. He was satisfied that the visions came from a power outside of Ellen G. White's knowledge and control. No wonder he concluded, "I believe the work is of God, and is given to comfort and strengthen His 'scattered,' 'torn,' and 'pealed people.'" [17]

James White saw these manifestations almost from the very beginning and had more opportunity to evaluate them than perhaps anyone else. He wrote:

"Dreams and Visions are among the signs that precede the great and notable days of the Lord. And as the signs of that day have been, and still are fulfilling, it must be clear to every unprejudiced mind, that the time has fully come, when the children of God may expect dreams and visions from the Lord.

"I know that this is a very unpopular position to hold on this subject, even among Adventists; but I choose to believe the word of the Lord on this point, rather than the teachings of men. I am well aware of the prejudice in many minds on this subject; but as it has been caused principally by the preaching of popular Adventists and the lack of a correct view of this subject. I have humbly hoped to cut it away, with the 'sword of the Spirit,' from some minds, at least." [18]

Not all were won over to full and complete support for Ellen G. White and her singular spiritual manifestations. Some were merely overawed and silenced by what they saw and heard. Such is the case of Robbins and Sargent, who were leading a group of Advent believers into a very serious type of fanaticism in Boston, Massachusetts. We have the story in Otis Nichols' own handwriting, around whose home the story has its setting. It is also presented by Mrs. White in her book *Spiritual Gifts*. She tells the story:

"By invitation of Brother and Sister Nichols, my sister S. and myself again went to Massachusetts, and made their house our home. There was in Boston and vicinity a company of fanatical persons, who held that it was a sin to labor. Their principal message was, 'Sell that you have and give alms.' They said they were in the jubilee, the land should rest, and the poor must be supported without labor. Sargent,

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Robbins, and some others, were leaders. They denounced my visions as being of the Devil, because I had been shown their errors. They were severe upon all who did not believe with them. While we were visiting at Brother N's., R. and S. came from Boston to obtain a favor of Brother N., and said they had come to have a visit, and tarry over night with him. Brother N. replied that he was glad they had come, for sisters Sarah and Ellen were in the house, and wished them to become acquainted with us. They changed their mind at once, and could not be persuaded to come into the house. Brother N. asked if I could relate my message in Boston, and if they would hear, and then judge. 'Yes,' said they. 'Come into Boston next Sabbath, we would like the privilege of hearing her.'

"Accordingly we designed to visit Boston, but in the evening, at the commencement of the Sabbath, I was shown in vision that we must not go into Boston, but in an opposite direction to Randolph; that the Lord had a work for us to do there. We went to Randolph, and found a large room full collected, and among them those who said they would be pleased to hear my message in Boston. As we entered, R. and S. looked at each other in surprise, and began to groan. They had promised to meet me in Boston, but thought they would disappoint us by going to Randolph, and while we were in Boston, warn the brethren against us. They did not have much freedom. At intermission one of their number remarked that good matter would be brought out in the afternoon. Sister N. answered, 'I believe it.' R. told my sister that I could not have a vision where he was." [19]

The Review and Herald and the Visions

It is well to analyze another chapter in our early history having to do with the attitude of our early pioneers toward the gift of prophecy. A number of the visions were published in the Present Truth in 1849 and 1850. It must be remembered, however, that the Review and Herald, which followed in 1850 and on, was the church paper and the vehicle for presenting the truth to non church members as well. Some of the brethren were afraid that the "visions" and "testimonies" intended primarily for the church members (1 Corinthians 14:3, 4, 22) would prejudice the non church member readers of the Review. They decided that such material should be printed on a separate sheet and placed in papers going only to our own people.

Elder James White explained all this in a Review and Herald Extra in these words:

"THIS SHEET is the form of the paper that we hope to publish once in two weeks. . . . We do not design this extra for so general circulation as the regular paper, for the reason that strong prejudice exists in many minds against a portion of its contents. Those who judge of a matter before they hear are unwise. Says Paul, 'Despise not prophesying, prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' 1 Thessalonians v, 20, 21."

"We believe that God is unchangeable, that He is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' And that it is His will and purpose to teach His tried people, at this the most important period in the history of God's people, in the same manner as in past time. But as many are prejudiced against visions, we think best at present not to insert anything of the kind in the regular paper. We will therefore publish the visions by themselves for the benefit of those who believe that God can fulfill His word and give visions 'in the last days.'" [20]

For five years the Review published none of Mrs. White's visions and only five articles from her pen of a general hortatory nature. The leaders thought their position sound and commendable, but the results among the Advent people were not so wholesome. There seemed to result a general lack of appreciation of the gift, and a lowering of its place of importance in the work. This has been the general tendency all through the years for the individual Adventists as well as for the movement as a whole. "Where there is no vision [or an indifference to it], the people perish" seems to be as true in our times as it was in ancient Israel.

A general meeting in 1855 brought a realization that all was not well. There seemed to be a partial withdrawal of the gift of prophecy. From two sources we draw the conclusion that a disregard for the gift and a desire to push it somewhat into the background had met with Heaven's disfavor.

First, we note an action taken by the business session of the conference in 1855 which reads, "That Joseph Bates, J. H. Waggoner, and M. E. Cornell be appointed to address the saints in behalf of the Conference, on the gifts of the church." Then the small committee reported to the meeting. We extract a few key sentences:

Confession. "In view of the present low state of the precious cause of our blessed Master, we feel to humble ourselves before God, and confess our unfaithfulness and departure from the way of the Lord,

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whereby the spirit of holiness has been grieved, our own souls burdened, and an occasion, given to the enemy of all righteousness to rejoice over the decline of faith and spirituality amongst the scattered flock.”

Gifts – “Nor have we appreciated the glorious privilege of claiming the gifts which our blessed Master has vouchsafed to His people; and we greatly fear that we have grieved the Spirit by neglecting the blessings already conferred upon the church.”

Appreciated in Past – “We have also, in our past experience, been made to rejoice in the goodness of our God who has manifested His care for His people by leading us in His way and correcting our errors, through the operations of His Spirit. And the majority of Sabbath keepers in the Third Angel’s Message, have firmly believed that the Lord was calling His church out of the wilderness by the means appointed to bring us to the unity of the faith. We refer to the visions which God has promised to the remnant ‘in the last days.’”

Not to Take Place of Bible – “Nor do we, as some contend, exalt these gifts or their manifestations, above the Bible; on the contrary, we test them by the Bible, making it the great rule of judgment in all things. So that whatever is not in accordance with it, in its spirit and its teachings, we unhesitatingly reject. But as we cannot believe that a fountain sends forth at the same place sweet water and bitter, or that an evil tree brings forth good fruit, so we cannot believe that that is of the enemy which tends to unite the hearts of the saints, to lead to meekness and humility and holy living, and incites to deep heart searching before God, and a confession of our wrongs.”

An Attitude Displeasing to God-”While we hold these views as emanating from the divine Mind, we would confess the inconsistency (which we believe has been displeasing to God) of professedly regarding them as messages from God, and really putting them on a level with the inventions of men. We fear that this has resulted from an unwillingness to bear the reproach of Christ, (which is indeed greater riches than the treasures of earth,) and a desire to conciliate the feelings of our opponents; but the word and our own experience have taught us that God is not honored, nor His cause advanced, by such a course. While we regard them as coming from God, and entirely harmonizing with His written word, we must acknowledge ourselves under obligation to abide by their teachings, and be corrected by their admonitions. To say that they are of God, and yet we will not be tested by them, is to say that God’s will is not a test or rule for Christians, which is inconsistent and absurd.” [21]

The conference began November 15, 1855, and the declaration of confession and neglect was made by the brethren. Then on November 20 Ellen G. White was given a vision of which she wrote: “November 20, 1855, while in prayer, the Spirit of the Lord came suddenly and powerfully upon me, and I was taken off in vision. I saw that the Spirit of the Lord has been dying away from the church.” [22]

A few weeks later Sister White wrote:

“The visions have been of late less and less frequent, and my testimony for God’s children has been gone. I have thought that my work in God’s cause was done, and that I had no further duty to do, but to save my own soul, and carefully attend to my little family....

“At our late Conference at Battle Creek, in November God wrought for us. The minds of the servants of God were exercised as to the gifts of the Church, and if God’s frown had been brought upon His people because the gifts had been slighted and neglected, there was a pleasing prospect that His smiles would again be upon us, and He would graciously and mercifully revive the gifts again, and they would live in the Church, to encourage the desponding and fainting soul, and to correct and reprove the erring.” [23]

Dr. Brown Comes to Scoff, Flees in Consternation

The manifestation of such a phenomenon in the church was bound to produce a variety of reactions. Some believed and accepted., Others sneered and scoffed. One, a Dr. Brown of Parkville, Michigan, a Spiritualist physician himself, declared that he could control Mrs. White in vision if he ever had the opportunity.

This came rather unexpectedly on Sabbath, January 12, 1861, when Elder and Mrs. White for the first time attended church in that very place. At the close of her sermon that Sabbath, Sister White was taken in vision. Immediately somebody thought of Dr. Brown and his loud boasts. He was invited to come and examine her. This he did without a moment’s hesitation. An eyewitness tells what happened:

“Before he had half completed his examination, he turned deathly pale, and shook like an aspen leaf. Elder White said, ‘Will the doctor report her condition?’ He replied, ‘She does not breathe,’ and

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rapidly made his way to the door. Those at the door who knew of his boasting said, 'Go back, and do as you said you would; bring that woman out of the vision.' In great agitation he grasped the knob of the door, but was not permitted to open it until inquiry was made by those near the door, 'Doctor, what is it?' He replied, 'God only knows; let me out of this house;' and out he went." [24]

Thus the "testimony of Jesus," which is the "spirit of prophecy," was introduced among the Advent believers, and made its power and influence felt more and more as the years passed.

Advent Believers Accept the Seventh-day Sabbath

In Washington, New Hampshire, in the year 1844, was an earnest group of Advent believers preparing for the coming of the Lord. One Rachel Oakes Preston, a Seventh Day Baptist, came into that community and listened to the preaching on the coming of the Lord on October 22. They, of course, urged her to join them in looking for Jesus to come, but she in turn urged them to keep the seventh-day Sabbath if they really wanted to be ready when the Lord returned. Some of the Advent believers in Washington, New Hampshire, accepted the Sabbath truth and began observing it faithfully.

Early in 1845, after the terrible disappointment, T. M. Preble wrote an article on the seventh-day Sabbath for the paper called *The Hope of Israel*. Through this article Joseph Bates, an eager searcher for truth, was convinced that he should observe the Bible Sabbath, and he became an apostle of the Sabbath truth.

Early in 1846 Ellen Harmon and her sister and James White visited Joseph Bates at New Bedford. The thing that was on his heart was the Sabbath truth. He urged them to accept the true Bible Sabbath and they urged upon him the thing nearest to their hearts.

Regarding the Sabbath Ellen G. White wrote in *Life Sketches*: "I did not feel its importance, and thought that he [Bates] erred in dwelling upon the fourth commandment more than upon the other nine." [25] As a matter of fact she was not impressed by Joseph Bates's enthusiasm for the Sabbath idea. Nevertheless, about the time of their marriage in August, 1846, James and Ellen White read Bates's tract *The Seventh day Sabbath a Perpetual Sign*, and from the Bible verses used decided that they too must keep the seventh day as the Sabbath. She says, "In the autumn of 1846 we began to observe the Bible Sabbath, and to teach and defend it." [26]

As one more testimony in this body of evidence that the great truths taught by Seventh-day Adventists came first from the Bible and not from Mrs. White, let us note a letter written by her in 1874, stating:

"I believed the truth upon the Sabbath question before I had seen anything in vision in reference to the Sabbath. It was months after I had commenced keeping the Sabbath before I was shown its importance and its place in the third angel's message." [27]

It was on the first Sabbath in April, 1847, that she had her first vision regarding the Sabbath. By putting together *Testimonies*, volume 1, pages 75 ff., and a letter to Joseph Bates, written April 7, 1847, now appearing in *Early Writings*, pages 32-35, we get the whole story of what she saw and heard. She seemed to be transferred from earth to heaven and in vision she was taken through the heavenly sanctuary, where she saw the most holy place and the ark containing the law. She was amazed to see the fourth commandment shining above all the others in glory with a sort of halo of light all around it. She was told of the change of the Sabbath, of the significance of its acceptance and observance, especially in the troublous times ahead, when it will become a sign or a mark for the people who have chosen to obey God rather than man.

"I was shown that the third angel, proclaiming the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, represents the people who receive this message and raise the voice of warning to the world, to keep the commandments of God as the apple of the eye, and that in response to this warning many would embrace the Sabbath of the Lord." [28]

Lo, here are the people of God mentioned in Revelation 12, having the "testimony of Jesus," which is the "spirit of prophecy" (December, 1844), and keeping the commandments—all ten of them—the Seventh-day Sabbath included. Here the remnant church was born, and these two significant truths identify it.

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Four Tests of a True Prophet

Repeatedly the New Testament asserts that there will be prophets in the church. It likewise states, "There were false prophets also among the people." 2 Peter 2: 1. Clearly, we can expect both true and false prophets in the church. We should not "quench" the Holy Spirit and His manifestations or despise the prophesying, but rather "prove," test, and try them. As a result of such a process we are to "hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21.)

Ellen G. White claimed the gift of prophecy, and thereby declared herself to be a prophet in the church. She, however, preferred the term "messenger." Thus we find her declaring:

"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." [29]

Every member of the remnant church must face the fact of Mrs. E. G. White, her visions, and her testimonies. In all fairness to ourselves, to her, and to the God whom she claimed to represent and for whom she said she spoke, we should apply the recognized Bible tests to satisfy ourselves as to her genuineness, and then decide what we shall do about her "messages," "counsel," and "testimonies." This is a decision of tremendous and vital personal import, for that decision will mold and fashion the details of our everyday lives, nay, it will transform them.

Now let us first apply the tests of a prophet, see how Ellen G. White meets them, and then discuss final and vital decisions.

The Test of Fulfilled Predictions

Predictions of things to come are of interest to everybody, for without exception we like to peer through the veil of the future. However, making predictions, or foretelling, is but one phase of the work of the prophet.

There are four passages of Scripture to keep in mind when talking about the prophet's predictions of things to come:

(1) Secret things belong to God. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

(2) God reveals secrets to the prophets. (Amos 3:7.)

(3) Unfulfilled predictions made in the name of the Lord are presumptuous; fulfilled predictions demonstrate that the prophet was sent by the Lord. (Jeremiah 28:9)

(4) Some prophecies are conditional. (Jeremiah 18:7-10)

Prophets have been God's chosen spokesmen, and through them He has made known things to come. Hence it is but natural for men to watch with eager interest to see whether such predictions actually come to pass. A failure of fulfillment would obviously become a factor in acceptance or rejection of the one claiming to be a prophet.

In the work of Ellen G. White we would expect to find some definite predictions and their equally definite fulfillment. Let us very briefly look at some of them:

Streams of Published Light to Encircle the Globe-In 1848, when our early pioneers were penniless, she was shown that a paper should be printed, and from this small beginning the publishing work would be a stream of light that would go clear round the world." Surely we have seen these words fulfilled as Seventh-day Adventists distribute \$13,000,000 worth of literature each year in 197 languages.

We cite in somewhat more detail one more illustration:

Rochester "Rappings" to Become World-encircling Delusion-These mysterious "rappings" began with the Fox sisters in New York State in 1848. On March 24, 1849, Ellen G. White made the following prediction:

"I saw that the mysterious knocking in New York and other places was the power of Satan, and that such things would be more and more common, clothed in a religious garb so as to lull the deceived to greater security, and to draw the minds of God's people, if possible, to those things, and cause them to doubt the teachings and power of the Holy Ghost." [31]

On August 24, 1850, Ellen G. White again predicted: "I saw that soon ... it [the mysterious rapping] would spread more and more, that Satan's power would increase, and some of his devoted followers would have power to work miracles." [32]

Yet again on January 10, 1854, Mrs. White added these further details: "I saw the rapping delusion-what progress it was making, and if it were possible it would deceive the very elect. Satan will

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have power to bring the appearance of a form before us purporting to be our relatives and friends that now sleep in Jesus. It will be made to appear as though they were present; the words they uttered while here, which we were familiar with, will be spoken, and the same tone of voice, which they had while living, will fall upon the ear. All this is to deceive the saints, and ensnare them into the belief of this delusion.” [33]

Remember the dates of these predictions. In America then there were no mediums, trances, spirit messages, no organized groups or companies of Spiritualists. It was a bold prediction, but every word has come to pass. Recently a book entitled Centennial Book of Modern Spiritualism in America (1848-1948) was issued by the National Spiritualistic Association of the U.S.A., which summarizes their history and achievements. Spiritualism now claims millions of believers -eminent judges, physicians, scientists, editors, writers, poets, clergymen, educators, and statesmen of various countries.

According to the Declaration of Principles adopted by the National Spiritualist Association, those who have passed on are conscious, and can communicate with us; therefore, Spiritualism, according to Spiritualists, is God’s message to mortals, declaring that there is no death, that all who have passed on still live, and that there is hope in the life beyond for the most sinful. Spiritualism teaches that every soul will progress through the ages to heights sublime and glorious. This means universal salvation and messages from the dead to the living.

Today all of this is history, which records the fulfillment of another of the E. G. White predictions.

San Francisco Earthquake Predicted-From 1902 and on she warned of coming destruction of San Francisco and Oakland, crying out that “not long hence these cities will suffer under the judgments of God.” [34] Ask any old resident in San Francisco and Oakland and he will tell you how this prediction was fulfilled. [35]

World War Conditions Foretold Back in 1890-In an article in the Signs of the Times Mrs. White wrote:

“The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see [1] troubles on all sides. [2] Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. [3] Navies will go down, and [4] human lives will be sacrificed by millions. [5] Fires will break out unexpectedly, and no human effort will be able to quench them. The palaces of earth will be swept away in the fury of the flames. [6] Disasters by rail will become more and more frequent; [7] confusion, collision, and death without a moment’s warning will occur on the great lines of travel.... Oh, let us seek God while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near!” [36]

In 1910 she warned, “Soon strife among the nations will break out with an intensity that we do not now anticipate.” [37] The fulfillment of this prediction made when men everywhere were proclaiming the golden age of peace and safety is too fresh in our memories to need any recital of details.

Divine Guidance in Times of Crisis in the Advent Movement

There are three texts to keep in mind when studying God’s guidance of His people:

- (1) “The Lord shall guide thee continually.” (Isaiah 58: 11.)
- (2) He instructs us in the way we should go. (Psalm 32:8)
- (3) By a prophet the Lord led and guided Israel of old. (Hosea 12:13)

Here the prophet becomes a “forth-teller”-one who speaks forth the “word of the Lord” when that word is needed most urgently. One who steps in when God’s people do not know which way to turn or what to do; or warns of impending dangers when they are going in the wrong direction, or of the dire results if the course is pursued.

This phase of the prophet’s work called for remarkable courage, close timing, and specific instruction to meet very specific circumstances. To make a mistake here would be fatal both to the prophet himself and to the situation he could remedy or safeguard. Herein is a test of the true prophet.

Time and again Ellen G. White, directed only by God, stepped into critical situations and the message she bore saved the church. If time permitted we might recount some of these thrilling experiences-how at the turn of the century the denomination was saved in the crisis over pantheistic teachings; and then there was the “holy flesh- movement. We might give the details of the work of false prophets and how the situation was met. On many occasions messages received at a critical moment protected the church or prevented some serious blunder. One outstanding experience must suffice.

The Salamanca Vision-In the night of November 3, 1890, God looked ahead some four months

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and saw a meeting of a very small group of men that would be held late on the night of March 7, 1891. Things would be said and done at that meeting on March 7 which would not be for the best interest of our work. In order to duly impress those who would be participants in that meeting and to convince them beyond the shadow of a doubt that God was still in control of His work, He gave a vision to His servant Ellen G. White on the night of November 3, 1890, and showed her a scene of that very meeting. She saw a man stand up and lift a copy of the American Sentinel high in the air and point to several articles, declaring that such topics as the Sabbath and the Second Coming of Christ should not find a place in the paper which spoke for the Religious Liberty Association.

Several times Mrs. White began to tell what she had seen in that vision at the meeting in Salamanca, New York. Each time she faltered and could not recall a single detail. Finally after four months she came to Battle Creek to attend the conference which convened from March 5 to 25 in the year 1891. She had been speaking to the ministers at their 5:30 A.M. meeting. On March 7 the president asked her if she would be back on Sunday morning, March 8, and she declined, thinking that she had given enough instruction already.

The Sabbath closed, the evening meeting was concluded, and Sister White with all others retired. Did I say "all others"? Not exactly, for a small group of men went to an office in the Review and Herald building for a strictly secret meeting of their own. They locked the door and resolved not to leave that room until their highly controversial problem was settled. Hour after hour passed. Midnight found them deep in their debate. One o'clock, two, and then three, when they finally adjourned and went to their respective rooms to sleep and rest.

As that meeting closed, Ellen G. White, in the privacy of her own room, was awakened. The angel of the Lord bade her attend the five-thirty meeting and present what she had seen at Salamanca four months before. The whole scene came back, and she wrote page after page until time came for the five-thirty ministers' meeting. She picked up her manuscripts and made her way to the vestry in the Tabernacle. The ministers were assembled. W. W. Prescott and O. A. Olsen were prepared to speak, but on seeing Mrs. White enter the room with her papers, Elder Olsen asked whether she had a message.

"Indeed I do," responded Ellen G. White, and made her way to the speaker's desk.

The Testimony Delivered on Time—She stated that she had not planned to be present at that meeting, but that she had been awakened at three o'clock and bidden to present some things she had seen in vision at Salamanca, New York, on November 3, 1890.

O. A. Olsen who was there in Battle Creek that morning records what was said and done:

"She then began to read, describing a meeting that was shown her that was held in one of the rooms in the Review Office, where a number of brethren were together. She described their attitude and their earnestness, and the position which they had taken; for there was a heated discussion, as they could not agree on certain questions at issue.

"Personally I sat there, in blank bewilderment. I did not know what she referred to. I had neither heard nor had any knowledge of the things that she presented, nor of such a meeting as she described. Indeed, I was so surprised, and the things she presented as having taken place in that meeting seemed so unreasonable, that I was quite nonplused in my mind as to what this meant." [38]

When Sister White sat down, the men present looked at one another in bewilderment, but not for long. Captain Eldridge arose and said:

"I was in that meeting. . . . Last night, after the close of the Conference, some of us met in my room in the Review Office, where we locked ourselves in, and there took up and discussed the questions and the matter that has been presented to us this morning. We remained in that room till three o'clock this morning." [39]

He stated further: "If I should have begun to give a description of what took place, and the personal attitude of those in the room, I could not have given it as exactly and correctly as it has been given by Sister White. I now see that I was in error; that the position that I took was not correct; and from the light that has been given this morning, I acknowledge that I was wrong." [40]

A. F. Ballenger, then secretary of the Religious Liberty Association, arose and said that the meeting described by the servant of the Lord had been held the night before. He declared that he was the one who had held up the copy of the American Sentinel and pointed to the article on the Sabbath and the Second Advent. He also confessed that he had been on the wrong side of the controversy.

Only a messenger in close communion with God could bear such an unusual but absolutely accurate testimony about a meeting to be held four months in advance.

Time and space forbid consideration of many other intensely interesting stories of crises met

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through divine guidance. We turn now to the third great test.

“To the Law and to the Testimony”

The true prophet must speak and write messages which are in harmony with the law and the testimony, or “there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. Every true prophet will be in accord with the law of God and the testimony of all of the other true prophets. Stated briefly, we must now test the twenty-five million words written by Ellen G. White, most of which appear in her forty-three bound volumes and the four thousand periodical articles of the church papers. Since she wrote so much, the chances of discrepancies are greatly increased. Did her teachings harmonize with the Scriptures?

Here we are looking at the prophet as a “for-teller,” one who speaks for God, who expounds, clarifies, and explains. In this capacity Ellen G. White did the major portion of her work. She added nothing new in doctrine, but exalted the Scriptures and gave them a central position in all her writings. Hers was the work of a magnifying glass, simply making the details of the observed object stand out in clearer lines, showing its original beauty more perfectly. Hers is a sort of inspired commentary on the Bible.

So clear is this point of agreement of the Ellen G. White teachings with those of the Bible that it is unnecessary here to review the work of Ellen White in the light of this test. The Bible sets forth several characteristics of the true prophet in relationship to “the law and the prophets,” or the Scriptures as we know them:

1. Deuteronomy 13:1-4. He will exalt the true God.
2. 2 Chronicles 24:19, 20; Deuteronomy 13:4. He will teach obedience to God’s law.
3. 1 John 4:2, 3. He will believe and teach that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.
4. 2 Peter 1:21. He will speak as he is inspired by the Holy Ghost.

The writings of Ellen G. White not only give every evidence that she was the kind of person set forth in these scriptures but her work agrees in every detail with the expectations of God as delineated in His Word. She most certainly passes this third great test.

“By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them”

Seventy years is a long time to live and work before the public, under the critical eyes of millions of people, largely skeptical, doubtful, uncertain, suspicious, and in some cases openly hostile. If any faults, errors, or inconsistencies existed, they would be exposed with great satisfaction by opponents.

Mrs. White lived in various places, in New England, Michigan, Switzerland, Australia, and California. She traveled extensively in many parts of the United States, Europe, and Australia, but the fruit of her life and labors attests to her godliness, her sincerity, her zeal and earnestness, her upright and noble character, and her consistent Christian conduct.

The Testimony of Uriah Smith-The testimony of one who was in a strategic point for observation must suffice. Uriah Smith, for many years the editor of the church paper, the Review and Herald, in constant touch with Mrs. White and her work, sometimes the recipient of her “testimonies” and “counsels,” should be able to judge her work by the fruit or results of that work:

“Every test which can be brought to bear upon such manifestations proves them 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. Calm, dignified, impressive, they commend themselves to every beholder as the very opposite of that which is false or fanatical.

“Their fruit is such as to show that the source from which they spring is the opposite of evil.

“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, more zealous efforts for holiness of heart, and greater diligence in the cause and service of our Master.

“They lead us to Christ. Like the Bible they set Him forth as the only hope and only Savior of

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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.

“They lead us to the Bible. They set forth that Book as the inspired and unalterable word of God. They exhort 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 teachings, for it is to judge us in the last day.

“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 Savior, 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.’ [41]

Ellen G. White’s Attitude Toward Jesus Christ-If one of the signs of a true prophet is to uplift, and exalt, and extol Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Son of man, the Savior of the fallen race, then the fruit of that teaching throughout the full seventy years of her labor can be found on every page of her writings and seen in the lives of Seventh-day Adventists around the world. Where will you find more beautiful words than these:

“Lift up Jesus, YOU that teach the people, lift Him up in sermon, in song, in prayer. Let all your powers be directed to pointing souls, confused, bewildered, lost, to ‘the Lamb of God.’ Lift Him up, the risen Savior, and say to all who hear, Come to Him who ‘hath loved us, and hath given himself for us.’ Let the science of salvation be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication. Bring nothing into your preaching to supplement Christ, the wisdom and power of God. Hold forth the word of life, presenting Jesus as the hope of the penitent and the stronghold of every believer. Reveal the way of peace to the troubled and the despondent, and show forth the grace and completeness of the Savior.” [42]

The External Evidence-The 4,155 church schools, the 283 intermediate schools, academies, and colleges, the 200,000 students in them, and the 40,000,000 dollars’ worth of Seventh-day Adventist school property-all witness to Ellen G. White’s work in the field of Christian education.

The 106 sanitariums, the 57 treatment rooms, the 371 institutional physicians, the College of Medical Evangelists, the 25,000,000 dollars’ worth of medical institutions-all bear witness to Ellen G. White’s work in the field of health and healing.

The 43 publishing houses, the 12,000,000 dollars’ worth of denominational publishing property, the 4,500 faithful colporteurs, the sale of a million and a quarter dollars’ worth of Seventh-day Adventist literature each month of the year-all bear their powerful testimony as to Ellen G. White’s work in the field of Seventh-day Adventist literature ministry.

The 17,000 Sabbath schools, the 1,000,000 Sabbath school members, the \$5,000,000 a year as a Sabbath school gift to foreign missions-all testify to the power of her counsels on Sabbath school work.

The worldwide General Conference organization of Seventh-day Adventists, with its 80 union conference organizations, its 143 local conference and 227 mission organizations, its 10,300 churches, its 18,000 evangelistic workers, and 756,712 baptized church members, reflects the fruit of this gift.

The consistent godly lives of Seventh-day Adventists around the world, exemplifying in their daily experience the principles set forth in the two score E. G. White books, testify to the prophetic gift-all these are the external evidence of the power and influence of Ellen G. White’s work for the spiritual uplift of the people of all nations.

All of this, I say, stands today as incontrovertible evidence of the power and influence of the life and work of the messenger who spoke and wrote what she called the messages of God to the people of the remnant church. These have stimulated, encouraged, and directed the inventive genius, the executive ability, the constructive thinking, and the consecrated efforts of men and women who have been instruments in God’s hand to bring about so great an achievement.

Blot out her writings and take out of the Seventh-day Adventist movement the life and influence of Ellen G. White and what would you have left? Perhaps something similar to what you have today in the Advent Christian Church, for the two were on a par on October 23, 1844.

Six Evidences That Ellen G. White Bore the Testimony of Jesus to the Remnant Church

By the four Bible tests we must all agree that the claims of Ellen G. White seem to be substantiated, and that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is justified in its claims to be the remnant church

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of Revelation 12:17.

Lest there remain any within or without the church who still doubt her claims, we hasten to present added cumulative evidence, so that in the end all may be without excuse. Let us look at the evidence under six heads:

- a. The timeliness of the messages given.
- b. The practical nature of the messages.
- c. The absolute certainty of the messages.
- d. The relation to outside influences.
- e. The recognition accorded by contemporaries.
- f. The physical phenomena attending the “messenger.”

Perhaps one incident or illustration from among many which might be cited will suffice for each type of evidence. We dip back into the records of a remarkably busy life for these very interesting and at times most unusual experiences.

The Timeliness of the Messages

Time and again the counsel given by the Lord for some particular individual arrived at the exact moment when it was needed most. Too early, it would not have been appreciated; too late, it would not have served its purpose. This placed a great responsibility upon the messenger of the Lord, for procrastination would have meant the defeat of God’s plans and purposes. This often necessitated rising at a very early hour, writing diligently hour after hour, hurrying to the post office to make connections with a particular train or boat. But the Lord saw to all of those details, and the Lord’s servant responded to the call of her Master any hour of the day or night.

In June, 1871, two of our ministers, J. N. Loughborough and a fellow evangelist, began a tent effort in the city of San Francisco. In due time the meetings were transferred from the tent to a hall and by December 1, 1871, about fifty people had been baptized.

Much to the chagrin of the workers and believers and to the shame of the cause of God, Elder Loughborough’s fellow evangelist had fallen into some questionable associations and actions. His conduct became such as to raise serious questions as to his relationship to the church and certainly gave rise to criticism by those opposing our work in that city. He took the attitude that he had a right to “do as he pleased,- and walk the streets “as he pleased- and “with whom he pleased.”

When counseled and admonished by the brethren his only response was it is “none of your business,” which was of course not true, for it is the business of the church how you and I conduct ourselves and live our lives. On Sabbath, January 27, 1872, it was decided that the church should investigate the situation on Sunday, January 28, at 9:00 A.M.

As Elder Loughborough started for that Sunday morning meeting, he met the brother on the sidewalk near the boarding house. He was weeping and gave evidence of a broken spirit. Looking up, he said, “Brother Loughborough, I am not going to the meeting today Not going to the meeting?” said Elder Loughborough. “The meeting relates to your case.”

“I know that,” said he, “but I am all wrong. You are right in the position you have taken in reference to me. Here is a letter of confession I have written to the church; you take it and read it to them.”

“What has occasioned this great change in you since yesterday?” inquired the elder.

“I went to the post office last night, after the Sabbath, and received a letter from Sister White, from Battle Creek, Michigan. It is a testimony she has written out for me,” he replied. “Read that, and you will see how the Lord sees my case.

Now what would you do with such a testimony if you were in a similar situation? I hold in my hand today the handwritten original of that testimony. It was mailed January 18, 1872. Very early that morning Sister White was awakened in her room in Battle Creek. She was bidden to arise and write out the testimony of what she had seen in vision on December 10, 1871, while in Bordoville, Vermont. As long before as December 27 she had begun to write out what she had seen about this worker in San Francisco, but had not finished it.

Without a moment’s delay she arose, and the voice said, ‘Write out immediately that testimony for California, and get it into the very next mail; it is needed.’ just before breakfast she called her son Edson and charged him, “Take this letter to the post office, but don’t put it into the drop. Hand it to the postmaster, and have him be sure to put it into the mail bag that goes out this morning.”

Thus this letter reached San Francisco on January 27, when the worker in trouble needed it most urgently. No, my brother, my sister, such things do not just happen. The very timeliness of the messages is

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an evidence of their divine origin. [43]

The Practical Nature of the Messages

The practical nature of Ellen G. White's messages may well be illustrated by one of her experiences in Australia. She went there to help lay solid foundations for the building of our work in that part of the world. A great believer in youth as God's heritage in the church, and realizing that a trained leadership for the church of tomorrow depends upon the training of the boys and girls of today, she at once proposed the founding of a college, a Seventh-day Adventist training center-and this not just another college, but an institution such as God had shown her to be His kind of school, the details of which are found in the chapter on "Work and Education" in the book *Fundamentals of Christian Education*.

How impossible it seemed for our few, poor church members in Australia to carry out such a plan! But there was the counsel given as "instruction from the Lord." Not all the Australian brethren were convinced that the plan was a wise one and some gave expression to their feelings. Elder W. C. White wrote of this attitude:

"One day an influential and talented member of the Melbourne church, after listening to our plans for the establishment of such a school as we had at Healdsburg, said to me, "Brother White, this plan of building such a school is not an Australian plan at all, the demand for having such a school is not an Australian demand. The idea of establishing a school at this time, when our cause is so young and weak, is not an Australian idea." [41]

All of which was perfectly true and obvious. Neither was it Ellen G. White's plan nor idea, but rather both plan and idea were God's. Finally, the brethren appointed a committee to search for a suitable tract of land for such a school as called for in the "blueprint." They found fine places but with a fine price of \$75 and up an acre, and that was impossible. In due time the committee found a block of 1,500 acres near Cooranbong, some seventy-five miles north of Sydney. It had but one commendatory feature-it was cheap at \$3 an acre. That price would and could buy only "poor, sandy, and hungry" land. The committee members were disappointed, but they decided Sister White should see it.

From several sources we put the story together. It seems that part of the committee went ahead, leaving Sister White to make the journey with Elder and Mrs. G. B. Starr. On the train she told the Starrs of her dream in which she and they were standing on the piece of property, looking it over, testing the soil, and studying a neat-cut furrow that had been plowed one quarter of a yard deep and two yards in length. She saw two of the brethren, who had grown up with the Iowa type of rich, deep soil, standing by the furrow and saying, "This is not good land; the soil is not favorable." As they spoke those words Sister White was told by One who had often given her counsel, "False witness has been borne of this land."

In due time she and her party arrived at Cooranbong, and looked over the estate without reaching a decision that day. The next morning, May 25, 1894, the whole group met in a fisherman's hut for a season of prayer. Sister White felt a burden to pray for divine healing to come to Brother McCullagh's tuberculosis-weakened body. As she prayed for him, he felt a sensation like an electric wave pass through his whole body and arose from that season of prayer a completely restored man, who continued to live for more than thirty-five years.

This manifestation of divine presence assured them all of divine guidance in the decision to be made that day. The group scattered out to examine the various parts of the property. The Starrs and Sister White walked over the place and came upon a spot where a neat-cut furrow had been plowed one quarter of a yard deep and two yards in length.

As they stood there looking at the turned up soil, two brethren came upon them from different directions. On seeing Sister White they remarked, "This is not good land; the soil is not favorable." [45]

Whereupon Sister White immediately told them of her dream and of the fulfillment. They decided to take the place, and made a down payment. Even then some hesitated, and to make sure they requested a government agricultural expert to visit the land and give his frank and honest appraisal of it. His comment was that if a bandicoot wanted to cross the 1,500 acres he would have to take with him his lunch in a basket, for there would be nothing for him to eat.

In the spring of 1895 the place was bought on the advice of the Lord and in spite of the expert's adverse report. To show Sister White's own confidence in what God had revealed to her, she selected sixty-six acres of the same land, moved into a few tents, and began work on her place, which she called "Sunny Side." She demonstrated that with proper cultivation the land would produce abundantly-and so it has all these years-a splendid harvest of fruit and vegetables and of fine Seventh-day Adventist youth to be workers in the great harvest fields.

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The Certainty of the Prophetic Messages

Here is a type of evidence which is conclusive and convincing, one in which no mistakes could be made without dire consequences to those involved. Here is no room for guesswork nor for human devising or imaginings. The message was either from God, or else it definitely was not.

Elder and Mrs. White arrived on the campground in a certain State after the meetings had begun. The people were assembled and a speaker was on the platform in the midst of his sermon. Ellen White paused a moment as she approached, and without a bit of hesitation took the arm of James White and they walked down the aisle straight to the place before the desk. James White sat down. She looked up at the man, and pointing her finger at him said in a loud voice, "You have no business to be standing by that desk. You are not a fit man to be bringing a message to these people."

Naturally the man stopped; all eyes were focused on him and on Ellen G. White as they stood there. She had never seen the man before, nor did she know anything about him, except what the Lord had revealed to her. She had heard only the sound of his voice, and the Lord told her when she heard that voice to deliver a message to that person. Tell him that he is not a fit man to preach to the people. There is a woman in another State who calls him husband and a child who calls him father, and there is a woman here on this campground who calls him husband and a child who calls him father.

The man disappeared. His sermon was never finished. His own brother sitting in the audience admitted that what Sister White had said was true, that the man had been living a double life and deserved the open rebuke. The effect of that message was immediate. The Spirit of God came into that camp, and a great revival followed.

Suppose Sister White had made a mistake. Suppose she had addressed the wrong man. Suppose it had been a message for a different camp meeting. It is easy to suppose a good many things in a situation like that, but Ellen G. White was certain of her revelations from the Lord only because she recognized a voice she had heard in vision. The Lord makes no mistakes.

No, if the Lord worked through her at all, the messages would be certain and very specific. Such messages could come from God alone; no human mind could devise such things with such deadly accuracy.

The Relation to Outside Influences

It would be but human to question and wonder whether at times Ellen G. White was not influenced by someone near her, or working for her, or perhaps the president of the General Conference, who might give her "messages" a certain "bias" or "slant." Some have wondered to what extent Milton's *Paradise Lost* might have influenced her Conflict Series, or whether she had been reading Doctors Trall and Jackson before her "health vision" of 1863.

These are good and fair questions, and therefore deserve the same kind of answer. First, let us look at the *Paradise Lost* question. In the spring of 1858 she had the long vision in which the scenes of the great controversy were opened before her. She was so thrilled with the message that she told it to the believers in Battle Creek at the morning and evening services.

J. N. Andrews heard the description of the fall of Satan, the fall of man, and the plan of salvation. He asked Mrs. White whether she had ever read Milton's book. She replied that she had never seen it nor read it. J. N. Andrews gave her a copy, but she put it up on a high shelf out of reach until she had finished writing out what she had been shown. Then she read it with great interest to see the harmony between the accounts.

The health message of 1863 brought from her pen these words: "As I introduced the subject of health to friends ... and spoke against drugs and flesh meats, and in favor of water, pure air, and a proper diet, the reply was often made, 'You speak very nearly the opinions taught in the *Laws of Life*, and other publications, by Drs. Trall, Jackson, and others. Have you read that paper and those works?' My reply was that I had not, neither should I read them till I had fully written out my views, lest it should be said that I had received my light upon the subject of health from physicians, and not from the Lord." [46]

In the same year she again declared, "My views were written independent of books or the opinions of others." [47]

Recognized by Contemporaries

Contemporaries are of three kinds—those interested in the subject who approve or accept it, those interested in the subject who disapprove and reject it, and those not interested but who may accept or reject it. Mrs. E. G. White for the seventy years of her ministry had all three kinds of contemporaries, and it is

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only reasonable that we might get all three kinds of reactions or recognition.

Those Interested Who Approved-Let us begin with her friends who approved and accepted her and her work. The president of the General Conference in 1883 was George I. Butler, who stood in a unique relationship between Mrs. White and the people. He had very intimate relationships with both people and God's messenger, and we shall let him speak for those who approved of her call and work. He knew whereof he spoke when he said:

"The majority of our people believe these visions to be a genuine manifestation of spiritual gifts, and as such to be entitled to respect. We do not hold them to be superior to the Bible, or in one sense equal to it. The Scriptures are our rule to test everything by, the visions as well as all other things. That rule, therefore, is of the highest authority; the standard is higher than the thing tested by it. If the Bible should show the visions were not in harmony with it, the Bible would stand, and the visions would be given up. This shows plainly that we hold the Bible the highest, our enemies to the contrary, notwithstanding." [48]

Elder J. N. Loughborough, a close associate, testifies:

"It is now over fifty-eight years since the writer first saw Mrs. E. G. White in prophetic vision. During these years many prophetic statements have been made by her relative to things that would take place. Some of these predictions relate to events already fulfilled, and some are in process of fulfillment, while others are still future. As to those relating to the past or present events, I know not of a single instance of failure." [49] "We find that the continual instruction given through Mrs. White has been in the line of unity and harmony, admonishing to 'counsel together' and to 'press together,' to be in union with Christ, thus insuring true fellowship and union with one another." [50]

Another leader in the Seventh-day Adventist movement fully qualified to speak concerning the "visions" and messages from the Lord through Ellen G. White was Uriah Smith, the editor of the church paper, the Review and Herald. In the issue of January 13, 1863, he published an editorial under the title of "Do We Discard the Bible by Endorsing the Visions?" We quote his own words:

"Those who profess to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone, are bound to receive what the Bible tells them will exist, and commands them to respect." [51]

Those Interested Who Disapproved-One of Mrs. White's most severe and unrelenting critics was D. M. Canright, one-time preacher for the Seventh-day Adventist people. Look at Canright's attitude toward Mrs. White from three angles-first, as a Seventh-day Adventist; then, as an opponent of the messages; finally, as an old man, too proud to admit a mistake, too weak to take his stand for the truth.

In 1885, just two years before he left the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he wrote in the Review and Herald the following words:

"While I have carefully read the first, second, and third volumes of 'Spirit of Prophecy,' heaven has seemed very near to me. If the Spirit of God does not speak to us in these writings, then I should despair of ever discerning it. Oh, how precious the dear Savior looks! How infinitely valuable the salvation of one soul! How hateful and inexcusable sin appears! God is good, and the sweetest thing on this earth is to love and serve him." [52]

"I have read many books, but never one which has interested me so intensely and impressed me so profoundly as Volume 4 of 'The Great Controversy,' by Sister White. Perhaps it may be partly because I see things differently; but I am sure that is not wholly the reason. The historical part is good, but that which was of the most intense interest to me, was the last part, beginning with the 'Origin of Evil.' The ideas concerning the nature and attributes of God, the character of Christ, and the rebellion of Lucifer in heaven, carry with them their own proof of inspiration. They moved the depths of my soul as nothing else ever did. I feel that I have a new and higher conception of the goodness and forbearance of God, the awful wickedness of Satan, and the tender love of Christ. I wish everybody could read it whether of our people or not. Get it, brethren, and read it carefully." [53]

In 1877, ten years before he finally turned his back on the Adventist Church, the Adventist message, and Ellen G. White, he wrote:

"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, more than half the history of our people. I have been in their family time and again, sometimes weeks at a time. They have been in our house and family many times. I have traveled with them almost everywhere; have been with them in private and in public, in meeting and out of meeting, and have had the very best chances to know something of the life, character, and spirit of Brother and Sister White. As a minister, I have had to deal with all kinds of persons, and all kinds of character, till I think I can judge something of what a person is, at least after years of intimate acquaintance.

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I know Sister White to be an unassuming, modest, kind-hearted, noble woman. These traits in her character are not simply put on and cultivated, but they spring gracefully and easily from her natural disposition. She is not self-conceited, self-righteous, and self-important, as fanatics always are. I have frequently come in contact with fanatical persons, and I have always found them to be full of pretentious, full of pride, ready to give their opinion, boastful of their holiness, etc. But I have ever found Sister White the reverse of all this. Any one, the poorest and the humblest, can go to her freely for advice and comfort without being repulsed. She is ever looking after the needy, the destitute, and the suffering, providing for them, and pleading their cause. I have never formed an acquaintance with any persons who so constantly have the fear of God before them.” [54]

It is strange how quickly the mental machinery of some people can go into reverse. We believe D. M. Canright to have been an honest man and to have meant what he said at least when he was saying it. Either he told the truth or he told lies. Now read some words from the same man and judge for yourself which Canright was telling the truth:

“I have been well acquainted with Mrs. White for nearly thirty years; have been in her family for weeks at a time, and she has often been in my family. I am familiar with all her work and all her books. I am satisfied that the whole thing is a delusion. Her visions have been a constant source of quarrels and divisions among themselves. Many of their ablest men, and thousands of others, have left them on this account. There is a strong anti vision party now....

“Mrs. White’s trances are simply the result of disease and religious excitement-hysteria. At the age of nine she received a blow upon her head which broke her nose and nearly killed her. It shattered her nervous system beyond recovery, and affected her mind to melancholy and even to insanity. She was weakly, sickly, often fainted, and did not expect to live. In this condition she was carried away with the Millerite fanaticism, and went into trances with others. All this she tells herself, in *Spiritual Gifts*, Volume 11, pages 7-48. . . .

“What harm does she do? Much every way. She teaches a false doctrine, writes a new Bible, leads her people to be narrow, clannish, and bigoted, to oppose the work of all other churches and needed Sunday and temperance laws. She has divided families, broken up churches, driven some to infidelity and others into despair. It leads her advocates to deceive. Being afraid that it will hurt them if it is known in what light they really hold her visions, they deny that it is a matter of importance with them. This is false and deceptive, for they hold her visions to be as sacred as the Bible. To defend her mistakes and errors, both she and her apologists have to deny the plainest facts and resort to untruthful statements. Fear of her authority compels many to profess faith in her when they have none, and thus become hypocrites.” [55]

Many years went by, and D. M. Canright became the pastor emeritus of the Berean Baptist church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1919 he published a book, *Life of Mrs. E. G. White*, in which he took one full page to make clear his “present standing”:

“Since I withdrew from the Adventists, over thirty years ago, they have continued to report that I have regretted leaving them, have tried to get back again, have repudiated my book which I wrote and have confessed that I am now a lost man. There has never been a word of truth in any of these reports. I expect them to report that I recanted on my deathbed. All this is done to hinder the influence of my books. I now reaffirm all that I have written in my books and tracts against that doctrine.

“Several Adventist ministers have rendered valuable aid in preparing these pages. Once they were believers in Mrs. White’s divine inspiration, but plain facts finally compelled them to renounce faith in her dreams.” [56]

We come now to the question, Did D. M. Canright ever show any signs of regret for his own course of action? Did he ever indicate that he was sorry for the active and open warfare he conducted against Ellen G. White? In his book published in 1919 he declares that he did not. But in 1915 at Battle Creek when Mrs. White rested in her casket, and the funeral service was ended, and the people passed quietly by to pay a final tribute to a great, noble, but humble servant of God, D. M. Canright was among them. He and his brother passed by once, and then came by a second time. He rested his hand upon the side of the casket, and with warm tears trickling down his cheeks, he said, “There is a noble Christian woman gone.” [57]

Those Disinterested Who Approved-The last group of contemporaries to speak their mind concerning Mrs. E. G. White are those non-Adventists who were neither friend nor foe, but merely onlookers or bystanders, who observed much but said little. They saw her as a woman, a neighbor, a citizen, a busy worker going here and there. They had no special reason for saying anything good or bad about her.

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Yet come with me to Battle Creek, where Ellen G. White lived for many years. The town leaders were preparing for a big mass meeting. They were anxious to make a good impression and to reach a certain objective in something of interest to all the citizens of Battle Creek. They wanted a public speaker with persuasive power, a gift of oratory, and a personality that would draw and hold the crowds.

To whom did they turn? None other than one of their own citizens on the west side—Mrs. E. G. White. Mayor Austin, W. H. Skinner, cashier of the First National Bank, and C. C. Peavey were the committee on arrangements. They invited Ellen G. White because they knew her and her work. Mrs. White, in writing of that occasion, says:

“I spoke in the mammoth tent, Sunday evening, July 1 [1877], upon the subject of Christian Temperance. God helped me that evening; and although I spoke ninety minutes, the crowd of fully five thousand persons listened in almost breathless silence.” [58]

The following year (1878) a book was published entitled *American Biographical History of Eminent and Self Made Men of the State of Michigan, Third Congressional District*. The authors of this book evidently observed and thought independently relative to Mrs. White:

“Mrs. White is a woman of singularly well-balanced mental organization. Benevolence, spirituality, conscientiousness, and ideality are the predominating traits. Her personal qualities are such as to win for her the warmest friendship of all with whom she comes in contact, and to inspire them with the utmost confidence in her sincerity. . . . Notwithstanding her many years of public labor, she has retained all the simplicity and honesty which characterized her early life.

“As a speaker, Mrs. White is one of the most successful of the few ladies who have become noteworthy as lecturers, in this country, during the last twenty years. Constant use has so strengthened her vocal organs as to give her voice rare depth and power. Her clearness and strength of articulation are so great that, when speaking in the open air, she has frequently been distinctly heard at the distance of a mile. Her language, though simple, is always forcible and elegant. When inspired with her subject, she is often marvelously eloquent, holding the largest audiences spellbound for hours without a sign of impatience or weariness.

“The subject matter of her discourses is always of a practical character, bearing chiefly on fireside duties, the religious education of children, temperance, and kindred topics. On revival occasions, she is always the most effective speaker. She has frequently spoken to immense audiences, in the large cities, on her favorite themes, and has always been received with great favor.” [59]

The Physical Phenomena Attending the Visions

For Seventh-day Adventists in particular and the world in general, seventy years of work by Ellen G. White have produced so many results of varied kinds that she and her works can be appraised and judged by their fruits alone. It was not so in 1844 and the years which immediately followed. Then evidence of a kind so unusual, so specific, was needed as to arrest attention and produce conviction and cause men and women to believe in her and her revelations.

Physical phenomena such as are described in the Bible concerning prophets, dreams, and visions supplied this evidence. They are described in Daniel 10: 16-19; Numbers 24:3, 4; 2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Corinthians 12:2A. The only question which concerns us briefly here is, Did Ellen G. White actually give evidence of these Biblical signs in the realm of physical phenomena?

Few, if any, present in this room can bear a personal testimony of having seen her in vision when she gave evidence of such physical manifestations. The most and the best we can do is to take the word or testimony of those who did have such firsthand knowledge. This we have in abundance from men whose veracity and honor are beyond question or doubt. The answer is, “Yes, the very same physical conditions were present in Mrs. White while in vision as are described in the Scriptures.”

The Relation of Ellen G. White to the Bible

Surely no one in this audience today, and I take for granted that most certainly no one in the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the world, would openly deny and defy God and His simple declaration of the fact that He has chosen to speak to men by His holy men called prophets. This is basic and fundamental.

The question which we have raised in this study is simply this, “Was Ellen G. White used by God as His prophet or messenger in the remnant church?” This we have studied, and we think sufficient

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evidence has been produced to satisfy every one of us that she was indeed chosen by God and for seventy years used by God as His “messenger,” and that He gave her revelations which she faithfully wrote out and are now published for us to read.

We have yet two phases of the topic which we wish to consider. First, the relation of Ellen G. White and her writings to the Scriptures; second, my personal relationship, and yours, to the writings of Ellen G. White.

These are vitally important questions for each one of us to study and analyze carefully and prayerfully; for once having thought, them through we shall be brought face to face with a decision which can and must affect our present way of living and our future destiny. May God help us now to find His way through these great questions is our sincere prayer at this very moment.

A few Seventh-day Adventists are inclined to give the impression that Ellen G. White’s writings are on a par with the Bible, and a very few tend to set the Scriptures aside and give first place in their study to the books written by Sister White. Without doubt the very free use we make of paragraphs and sentences from her writings in our sermons and Sabbath school lessons has given rise to the accusation from our critics that we make of those writings a second Bible.

However, to properly understand how Seventh-day Adventists as a group or as a church regard the writings of Ellen G. White, we should turn first to Mrs. White herself and find out the relation she saw between her writings and the Bible, and then examine statements by the leaders of the denomination as to the relation they see between the Bible and Mrs. White’s writings.

Ellen G. White Exalted the Scriptures

No clearer statement can be found from the pen of Ellen White concerning the relationship of her writings to the Scriptures than the words with which she closed her first book (*Experiences and Views*) in 1851:

“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.” [60]

All through her life she exalted the Word of God. Her last words to the General Conference in session were spoken in 1909 as she held the Bible extended on her hands: “I commend unto you this Book.” [61]

Again and again she reiterated the truth of the supremacy of the Word of God. (See Item 3 in Appendix, page 277, for further E. G. White statements on this topic.)

From her own statements we may conclude that Ellen G. White believed:

- a. That the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God.
- b. That men should “cling” to their Bibles.
- c. That men should believe and obey the Bible and “not one” of them would be lost.
- d. That in the Bible is found “comfort, guidance, counsel, and the plan of salvation as clear as a sunbeam.”
- e. That the Bible is “fitted” for the needs of all-rich and poor, learned and illiterate, “all ages and all classes.”
- f. That the “truth of God is found in His Word.”
- g. That no one need “seek elsewhere for present truth.”
- h. That the Bible contains all that a man needs for salvation.
- i. That the Bible sets forth the pattern for Christian living.
- j. That the Testimonies were given only because man has neglected his Bible, and that the Testimonies will direct him back to his Bible. They are not given as “an addition to the Word of God,” nor to take the place of that Word of God.

Spirit of Prophecy Relationship to Development of Doctrine

Someone may say, “Is it not a fact that we Adventists got our fundamental doctrines and interpretations of prophecy from the writings of Ellen G. White?”

There is but one answer. No, we did not in the past and we cannot today. Our doctrines came from

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the Bible and then were confirmed by God in the revelations given to Mrs. White. As to interpretations of prophecy, L. E. Froom, in his four volumes, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, has proved conclusively that Seventh-day Adventists have made but few contributions in this field. Nowhere does Ellen G. White claim the right or distinction to any original interpretations of prophecy. That was not her burden or her message.

In 1848 and 1849 the earnest group of Sabbath-observing Adventists came together in a series of Bible conferences. They were held in such places as Rocky Hill, Connecticut, April 20-24, 1848; Volney, New York, beginning August 18, 1848, in "Brother Arnold's barn"; Port Gibson, New York, August 27 and 28, in "Hiram Edson's barn"; Rocky Hill, Connecticut, September 8 and 9; and in Topsham, Maine, October 20-22, in "Brother Howland's house."

The record states that when they first came together for such study, "hardly two agreed. Each was strenuous for his views." [62] Sister White says:

"I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word.... When they came to the point in their study where they said, 'We can do nothing more,' the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively." [63]

Of great significance are these words:

"During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given!" [64]

Without a doubt God intended it to be that way, for the doctrinal truths held by Seventh-day Adventists thus come from the Bible and not from Ellen G. White.

The Greater Light and the Lesser Light

In order that there may be no mistake in the relation of the writings of Ellen G. White to the Bible, God impressed this fact upon her mind by a dream which she had on April 3, 1871. Concerning it she wrote:

"I seemed to be attending an important meeting, at which a large company were assembled....

"I took the precious Bible and surrounded it with the several Testimonies for the Church, given for the people of God. Here, said I, the cases of nearly all are met. The sins they are to shun are pointed out. The counsel that they desire can be found here, given for other cases situated similarly to themselves. God has been pleased to give you line upon line and precept upon precept. But there are not many of you that really know what is contained in the Testimonies. You are not familiar with the Scriptures. If you had made God's word your study, with a desire to reach the Bible standard and attain to Christian perfection, you would not have needed the Testimonies. . . .

"The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all." [65]

There is one other statement which seems to set forth her own attitude and certainly leaves no room for doubt or uncertainty in the matter:

"Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light." [66] (*Italics supplied.*)

We should close this section with the most solemn words she ever wrote on the subject:

"In the Bible the will of God is revealed to His children. Wherever it is read, in the family circle, the school, or the church, all should give quiet and devout attention as if God were really present and speaking to them." [67]

What Others Have Said of the Relation of the Testimonies to the Bible

Ellen G. White leaves us with no doubt as to her own attitude toward the Bible. Now it, becomes necessary to find out what her writings did to her brethren and the relation they saw between those writings

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and the Bible.

James White reproduced in the Review and Herald of October 16, 1855, what he had first stated in a tract in 1847. He said:

“The Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice. But this is no reason why God may not show the past, present, and future fulfillment of His word, in these last days, by dreams and visions, according to Peter’s testimony. True visions are given to lead us to God, and to His written word; but those that are given for a new rule of faith and practice, separate from the Bible, cannot be from God, and should be rejected!” [68]

Continuing his article of October 16, 1855, he quotes from another of his articles on the gifts of the gospel church:

“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. We say that the very moment he does, he places the gifts in a wrong place, and takes an extremely dangerous position.” [69]

In the February 28, 1856, issue of the Review, James White was laboring to correct the attitude of our people on the same topic. He stated his position and viewpoint in these words:

“The Word should be in front, and the eye of the church should be placed upon it, as the rule to walk by, and the fountain of wisdom, from which to learn duty in ‘all good works.’ But if a portion of the church err from the truths of the Bible, and become weak and sickly, and the flock become scattered, so that it seems necessary for God to employ the Gifts of the Spirit to correct, revive and heal the erring, we should let Him work. Yea more, we should pray for Him to work and plead earnestly that He would work by the Spirit’s power, and bring the scattered sheep to His fold. Praise the Lord, He will work. Amen.” [70]

J. N. Andrews was highly respected by our people in the earlier years of our work. He must have represented a prevailing attitude in 1870 when he wrote: “We understand that the Holy Scriptures are divinely inspired, and that they contain the truth of God which is able to make us wise unto salvation.” [71] G. I. Butler in 1874 wrote:

“They [the visions] everywhere direct us to the Scriptures as the great source of true instruction, and to the example of Jesus Christ as the true pattern. They never claim to be given to take the place of the Bible, but simply to be a manifestation of one of those spiritual gifts set in the church by its divine Lord; and as such should have their proper weight.” [72]

By 1887 Uriah Smith spoke out with great positive desire on this subject. We do well to ponder his words and follow his reasoning:

“As to the relation of the visions to the word of God, our position is, and ever has been, the same as set forth in the work ‘Objections to the Visions Answered,’ published in 1868. In that work (p. 127) we said:

“Someone may say, Then you make the visions a second New Testament, a Mormon Bible in your system. We do not, as the following reason will show: We have ever held, as set forth in this work, that the word of God, the Bible, is the standard by which to test all these manifestations. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” All gifts of the Spirit in the church, must be thus tested. Now it is evident that that which tests occupies a higher position than that which is tested by it. This, in one word, expresses our view of the relative position which the Bible and the visions sustain to each other. But when a manifestation accords with the Word, and gives every evidence that it is a genuine manifestation of the Spirit of God, we submit it to the objector himself to say how far we may regard it lightly, or despise or transgress its teachings with impunity.” [73]

In March, 1888, Elder G. I. Butler, then president of the General Conference, gave a series of talks to the students in Battle Creek College. As is our custom today in presenting the nature and work of the Spirit of prophecy in the remnant church, he gave an opportunity for questions. One of them had to do with the topic under consideration and expressed a denominational viewpoint in that year.

“Question 14. I have heard individuals say that if they were obliged to give up the Bible or the testimonies, they would give up the Bible. Is it right to make such statements, especially before those who have no knowledge of the visions?

“Answer. I should say it is very unwise and very wrong to make such a statement as that. I believe that the testimonies are from God, because they agree with the Bible—with the rule it gives by which to test such things. I believe them, perhaps, as strongly as any one; but I have never said and never expect to say that the testimonies are to be placed superior to the Bible, or even equal to the Bible. . . . But the thing

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which tests is superior to the thing tested. The Bible is the standard. And that which comes up to the standard we ought to accept. But to go so far as to say, 'I would give up the Bible before the testimonies,' is a very wrong statement to make. And if any one says the testimonies contradict the Bible, I should advise him to cling to the Bible; for the Bible should be the test by which everything is tried.

"Our enemies make great cavil of this, just because of some such unguarded, foolish statements. Do not do it. Such persons are but little short of being fanatical." [74]

Seeing the Scriptures Through the Eye of the Spirit of Prophecy

While Ellen G. White made it very clear that her writings were not in any way to supersede, surpass, or supplant the Holy Scriptures, yet she declared that they would help the diligent student of the Word to see more clearly and distinctly the great truths taught in that Word. They became a sort of magnifying glass, or microscope, to enable the searcher for truth to behold the wondrous beauties contained in the passage under observation.

They become a kind of inspired commentary on the Scriptures. The ministers and Bible teachers in our day schools as well as Sabbath schools who use the writings of God's messenger in connection with their sermons and lessons are soon identified as men who have power and something to say. Men who live with the Bible and who place the Testimonies alongside that Book as they search for truth are richly repaid with gems of thought, treasures out of the infinite mind of God brought to man by means of the prophets, ancient and modern. I commend this method of study and this use of the writings to my brethren everywhere. You will be richly rewarded for every hour thus spent in your study with your God.

The experience of Mrs. S. M. I. Henry, at one time a prominent W.C.T.U. worker, with the writings of Ellen G. White illustrates the point under discussion. She accepted the Sabbath truth and other tenets of our faith before she became acquainted with and believed in the Testimonies. As she associated with our people in those critical days of readjustment of thinking and of coming to conclusions and decisions, she was somewhat perturbed by what she saw and that which she heard. They did not always agree, and therefore caused her some concern until she saw the Testimonies as simply a lens or a telescope through which to look at the truth. [75]

My Salvation and the Writings of Ellen G. White

Our study has brought us a long way from the point of departure, and yet there is a very close connection so far as you and I are concerned personally. My belief in the five great facts of faith upon which my Christianity is based leads me to the one and only possible conclusion, namely, that God has spoken to man through His Word-the Scriptures-using holy men and women of God as His spokesmen in Old and New Testament times, and also in our own time.

The evidence thus far presented proves that Ellen G. White was chosen by God as His messenger in the remnant church. Now the question before us is simply this, "How is my salvation, how is your salvation, related to the writings of Ellen G. White?"

What Does the Lord Require?

By salvation I mean a sinner saved out of this world of sin and given an entrance into God's everlasting kingdom as a saint. The question, then, is what must I be or do in order to qualify for such a transfer? What are God's requirements for an entrance into His kingdom? What bearing have the writings of Ellen G. White on our fitness for a place among the saints of all ages to whom the everlasting kingdom shall be given?

Ellen G. White is very consistent in her answer to these questions, and she has not left us in doubt in the matter. Two sentences from her pen are typical of what we find in all of her writings:

"All who would enter the city of God must during their earthly life set forth Christ in their dealings. It is this that constitutes them the messengers of Christ, His witnesses." [76]

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The Conclusion From Her Own Statement

The conclusion is as simple as it is certain. Ellen G. White turns the sinner's attention to the Bible and to Christ as man's only hope for salvation. Every page of her writings uplifts Jesus, upholds Christ as man's only Savior, points unerringly to the Son of God as the one who takes away the sins of the penitent sinner. Steps to Christ, Ministry of Healing, Mount of Blessing, Christ's Object Lessons, and The Desire of Ages—all set forth the doctrine of righteousness by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"What are we to do," they asked, "to carry out what God requires?" John 6:28, Weymouth. It was Jesus Himself who gave the answer, "This . . . is above all what God requires—that you should be believers in Him whom He has sent." Verse 29.

Paul and Silas came forth with a similar answer to the earnest appeal of the keeper of the prison, "O sirs, what must I do to be saved?" "They did not hesitate or falter for a moment, but knew the answer, and so must you and I as Christ's ministers today. They declared, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus. . . and both you and your household will be saved.' " Acts 16:30, 31, Weymouth.

"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1: 12.

The whole story of God's requirements for my salvation is told in one verse, John 3:16; in one chapter, Ephesians 2; in one book, the Bible, "the greater light"; and in one library, "the lesser light," the forty-three bound volumes and four thousand E. G. White articles which have appeared in our church papers over the past one hundred years.

"The revelation of God's love to men centers in the cross. Its lull significance tongue cannot utter; pen cannot portray; the mind of man cannot comprehend. Looking upon the cross of Calvary we can only say: 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John 3:16.

"Christ crucified for our sins, Christ risen from the dead, Christ ascended on high, is the science of salvation that we are to learn and to teach." [77] (Italics supplied.)

My faith in Christ as my personal Savior causes me to make a full and complete surrender to Him:

"He asks for a whole heart; give it to Him; it is His, both by creation and by redemption. He asks for your intellect; give it to Him; it is His. He asks for your money; give it to Him; it is His. 'You are not your own; for you are bought with a price.' God requires the homage of a sanctified soul, which has prepared itself, by the exercise of the faith that works by love, to serve Him. He holds up before us the highest ideal, even perfection. He asks us to be absolutely and completely for Him in this world as He is for us in the presence of God."

Now what is the purpose of the Bible? Christ and the cross are at the center of the Bible, and rise up, as it were, out of the Book as the focal point of interest for me, but God gave the Book from Genesis one to Revelation twenty-two as the story of redemption, the standard of His everlasting kingdom, a guidebook from earth to heaven, a complete pattern for Christian living. (See 2 Timothy 3:15-17)

We must keep in mind that a man is not saved by merely assenting to the doctrines of the Bible, but by his faith in the Lord Jesus. The doctrines, the reproofs, the instruction are given as the detailed specifications for building a perfect Christian character, for the making of an "intelligent Christian." This is what Peter means by "growing in grace" as set forth in 2 Peter 1: 5-11. We begin with our faith in Jesus Christ, and He then comes into our hearts by faith and takes up His abode. (Ephesians 3:17) This abiding presence brings about a transformation of character so that the Christian shows forth the virtues of Christ in his every business transaction, in every social relation, in every phase of his everyday life.

Ellen G. White describes it this way:

"Every moment of our lives is intensely real, and charged with solemn responsibilities. Ignorance will be no excuse for lack of spiritual understanding and attainment; for we are exhorted to add to virtue, knowledge. Many are very ignorant of Bible truth, and they do not realize the duty and necessity of becoming intelligent Christians. . . . The uncultured fishermen became men of refinement and ability; and the lessons that they were privileged to learn are written for our admonition and instruction. We are invited to become learners in the school of Christ. We need to acquire all the knowledge possible. We cannot afford to be ignorant of the things that pertain to our eternal welfare. If all would cease gossip and evil communication, devoting the time to contemplation of Christ and the plan of salvation, they would add the knowledge essential to a growth in grace." [79]

May we pause for a moment and think that through. Is it possible that we as Seventh-day Adventist preachers and teachers have been putting our emphasis in the wrong place? Have we shifted our

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focus from the great fundamentals to the incidentals and perhaps the nonessentials? Is my salvation still dependent on my faith in Jesus Christ? Or is it dependent on my readiness to give mere intellectual assent to certain designated answers to specific questions regarding a Seventh-day Adventist system of theology, and to certain interpretations of prophecies that were originally designed to help me know how far along I am today in the path leading to the everlasting kingdom?

Brethren, we do well to ponder these things lest we be guilty of doing the very things Ellen G. White warns against. Listen to her words:

“More people than we think are longing to find the way to Christ. Those who preach the last message of mercy should bear in mind that Christ is to be exalted as the sinner’s refuge. Some ministers think that it is not necessary to preach repentance and faith; they take it for granted that their hearers are acquainted with the gospel, and that matters of a different nature must be presented in order to hold their attention. But many people are sadly ignorant in regard to the plan of salvation; they need more instruction upon this all-important subject than upon any other.

“Theoretical discourses are essential, that people may see the chain of truth link by link, uniting in a perfect whole; but no discourse should ever be preached without presenting Christ and Him crucified as the foundation of the gospel. Ministers would reach more hearts if they would dwell more upon practical godliness. . . .

“The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken....

“The people must be instructed that Christ is unto them salvation and righteousness. It is Satan’s studied purpose to keep souls from believing in Christ as their only hope.” [80] (Italics supplied.)

Righteousness by Faith-the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry

May I call to your attention one more challenging question? Is it possible that our failure to give due emphasis to this topic of “Righteousness by Faith” is delaying the outpouring of the latter rain” and the “loud cry”?

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people.... This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Savior, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus.... This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” [81] (Italics supplied.)

No, my salvation does not depend upon the twenty-five million words written by Ellen G. White, but upon Jesus Christ, to whom they point, who only can save me from my sins and give me an entrance into His everlasting kingdom. She sums up her whole message to me in these words:

“The sum and substance of the whole matter of Christian grace and, experience is contained in believing on Christ, in knowing God and His Son whom He has sent.” [82]

“Religion means the abiding of Christ in the heart, and where He is, the soul goes on in spiritual activity, ever growing in grace, ever going on to perfection.” [83]

A letter written by Sister White from Melbourne December 21, 1892, was read by W. W. Prescott to the General Conference in session on Sabbath, January 28, 1893. One paragraph is pertinent to our discussion:

“The whole earth is to be lightened with the glory of God’s truth. The Lord will not close up the period of probation until the warning message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. The trumpet must give a certain sound. The law of God is to be magnified, its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character, that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the world to the other. This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.” [84] (Italics supplied.)

You see, there are some portions of the world which have none of the E. G. White writings, other portions have only two or three small books from her pen, while other areas are blessed with all her writings. This fact in itself makes it improbable that God would set up the Testimonies as basically

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necessary and essential for a man's salvation.

The same is true of the Bible and its availability to each and every language area. It is safe for us to conclude that God will judge a man and his salvation on the basis of how well he has lived up to the amount of light he has had available.

Here is one paragraph on this topic from Ellen G. White herself:

“Said the angel: ‘If light come, and that light is set aside or rejected, then comes condemnation and the frown of God; but before the light comes, there is no sin, for there is no, light for them to reject.’”

[85]

Ellen G. White's Attitude Toward Her Own Writings

All of this leads us to the point in our study where we must settle our own individual and personal attitude toward the writings of Ellen G. White. To help us in arriving at that conclusion we shall first see how Mrs. White regarded her own work, and then search to find the attitude of the brethren toward her writings, and finally attempt to draw a statement of what our personal attitude should be today.

Infallibility and Inspiration

Ellen G. White never claimed “verbal inspiration” for either her own writings or the Bible itself. Neither did she ever claim infallibility for herself nor for the men who gave us the Bible.

Let us pause for a few minutes on this question, for some of our people must clarify their thinking and bring themselves into accord and agreement with Ellen G. White, whom they so ardently support.

First, on infallibility she said: “In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible. His word is true, and in him is no variableness or shadow of turning.” [86] That is final and unequivocal. No one can possibly misunderstand or misinterpret such a definite declaration of a fact.

Next, on inspiration she has much more to say, just as final and just as definite:

“The writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men. These men were inspired of the Holy Spirit. Because of the imperfections of human understanding of language, or the perversity of the human mind, ingenious in evading truth, many read and understand the Bible to please themselves. It is not that the difficulty is in the Bible. Opposing politicians argue points of law in the statute book, and take opposite views in their application and in these laws....

“The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes....

“The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

“It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the Word of God!” [87]

This is E. G. White's concept of inspiration. We also find it expressed in the Introduction to The Great Controversy.

Dr. David Paulson was known by many of our people as a dynamic worker and a zealous Seventh-day Adventist. In 1906 he wrote a letter to Ellen G. White and set forth his convictions regarding her and her work. It is not his letter to her, but rather her letter in response to his which has a part in our present discussion. Let us look at several paragraphs:

“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 ever made such claims.”

“In my preface to ‘Great Controversy,’ . . . you have no doubt read my statement regarding the ten

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commandments and the Bible, which should have helped you to a correct understanding of the matter under consideration.” [88]

Concerning her own writings she declared in a similar vein:

“Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.” [89]

It thus becomes apparent that Ellen G. White:

a. Never claimed infallibility either for herself or for the writers of the Scriptures. “God alone is infallible.”

b. Never claimed verbal inspiration for her own writings nor for the Scriptures.

c. Did claim thought inspiration both for her own writings and for the Scriptures.

d. Did not look upon her writings as “Commandments of God,” but saw them as “reproofs,” “counsels,” “warnings,” encouragement,” “messages testimonies,” “cautions.”

I think of her writings as the detailed specifications which the Master Architect places in my hands along with the blueprint—the Bible—to help me in the building of a fine Christian character, fit for an entrance into God’s everlasting kingdom. The wise builder sticks to his blueprints and specifications in every detail, for he has learned from experience that changes and deviations are expensive to him and a disappointment to the architect.

How the Writings Came to Be

“Early in my public labors I was bidden by the Lord, ‘Write, write the things that are revealed to you.’ At the time this message came to me, I could not hold my hand steady. My physical condition made it impossible for me to write. But again came the word, ‘Write the things that are revealed to you.’ I obeyed; and as the result it was not long before I could write page after page with comparative ease. Who told me what to write? Who steadied my right hand, and made it possible for me to use a pen? It was the Lord.” [90]

“I am very busy with my writing. Early and late, I am writing out the matters that the Lord opens before me. The burden of my work is to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord.” [91]

Purpose of the Testimonies

“The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His word. The written testimonies 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 and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse.” [92] (Italics supplied.)

How to Read and Understand the Testimonies

“In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.” [93]

“The volumes of ‘Spirit of Prophecy’ [now Conflict of the Ages Series] should be in every family, and should be read aloud in the family circle. More than one-half of our people know little or nothing of the contents of these books, and they are losing much by their neglect.

“The Testimonies contain instruction which meets the case of all, both parents and children. Should these be read aloud to the entire family, the children as well as the parents would be benefited by their counsels, warnings, and reproofs. While these are placed out of sight and neglected for the reading of fictitious, sensational literature, both yourselves and your children will be retrograding mentally and spiritually.” [94]

Attitudes Toward the Testimonies

In a crisis in 1903 Ellen White clearly depicted the various attitudes which would reflect the reaction of the people toward the testimonies:

“Soon every possible effort will be made to discount and pervert the truth of the testimonies of

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God's Spirit. We must have in readiness the clear, straight messages that since 1846 have been coming to God's people.

[1] "There will be those once united with us in the faith who will search for new, strange doctrines, for something odd and sensational to present to the people. They will bring in all conceivable fallacies, and will present them as coming from Mrs. White, that they may beguile souls...."

[2] "Those who have treated the light that the Lord has given as a common thing will not be benefited by the instruction presented.

[3] "There are those who will misinterpret the messages that God has given, in accordance with their spiritual blindness.

[4] "Some will yield their faith, and will deny the truth of the messages, pointing to them as falsehoods.

[5] "Some will hold them up to ridicule, working against the light that God has been giving for years, and some who are weak in the faith will thus be led astray.

[6] "But others will be greatly helped by the messages. Though not personally addressed, they will be corrected, and will be led to shun the evils specified. . . . The Spirit of the Lord will be in the instruction, and doubts existing in many minds will be swept away. The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture. Many will read with eagerness the messages reproving wrong, that they may learn what they may do to be saved.... Light will dawn upon the understanding, and the Spirit will make, an impression on minds, as Bible truth is clearly and simply presented in the messages that since 1846 God has been sending His people. These messages are to find their place in hearts, and transformations will take place." [95]

Wrong Use of the Testimonies

While the larger part of our Seventh-day Adventist church members are found in the last class named, those who are helped by the messages as light comes to them, correcting evils and pointing the way to life, yet there are some who may be found in one of the other classes.

Mrs. E. G. White was fully aware of the situation regarding her and her work, and did her best to make clear what she was appointed by God to do and why. She gave a number of cautions and suggestions to her contemporaries, and indirectly to us, so that we might not make unjustifiable claims for her and her writings, nor an unwise use of her words and her position in relation to God and the Holy Spirit.

The reproduction of some of them here may help us find and maintain a sensible, balanced, middle-of-the-road attitude toward her and her work:

a. Do not use the Testimonies as proof for unbelievers. Testimonies, Volume 1, Pages 119, 120; Volume 5, p. 669. (See Item 10 in Appendix, page 291, for statement from E. G. White.)

b. Do not use as a test of fellowship. Testimonies, Volume 1, Pages 327-329.

c. Do not use the visions as a rule to measure all. Testimonies, Volume 1, Pages 382, 383.

d. Do not use the Testimonies as an iron rule or club. Testimonies, Volume 1, p. 369.

e. Do not take the extreme meaning of what has been shown in the visions. Testimonies, Volume 1, p. 166.

f. Do not use the Testimonies to give force to certain subjects to impress upon others. Manuscript 23, 1911.

Each one of us should keep in mind that, first of all, the Spirit of prophecy counsels are messages to us personally. There is a growing tendency on the part of some among us to apply the counsels to someone else and to use certain portions of the E. G. White writings as a sort of club over the heads of others. This is not a right or a proper use of the Testimonies. On the part of some, her words are used to give expression to harsh criticism of one another. All of this brings to mind the following paragraph:

"There are many whose religion consists in criticizing habits of dress and manners. They want to bring every one to their own measure. They desire to lengthen out those who seem too short for their standard, and to cut down others who seem too long. They have lost the love of God out of their hearts; but they think they have a spirit of discernment. They think it is their prerogative to criticize, and pronounce judgment; but they should repent of their error, and turn away from their sins.... Let us love one another. Let us have harmony and union throughout our ranks. Let us have our hearts sanctified to God. Let us look upon the light that abides for us in Jesus. Let us remember how forbearing and patient He was with the erring children of men. We should be in a wretched state if the God of heaven were like one of us, and

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treated us as we are inclined to treat one another.” [96]

Then, again, there are some who isolate a phrase or sentence and place the most extreme interpretation upon it, and then endeavor to persuade or drive everyone else to the same conclusion. Such have usually failed to study the full counsel, placing statement with statement in an endeavor to find the great underlying principles which should guide to right conclusions. A statement from the pen of Ellen White on this point, drawn from her counsel on the question of two meals versus three meals a day, is of great significance:

“It is plain that two meals a day are better than three. I believe and practice this, but I have no ‘Thus said the Lord’ that it is wrong for some to eat the third meal. We are not to be as the Pharisees, bound about by set rules and regulations. God’s word has not specified any set hours when food should be eaten. We are to be careful not to make laws like the laws of the Pharisees, or to teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Let your regulations be so consistent that they will appeal to the reason of those even who have not been educated to see all things clearly.” [97]

It is interesting that when writing on the subject of diet she declared: “I make myself a criterion for no one else.’ Should we not look at the detailed counsels as but a part of a greater whole, the purpose of which is to guide us into the heavenly Canaan, rather than to select a few pet items and through them endeavor to earn our salvation?

A Balanced Message in the Writings of Ellen G. White

Seventy years is a long period of service, and twenty-five million words are a lot of words; but over that long span of years and in that maze of instruction set forth in so many words, the remarkable thing is that there are so very, very few apparent discrepancies or mistakes. The human factor was ever present and God took that into account—so must we. Too many of us are prone to pick out a paragraph here or a sentence there, and set out to reform the brethren with but that one side or facet of the issue in question. May we set forth two such items to serve as examples. We draw again from the counsels on diet, for it is in this field that we so often observe tendencies toward extremes.

Caution Concerning Eggs (1870):

“Eggs should not be placed upon your table.” [99]

Without giving heed to the setting of the statement, this sentence may seem all-inclusive. A study of the setting, however, indicates that it is one sentence in a personal testimony addressed to Brother and Sister “E,” and the chapter is entitled “Sensuality in the Young.” Because some were giving the words a general all-inclusive application, Mrs. White sounded balancing counsels.

Balancing Counsel (1905):

“It is true that persons in full flesh and in whom the animal passions are strong need to avoid the use of stimulating foods. Especially in families of children who are given to sensual habits, eggs should not be used. But in the case of persons whose blood-making organs are feeble, especially if other foods to supply the needed elements can not be obtained, milk and eggs should not be wholly discarded. Great care should be taken, however, to obtain milk from healthy cows, and eggs from healthy fowls, that are well fed and well cared for.” [100]

Summarizing Statement (1909):

“While warnings have been given regarding the dangers of disease through butter, and the evil of the free use of eggs by small children, yet we should not consider it a violation of principle to use eggs from hens that are well cared for and suitably fed. Eggs contain properties that are remedial agencies in counteracting certain poisons.” [101]

Caution Concerning Dairy Products (1899):

“The light given me is that it will not be very long before we shall have to give up any animal food. Even milk will have to be discarded. Disease is accumulating rapidly. The curse of God is upon the earth.” [102]

“Tell them that the time will soon come when there will be no safety in using eggs, milk, cream, or butter, because disease in animals is increasing in proportion to the increase of wickedness among men.” [103]

Note that the disease in the animal kingdom is the reason for caution, and that dairy products are not arbitrarily condemned, but rather a caution is sounded concerning the possible contamination of such

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foods.

Balancing Counsel:

“God has furnished man with abundant means for the gratification of an non perverted appetite. He has spread before him the products of the earth, a bountiful variety of food that is palatable to the taste and nutritious to the system. Of these our benevolent heavenly Father says we may freely eat. Fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, free from spice and grease of all kinds, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet. They impart nourishment to the body, and give a power of endurance and a vigor of intellect that are not produced by a stimulating diet.” [104]

“The time may come when it will not be safe to use milk. But if the cows are healthy and the milk thoroughly cooked, there is no necessity of creating a time of trouble beforehand.” [105]

“As for myself, I have settled the butter question. I do not use it. This question should easily be settled in every place where the purest article cannot be obtained. We have two good milk cows, a jersey and a Holstein. We use cream, and all are satisfied with this.” [106] (Italics supplied.)

Summarizing Statement (1909):

“Food should be prepared in such a way that it will be appetizing as well as nourishing.... Vegetables should be made palatable with a little milk or cream, or something equivalent.... Some, in abstaining from milk, eggs, and butter, have failed to supply the system with proper nourishment, and as a consequence have become weak and unable to work. Thus health reform is brought into disrepute. . . . “The time will come when we may have to discard some of the articles of diet we now use, such as milk and cream and eggs; but it is not necessary to bring upon ourselves perplexity by premature and extreme restrictions. Wait until the circumstances demand it, and the Lord prepares the way for it.” [107] (Italics supplied.)

“Milk, eggs, and butter should not be classed with flesh meat. In some cases the use of eggs is beneficial. The time has not come to say that the use of milk and eggs should be wholly discarded. There are poor families whose diet consists largely of bread and milk. They have little fruit and cannot afford to purchase the nut foods. In teaching health reform, as in all other gospel work, we are to meet the people where they are. Until we can teach them how to prepare health reform foods that are palatable, nourishing, and yet inexpensive, we are not at liberty to present the most advanced propositions regarding health reform diet.” [108] (Italics supplied.)

The Attitude of the Brethren Toward the Writings of Ellen G. White

One of the finest statements by the early brethren showing their attitude toward the writings of Ellen G. White came from the pen of Uriah Smith in the Review and Herald in 1866.

“Further, their [the Testimonies] fruit is such as to show that the source from which they spring, is the opposite of evil. 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, more zealous efforts for holiness of heart, and greater diligence in the cause and service of our Master. . . . [Continued as Item 11 in the Appendix, page 294.]

“With all this array of good fruit which they are able to present, with all this innocence of any charge of evil that can be brought against them, they everywhere encounter the bitterest opposition. They are the object of the blindest prejudice, the most intense hate, and most malignant bitterness. Worldly people 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 Savior, of the infidel who storms with passion at the very name of Jesus, and from the principle of the carnal heart which is at

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enmity with everything that is holy and spiritual, we leave the reader to answer.” [109] (*Italics supplied.*)

In answer to Uriah Smith’s question I would say that opposition or indifference to the Spirit of prophecy and spiritual gifts in general grows out of:

- (1) A failure to accept one or all of the five great facts of faith on which Christianity is based.
- (2) A failure to read enough of or all of the writings of Ellen G. White to thoroughly understand her over-all and well-balanced instruction on any given topic.
- (3) A failure to understand the proper relation of her writings to the Scriptures, and of the whole Bible to the one and only great fundamental requirement for salvation and an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
- (4) A failure to grasp the true nature of her writings with respect to inspiration and infallibility.
- (5) A failure to recognize the principle of “time and place” in connection with the counsel she has given.
- (6) A failure to acknowledge that the counsels given in the early days of the message are safe for counsel for these its closing days.
- (7) A failure to recognize that while sufficient evidence is given to convince the honest in heart, the Lord does not propose to remove the opportunity for doubt nor to take away the hooks upon which doubts may be hung. The Lord requires the exercise of faith.
- (8) A failure to recognize that the veracity of the Spirit of prophecy counsels cannot be appraised by the changing dictums of science, nor the prejudiced or molded assertions of historians.
- (9) An unwillingness to make a personal sacrifice of some personally cherished habit, custom, or practice which seems out of harmony with the counsel given in the pattern for Christian living as set forth in the writings of E. G. White. Individual opposition stems from the point where a man’s “darling” taste, fancy, whim, habit, or practice is touched. He gets rid of that particular item by doing away with all.
- (10) Most Seventh-day Adventist opposition would disappear:
 - (a) If our ministers and our laymen would stop using some “Pet -sentences” or paragraphs as a “club” with which to hit somebody else.
 - (b) If each of us would take the counsel to ourselves instead of trying to find someone else to whom to apply it.
 - (c) If all of us Seventh-day Adventists would remember 1 Corinthians 14, which tells us that prophecy and prophesying are primarily for the church members and not for non church people.
 - (d) If each of us would determine not to use or pass on unfounded rumors” or “sayings” without proper reference in book, page, and paragraph.
 - (e) If we would not discuss a topic or question unless and until we have FULLY studied ALL the writings on it. Partial knowledge is more dangerous than no knowledge at all. “I do not know” is an acknowledgment which can be excused, but a half-truth or a lie is not soon forgiven or forgotten.
 - (f) If we would recognize that one person’s failure, or that of many people, to live up to or carry out the counsel given by Ellen G. White has absolutely nothing to do with the authenticity or reliability of the visions of, or the instruction from, Ellen G. White.

Perhaps one more statement from J. N. Andrews, published in the Review and Herald, must suffice. There are many others, but space forbids their inclusion here:

“The object of spiritual gifts is to maintain the living work of God in the church. They enable the Spirit of God to speak in the correction of wrongs, and in the exposure of iniquity. They are the means whereby God teaches His people when they are in danger of taking wrong steps. They are the means by which the Spirit of God sheds light upon church difficulties, when otherwise their adjustment would be impossible. They also constitute the means whereby God preserves His people from confusion by pointing out errors, by correcting false interpretations of the Scriptures, and causing light to shine out upon that which is in danger of being wrongly understood, and therefore of being the cause of evil and division to the people of God. In short, their work is to unite the people of God in the same mind and in the same judgment upon the meaning of the Scriptures....

“Finally, in the reception of members into our churches, we desire on this subject to know two things: 1. That they believe the Bible doctrine of Spiritual gifts. 2. That they will candidly acquaint themselves with the visions of Sister White which have ever held so prominent place in this work. We believe that every person standing thus and carrying out this purpose will be guided in the way of truth and righteousness. And those who occupy this ground, are never denied all the time they desire to decide in this matter.” [110]

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My Attitude Toward the Life and Work of Ellen G. White

This brings us to the heart of this entire study. That which we have presented thus far is but a background for the all-important question, “What Is My Own Personal Attitude Toward the Life and Work of Ellen G. White?” “What Is Yours to Be Today and for All Time to Come?”

Personally, many years ago I settled my attitude toward the five great facts of faith on which Christianity is built. Therefore, there is no need of proofs and evidences to convince me of the “gift of prophecy” manifested through men and women chosen and called by God; there is no need for any further evidence to convince me that Ellen G. White was the one chosen by God as His “messenger” to the remnant church. Furthermore, I believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church, and that God’s requirements for my salvation from this sinful world and for my entrance into His everlasting kingdom are still, as they always have been, “perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness,” neither of which have I in and of myself; but that both of these are made available to me through my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. [111]

I believe that the Bible is given to me to show me how God thinks, how God works, what God wants me to become as a candidate for citizenship in His kingdom. And that the prophecies in the Bible have made plain to me where we stand today in relationship to the grand consummation of all God’s plans. To me the Christian’s business is not so much how to get into heaven by and by, as it is how to get heaven into me here and now. (See Item 12, Appendix, page 295)

I believe that the writings of Ellen G. White describe what God wants of me and what God will do for me through His Son Jesus Christ. They are words of beauty and of power. They present before me the pattern for the Christian life. I accept her words as she has declared them to be, words of “reproof for the erring,” words “of encouragement to the meek and lowly,” words of “counsel,” “instruction,” “correction.” They are not the “commandments of the Ten Commandments,” but the wise counsel and earnest entreaties of a kind heavenly Father through His chosen “messenger.”

I find myself in perfect agreement with the great mass of counsel given, but like so many others I am tempted to despise and reject ONLY the testimonies which reprove my darling sins, conflict with my own preconceived ideas of theology, and disturb my self-complacency. In these few, very few items I am daily praying that God will help me to conform completely and perfectly to His will and standard.

I believe that I am voicing the opinion and describing the experience of Seventh-day Adventists generally in all parts of the world. Such opposition and indifference as is seen here and there is not directed against such books as the Conflict Series, Steps to Christ, Christ’s Object Lessons, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, and a score of other such books, but rather to a very few paragraphs, a small percentage indeed, of the total messages given by Ellen G. White. Each one of us would do well to set down on paper a list of the things which cause us concern or which we may be inclined to ignore, and then give careful and prayerful study to each item.

It may be that your experience and mine are described in the words of these paragraphs from the Testimonies:

“As the word of God is walled in with these books and pamphlets, [by E. G. White], so has God walled you in with reproofs, counsel, warnings, and encouragement. Here you are crying before God, in the anguish of your souls, for more light. I am authorized from God to tell you that not another ray of light through the Testimonies will shine upon your pathway until you make a practical use of the light already given. The Lord has walled you about with light; but you have not appreciated the light; you have trampled upon it. While some have despised the light, others have neglected it or followed it but indifferently. A few have set their hearts to obey the light which God has been pleased to give them.” [112]

“Let ministers and people remember that gospel truth hardens when it does not save. The rejection of light leaves men captives, bound about by chains of darkness and unbelief. The more self is exalted, the more will faith in the Testimonies of the Spirit of God be lessened.... Those who trust wholly in themselves will see less and less of God in the Testimonies of His Spirit.” [113]

Such paragraphs will cause any man down deep in his heart to desire to live a better life, to be a better man. But we must ever remember that the power to inspire is not wrapped up in the words themselves, but in the God who inspired the messenger with His thoughts and then left the human agent to find the human words to give expression to those inspired thoughts.

In a letter penned by Ellen G. White back in 1890 she wrote concerning the last work of Satan:

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“Satan is . . . constantly pressing in the spurious-to lead away from the truth. The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish.’ [Proverbs 29:18.] Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony.” [114]

Appeal

Brethren and sisters of the Advent family, let us give most careful, thoughtful, and prayerful consideration to the topic of this study, and take our stand with the remnant church for the message given to us as a people, and for the messenger whom God chose to accomplish His will and purpose in and for us as time comes to an end, as history comes to its last chapter, as Christ finishes His work for the salvation of men, and as the closing events in the great controversy bring us ever nearer to the grand consummation of all things earthly.

We have every reason to rejoice as Seventh-day Adventists in the abundant provision made by God Himself for our salvation. He loves us with a tender love. He is so kind and good and gentle. He has anticipated our every need, and has given us the help we must have at every turn in life’s way. He is ready to fit us for His kingdom. May each and every one of us be molded and fashioned according to His own divine pattern. He wants you and me in His presence throughout eternity. “Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets.” Hosea 6:5.

Appendix

ITEM 1.

The story of the vision concerning Robbins and Sargent in Randolph, Massachusetts. Referred to on page 210.

“In the afternoon the blessing of the Lord rested upon me, and I was taken off in vision. I was again shown the errors of R. and S., and others united with them. I saw that they could not prosper; that truth would triumph in the end, and error be brought down. I was shown that they were not honest, and then I was carried into the future and shown some thing of the course they would pursue, that they would continue to despise the teachings of the Lord, despise reproof, and that they would be left in total darkness, to resist God’s Spirit until their folly should be made manifest to all. A chain of truth was presented to me from the scriptures, in contrast with their errors. When I came out of vision, candles were burning. I had been in vision nearly four hours.

“As I was unconscious to all that transpired around me while in vision, I will copy from Brother Nichols’ description of that meeting.

“Sister Ellen was taken off in vision with extraordinary manifestations, and continued talking in vision with a clear voice, which could be distinctly understood by all present, until about sundown. S., R. and F. were much exasperated, as well as excited, to hear sister E. talk in vision, which they declared was of the Devil; they exhausted all their influence, and bodily strength, to destroy the effect of the vision. They would unite in singing very loud, and then alternately would talk and read from the Bible in a loud voice, in order that E. might not be heard, until their strength was exhausted, and their hands would shake so they could not read from the Bible. But amidst all this confusion and noise, E.’s clear and shrill voice, as she talked in vision, was distinctly heard by all present. The opposition of these men continued as long as they could talk and sing, notwithstanding some of their own friends rebuked them, and requested them to stop. But says R., “You are bowed to an idol; you are worshipping a golden calf.”

“Mr. Thayer, the owner of the house, was not fully satisfied that her vision was of the Devil, as R. declared it to be. He wanted it tested in some way. He had heard that visions of satanic power were arrested by opening the Bible and laying it on the person in vision, and asked S. if he would test it in this way, which he declined to do. Then Thayer took a heavy, large quarto family Bible which was laying on the table, and seldom used, opened it, and laid it open upon the breast of E. while in vision, as she was then inclined backward against the wall in the corner of the room. Immediately after the Bible was laid upon her, she arose upon her feet, and walked into the middle of the room, with the Bible open in one hand, and lifted up as high as she could reach, and with her eyes steadily looking upward, declared in a solemn

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manner, "The inspired testimony from God," or words of the same import. And then she continued for a long time, while the Bible was extended in one hand, and her eyes looking upwards, and not on the Bible, to turn over the leaves with her other hand, and place her finger upon certain passages, and correctly utter their words with a solemn voice. Many present looked at the passages where her finger was pointed, to see if she spoke them correctly, for her eyes at the same time were looking upwards. Some of the passages referred to were judgments against the wicked and blasphemers; and others were admonitions and instructions relative to our present condition.

"In this state she continued all the afternoon until near sunset, when she came out of vision. When E. arose in vision upon her feet, with the heavy open Bible in her hand, and walked the room, uttering the passages of scripture, S., R. and F. were silenced. For the remainder of the time they were troubled, with many others; but they shut their eyes and braved it out without making any acknowledgement of their feelings." [1]

ITEM. 2

Uriah Smith's statement from the Review and Herald, January 13, 1863. Referred to on page 237.

"The Bible, and the Bible alone,' 'The Bible in its purity,' 'The Bible a sufficient and only reliable rule of life,' etc., etc., is now the great cry of those who are giving vent to their opposition to the visions, and are working with their might to prejudice others against them. This course reminds us of the low tricks and maneuvers resorted to by political demagogues to gain their nefarious ends. It is similar to the game played by the democratic party in the last election, which led to results in many States so disastrous to the Republicans, and to the country. Their cry was, 'Our country before party;' and thus under the garb of supreme devotion to the country, to the exclusion of all other considerations, many honest-hearted ones were deceived into co-operation with them, and they were enabled to place in positions of trust and power, men full of depravity and corruption. Such are unworthy weapons in the hands of Christians; yet some, we are sorry to say, who profess that name, do not hesitate to use them.

"The Protestant principle, of 'The Bible and the Bible alone,' is of itself good and true; and we stand upon it as firmly as any one can; but when re-iterated in connection with outspoken denunciations of the visions, it has a specious appearance for evil. So used it contains a covert insinuation, most effectively calculated to warp the judgment of the unguarded, that to believe the visions is to leave the Bible, and to cling to the Bible, is to discard the visions....

"1. When we claim to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone, we bind ourselves to receive, unequivocally and fully, all that the Bible teaches. This being a self-evident proposition, we pass on to inquire what the Bible teaches concerning the outpouring of the Spirit, its operations, the gift of prophecy, visions, etc. . . .

"In view of all these considerations, what shall we conclude? Those who reject these manifestations, do so not only without evidence, but against all evidence. Those who profess to stand on the Bible and the Bible alone are bound to receive what the Bible tells them will exist, and commands them to respect.

"One illustration may help to set this matter in a still clearer light. Suppose we are about to start upon a voyage. The owner of the vessel gives us a book of directions, telling us that it contains instructions sufficient for our whole journey, and that if we will heed them, we shall reach in safety our port of destination. Setting sail we open our book to learn its contents. We find that its author lays down general principles to govern us in our voyage, and instructs us as far as practicable, touching the various contingencies that may arise, till the end. But he also tells us that the latter part of our journey will be especially perilous; that the features of the coast are ever changing by reason of quick sands and tempests. 'But for this part of the journey,' says he, 'I have provided you a pilot, who will meet you, and give you such directions as the surrounding circumstances and dangers may require; and to him you must give heed.' With these directions we reach the perilous time specified, and the pilot, according to promise, appears. But some of the crew, as he offers his services, rise up against him. 'We have the original book of directions,' say they, 'and that is enough for us. We stand upon that, and that alone; we want nothing of you.' Who now heed that original book of directions? Those who reject the pilot, or those who receive him, as that book instructs them? Judge you.

"But some, through lack of perception, or lack of principle, or the ebullitions of an unconquerable prejudice, one, or all combined, may meet us at this point like this: 'Then you would have us take sister White as our pilot, would you?' It is to forestall any efforts in this direction, that this sentence is penned.

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We say no such thing. What we do say is distinctly this: that the gifts of the Spirit are given for our pilot through these perilous times, and wherever and in whomsoever we find genuine manifestations of these, we are bound to respect them, nor can we do otherwise without in so far rejecting the word of God, which directs us to receive them. Who now stand upon the Bible, and the Bible alone?" [2]

ITEM 3.

E. G. White statements in which she exalts the Scriptures. Referred to on page 244.

"I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible. Men arise who think they find something to criticize in God's word. They lay it bare before others as evidence of superior wisdom....

"Brethren, let not a mind or hand be engaged in criticizing the Bible.... Men should let God take care of His own Book, His Living Oracles, as He has done for ages. . . . Brethren, cling to your Bible, as it reads, and stop your criticisms in regard to its validity, and obey the word, and not one of you will be lost....

"Wen of humble acquirements, possessing but limited capabilities and opportunities to become conversant in the Scriptures, find in the Living Oracles comfort, guidance, counsel, and the plan of salvation as clear as a sunbeam. No one need be lost for want of knowledge, unless he is willfully blind.

"We thank God that the Bible is prepared for the poor man as well as for the learned man. It is fitted for all ages and all classes." [3]

"God committed the preparation of His divinely inspired word to finite man. This word arranged into books, the Old and New Testaments, is the guidebook to the inhabitants of a fallen world; bequeathed to them, that by studying and obeying the directions, not one soul would lose its way to heaven." [4]

"The truth of God is found in His word. Those who feel that they must seek elsewhere for present truth need to be converted anew. They have wrong habits to mend, evil ways to be abandoned. They need to seek anew the truth as it is in Jesus, that their character building may be in harmony with the lessons of Christ. As they abandon their human ideas and take up their God-given duties, beholding Christ and becoming conformed to His likeness, they say: 'Nearer, my God, to Thee; nearer to Thee.' [5]

"Brother J would confuse the mind by seeking to make it appear that the light God has given through the Testimonies is an addition to the word of God, but in this he presents the matter in a false light. God has seen fit in this manner to bring the minds of His people to His word, to give them a clearer understanding of it." [6]

"The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles." [7]

For further study on this phase of the topic, kindly read the following references: Fundamentals of Christian Education, Page 384; Gospel Workers, Page 249. The Desire of Ages, Page 329; Mount of Blessing, Page 77; Testimonies, Volume 2, Pages 454, 455, 605-607. Volume 5, Pages 665-667, 674; Volume 6, pp. 402, 403; Introduction to The Great Controversy. The Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 1, Page 45.

ITEM 4.

Paragraphs from Mrs. S. M. I. Henry's letter stating the relation she saw between the Bible and the Testimonies. Referred to on page 251.

"I supposed these Testimonies were considered as an appendix to the Bible, and of equal authority with it, that there were those among our people who even judged the Bible by these writings. When I came into the church, I stated to the brethren with whom I conversed that I knew nothing at all about this matter but that I was confident that God was leading me hither, and that he would not lead me into any organization where I would find an insuperable barrier to faith, and that if they were willing to accept me upon this condition, I was glad to come in. . . .

"I had so much confidence in the intelligent understanding of my brethren who fully accepted the Testimonies, that I could not repudiate the claim that this is God's way of teaching his people in these days. I had read a few paragraphs only from these writings, but to everything which I had read or heard I had found a chord in my heart ready to respond; nothing seemed strange or new. It was always like a stave or bar from some old song; a repetition or resetting of some truth which I had known and loved long before; hence I had found nothing which could lead to any controversy. But one question troubled me. Suppose I

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should find some point in these writings with which I could not agree, which would be of vital significance if it were competent to become the end of controversy, what would I do with it? I knew that so far as any light which I now had would serve me, it would be impossible to surrender my own judgment to this authority. The Bible had my unquestioning obedience; but while the Testimonies might be good, sound, helpful, they were not, I had been compelled to notice, of sufficient authority to command obedience and silence controversy in those who had professed to have been always led by them.

“This fact caused a heavy and sad burden in my soul. I had supposed because of the solemnity of the truth as we believe it and the times in which we live, that the people who are known as Seventh-day Adventists must of necessity most earnestly believe and endeavor to practice all that they did accept as truth. But as I went out from the quiet seclusion of the Sanitarium, and mingled more with people abroad, I found this practical disbelief in the authority of the Testimonies among our own people, especially in the matter of health principles. It was natural that I should take especial note of this, because I had as a W.C.T.U. woman adopted and followed all the health principles which we had discovered; and as new light had come I promptly walked in it. But now I found in some Adventist homes a total disregard of these principles; and learned that there was controversy even among the brethren who were quoting and teaching from these writings.

“In letters and conversation I was assured that these writings were no longer considered of authority by the church; that they were accepted theoretically, but only as obsolete doctrines were by other denominations; for instance, that they stood on the same relative footing with the teaching of eternal torment in other churches, acknowledged at best with a very pronounced mental reservation even by those who preach it. And so at last I came to even question the necessity of considering this matter any further for myself. I reasoned that I was in all essentials a Seventh-day Adventist. I did not like to seem to be standing for something which I did not believe, but, at present, saw no help for it. I realized the importance of care in anything which I should write or say to others, and was careful, for I could not but see how helpful, inspiring, and full of truth these writings are even if they should carry no special weight over and above those of any good man or woman who had light and experience in Christian doctrine. . . .

“From my standpoint to see anything in the Bible was to believe it, to receive it, it was the end of all controversy; and if Adventists believed the Testimonies to be invested with authority from the Spirit of God, how could there be all this controversy upon points concerning which they had so clearly spoken?

“My attitude I see now must have been like that of an unbeliever in the Bible before a congregation of Christians, if he should see the same inconsistencies and declare it as he might have done in the same words; and the effect upon my brethren must have been to arouse them to the same earnest self-examination and consecration which any honest Christian would have made in such a crisis. I knew at once that the sympathies of my brethren were aroused for me, but felt that I was beyond any human help. If the Testimonies were the word of God for this time in which we live, if this was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, I wanted to know it, but only God could make me know it. The brethren did their best to help me, but all that was said seemed to only add to my perplexity, until at last, feeling that I could go no further in any direction until this question was disposed of, I determined to give myself to it at the sacrifice of any and all things. Brother Ballenger was arising again to give me something further in the hope that it might be light to me, but I asked him to wait while they should join with me in prayer that the Spirit of the Lord might come to my relief.

“Accordingly, we all bowed in prayer, and I stated the case to God, with as deep a sense of need as I had ever known in my life. All the great and marvelous blessings of my life were for the time forgotten in this present need, and as must always be true, I was heard. The manifestation of the power of the Spirit of God was as clear as sunlight; and in that light I saw the Testimony as simply a lens through which to look at the Truth. It at once grew from a lens to a telescope, a perfect, beautiful telescope, directed toward the field of the heavens:-(that field the Bible); subject to all telescopic conditions and limitations.

“Clouds may intervene between it and a heaven full of stars, clouds of unbelief, of contention; Satan may blow tempests all about it; it may be blurred by the breath of our own selfishness; the dust of superstition may gather upon it; we may meddle with, and turn it aside from the field; it may be pointed away toward empty space; it may be turned end for end, so that everything is so diminished that we can recognize nothing. We may change the focus so that everything is distorted out of all harmonious proportions, and made hideous. It may be so shortened that nothing but a great piece of opaque glass shall appear to our gaze. If the lens is mistaken for the field we can receive but a very narrow conception of the most magnificent spectacle with which the heavens ever invited our gaze, but in its proper office as a medium of enlarged and clearer vision, as a telescope, the Testimony has a wonderfully beautiful and holy

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office.

“Everything depends upon our relation to it and the use which we make of it. In itself it is only a glass through which to look, but in the hand of the Divine Director, properly mounted, set at the right angle and adjusted to the eye of the observer, with a field, clear of clouds, it will reveal truth such as will quicken the blood, gladden the heart, and open a wide door of expectation. It will reduce nebulae to constellations; faraway points of light to planets of the first magnitude; and to suns burning with glory.

“The failure has been in understanding what the Testimonies are and how to use them. They are not the heavens, palpitating with countless orbs of truth, but they do lead the eye and give it power to penetrate into the glories of the mysterious living word of God.

“This has been the most beautiful experience which has ever been granted me; it grows on me from day to day. I think I feel very much as Galileo must have felt when with his first telescope before him, he was bringing himself into position to look. Just to look, at last, beyond the stars which he had seen, into the vast, unexplored field where worlds on worlds were keeping rhythmic step to the throbbing heart of the Infinite One whose steady strokes of power set the pace for every moving thing. The simple possession of it must have given a sense of might, even before one glimpse had been taken through it. He knew that revelations such as eye had never seen nor ear heard were waiting him as soon as he should humble himself to the instrument, acknowledge its right to control his vision, and fix his eye upon the point of observation. I have often tried to imagine how Galileo’s heart must have throbbed and his whole soul been filled, even before he obtained one glimpse: And now I think I know.” [8]

ITEM 5.

E. G. White’s statements on “What Does the Lord Require?” Referred to on page 253.

“Who are the subjects of the kingdom of God? All those who do His will. They have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The members of Christ’s kingdom are the sons of God, partners in His great firm. The elect of God are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a holy nation, to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. They are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. They are living stones, a royal priesthood. They are in co partnership with Jesus Christ. These are they that follow the Lamb whither so ever He goes.” [9]

“The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been, just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents, perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. . . . We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us.” [10]

“The law requires righteousness, a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God’s holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can “be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.” Romans 3:26. [11]

“This robe [of Christ’s righteousness] woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. . . . When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. . . .

“Righteousness is right-doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.” [12]

“The Lord’s philosophy is the rule of the Christian’s life. The entire being should be imbued with the life-giving principles of heaven. The busy nothings which consume the time of so many shrink into their proper position before a healthy, sanctifying, Bible piety.

“The Bible, and the Bible alone, can produce this good result. . . . The whole Bible is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Received, believed, obeyed, it is the great instrumentality in the transformation of character. And it is the only sure means of intellectual culture. . . .

“The Scriptures are the great agency in the transformation of character. . . . If studied and obeyed,

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the Word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. . . . The truths of the word of God meet man's great practical necessity-the conversion of the soul through faith." [13]

ITEM 6.

More complete statements of Ellen G. White on "Accountability for Light Received." Referred to on page 258.

"None will be condemned for not heeding light and knowledge that they never had, and they could not obtain. But many refuse to obey the truth that is presented to them by Christ's ambassadors, because they wish to conform to the world's standard; and the truth that has reached their understanding, the light that has shone in the soul, will condemn them in the judgment. In these last days we have the accumulated light that has been shining through all the ages, and we shall be held correspondingly responsible. The path of holiness is not on a level with the world; it is a way cast up. If we walk in this way, if we run in the way of the Lord's commandments, we shall find that the 'path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.'" [14]

"Every soul to whom the Lord has granted light will be accountable for the light, and will be expected to walk in the light according to the degree of grace and truth given him.

"But those who have not had the light which is now shining upon the people of God concerning the Sabbath question, will not be accountable for the light; for it has never been brought before them, and they have died without condemnation. . . .

"We shall not be held accountable for the light that has not reached our perception, but for that which we have resisted and refused." [15]

"Our fathers are not accountable for the light they never received, or for the messages of warning they never heard.

"Special truths have been adapted to the conditions of the nations as they have existed. The present truth, which is a test to the people of this generation, was not a test to the people of generations far back. If the light which now shines upon us in regard to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, had been given to the generations of the past, God would have held them accountable for that light. We are accountable only for the light that shines upon us." [16]

"Men will not be judged for light they have never had. But those who have kept Sunday, whose attention has been called to this error, but who would not open their eyes to behold wondrous things out of the law, will be judged according to the light that has come to them. . . .

"It is not a lack of knowledge of spiritual light and understanding that will separate any soul from the presence of God. These are not the things that will decide his destiny. It is the truth, brought home to the understanding, but rejected because of the cross it involves, that will condemn the sinner in that day of final judgment." [17]

"Those who have been favored with great light and many opportunities, but who have not accepted the light nor improved the opportunities. . . . will receive punishment in accordance with their sin." [18]

"Those who cling to old customs and hoary errors have lost sight of the fact that light is ever increasing upon the path of all who follow Christ; truth is constantly unfolding to the people of God. We must be continually advancing if we are following our Leader. It is when we walk in the light that shines upon us, obeying the truth that is open to our understanding, that we receive greater light. We cannot be excusable in accepting only the light which our fathers had one hundred years ago. If our God-fearing fathers had seen what we see, and heard what we hear, they would have accepted the light, and walked in it. If we desire to imitate their faithfulness, we must receive the truths open to us, as they received those presented to them; we must do as they would have done, had they lived in our day." [19]

ITEM 7.

E. G. White statements on "How the Writings Came to Be. Referred to on page 261.

"Since the warning and instruction given in testimony for individual cases applied with equal force to many others who had not been specially pointed out in this manner, it seemed to be my duty to publish the personal testimonies for the benefit of the church." [20]

"Through His Holy Spirit the voice of God has come to us continually in warning and instruction, to confirm the faith of the believers in the spirit of prophecy. . . . Time and trial have not made void the

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instruction given, but through years of suffering and self-sacrifice have established the truth of the testimony given. The instruction that was given in the early days of the message is to be held as safe instruction to follow in these its closing days.” [21]

“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? . . .

“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.” [22]

“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.” [23]

“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.” [24]

“I wish all to understand that my confidence in the light that God has given stands firm, because I know that the Holy Spirit’s power magnified the truth and made it honorable, saying, ‘This is the way; walk you in it.’ In my books, the truth is stated, barricaded by a ‘Thus said the Lord.’ The Holy Spirit traced these truths upon my heart and mind as indelibly as the law was traced by the finger of God upon the tables of stone, which are now in the ark, to be brought forth in that great day when sentence will be pronounced against every evil, seducing science produced by the father of lies.

“Ministers and doctors may depart from the faith, as the Word declares they will, and as the messages that God has given his servant declare they will. Thus believers will be given evidence that the Word of God, the warnings He has given, are being fulfilled right among us. Some may make light of these messages, misinterpret them, and say untruthful things, which lead other minds astray. Our only hope is in the God of truth.” [25]

“I commit my ways to the Lord; for I am wholly dependent upon His mercy and grace to aid me in glorifying His name with pen and voice.” [26]

“I am deeply concerned in regard to the disregard of warnings and appeals that have been made by the Spirit of God through the humble instrument.” [27]

“What you have done is not against me, but against my Savior, who has given me my work to do.” [28]

“I see that you regard my work and my mission as on a level with your own work. . . . When I stand before the people I do not stand in my own spirit. My words are not mine, but His who sent me, and has given me a message to bear. . . .

“I have no explanation to make, no apologies to make. I have spoken to you the words of the Lord; I stand before the people bearing a testimony which is not premeditated, and which I do not manufacture. . . .

“If God strengthens me as He did on the last Sabbath and every day since then, I shall feel myself strengthened with a courageous and joyful spirit; for I experience within me a divine power by which and through which I can accomplish the work He has given me to do.” [29]

“The work that the Lord desires me and my workers to do is outlined before me. This work does not consist alone in attending camp meetings and special council-meetings, but in getting together as fast as possible the light given me by the Lord, that it may be given to the people.” [30]

“Jesus Christ is the world’s greatest Teacher. . . . He has made me His messenger, to communicate great spiritual truths to many thousands. With pen and voice I have been doing this for the past half

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century. How greatly I desire so to present His instruction that many will be led to Him. I never question His leading, and I know that I am sustained by the One who bade His disciples go forth and proclaim the gospel message, "Teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you. . . ."

"Since 1844 I have been engaged in public labor. I am always strengthened by the Lord. I realize that a power from above is imparted to me, giving me physical, mental, and spiritual efficiency. I have the full assurance that Christ gives me His sustaining grace and the evidence that He is the light of the world." [31]

"For half a century I have been the Lord's messenger, and as long as my life shall last I shall continue to bear the messages that God gives me for His people. I take no glory to myself; in my youth the Lord made me His messenger, to communicate to His people testimonies of encouragement, warning, and reproof. For sixty years I have been in communication with heavenly messengers, and I have been constantly learning in reference to divine things, and in reference to the way in which God is constantly working to bring souls from the error of their ways to the light in God's light....

"I know that the Lord has given me this work, and I have no excuse to make for what I have done. In my experience I am constantly receiving evidence of the sustaining miracle-working power of God upon my body and my soul, which I have dedicated to the Lord. I am not my own; I have been bought with a price. And I have such assurance of the Lord's working in my behalf that I must acknowledge His abundant grace.... As long as He sustains me, I shall bear a decided testimony.

"Why should I complain? So many times has the Lord raised me up from sickness, so wonderfully has He sustained me, that I can never doubt. . . . He gives me freedom to speak His truth before large numbers of people. Not only when I am standing before large congregations is special help bestowed upon me; but when I am using my pen, wonderful representations are given me of past, present, and future." [32]

"Of mine own self I can do nothing. I feel that all credit must be given to a higher Power whose will and word I am to carry out, in order that, united with heavenly intelligence, I may have a clear perception of spiritual and eternal things." [33]

"Sabbath night, a week ago, after I had been prayerfully studying over these things, I had a vision, in which I was speaking before a large company, where many questions were asked concerning my work and writings.

"I was directed by a messenger from heaven not to take the burden of picking up and answering all the sayings and doubts that are being put into many minds. 'Stand as the messenger of God anywhere, in any place,' I was bidden, 'and bear the testimony I shall give you. Be free. Bear the testimonies that the Lord has for you to bear in reproof, in rebuke, in the work of encouraging and lifting up the soul; "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." [34]

"O I need the closest connection with my brethren, but I cannot always follow their way. I pray the Lord that He will give me faith and clear eyesight to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. My life has been spared by the mercy of God, to do a certain work: I have pledged that life to Him, but the work is not always easy to perform. I have to take positions not in harmony with men whom I believe to be God's workmen, and I see that I must do this in the future as in the past. It hurts me more than I can tell." [35]

"The greatest tirade may be made against me, but it will not change in the least my mission or my work. We have had this to meet again and again. The Lord gave me the message when I was only sixteen years old, and I have been engaged in public labor ever since. Next November I shall be seventy years old. The message the Lord has given me to bear has been in a straight line from light to light, upward and onward from truth to advanced truth.

"As for the claims that these brethren make, that their conscience and the Holy Ghost has led them to take the position they have against me and the truth, the Lord has given them no such commission. They cannot do anything against the truth, but for the truth." [36]

"I am again and again reminded that I am not to try to clear away the confusion and contradiction of faith and feeling and unbelief that is expressed. I am not to be depressed, but am to speak the words of the Lord with authority, and then leave with Him all the consequences. I am instructed by the Great Physician to speak the word that the Lord gives me, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. I am told that I have nothing to do with the consequences, that God, even the Lord Jehovah, will keep me in perfect peace if I will rest in His love and do the work He has given me." [37]

"I shall try to arouse their slumbering senses by writing, but not by speaking. The awful sense of my responsibility takes possession of me. I do not desire to feel less keenly my obligation to the higher

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Power. That Presence is ever with me, asserting supreme authority and taking account of the service that I render or withhold.” [38]

“I cannot, at my own impulse, take up a work and launch out into it. I have to be impressed by the Spirit of God. I cannot write unless the Holy Spirit helps me. Sometimes I cannot write at all. Then again I am aroused at eleven, twelve, and one o’clock; and I can write as fast as my hand can move over the paper.” [39]

ITEM 8.

Quotations on “The Purpose of the Testimonies.” Referred to on page 261.

“The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.” [40]

“The word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow.” [41]

“The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles.” [42]

“As the end draws near and the work of giving the last warning to the world extends, it becomes more important for those who accept present truth to have a clear understanding of the nature and influence of the Testimonies, which God in His providence has linked with the work of the third angel’s message from its very rise.” [43]

“They [repentant sinners] have only to follow His counsel and do His will, to inherit eternal life.” [44]

“The Lord reprove and corrects the people who profess to keep His law. He points out their sins and lays open their iniquity because He wishes to separate all sin and wickedness from them, that they may perfect holiness in His fear. . . . God rebukes, reprove, and corrects them, that they may be refined, sanctified, elevated, and finally exalted to His own throne.” [45]

“I have been looking over the Testimonies given for Sabbath keepers and I am astonished at the mercy of God and His care for His people in giving them so many warnings, pointing out their dangers, and presenting before them the exalted position which He would have them occupy. . . .

“I have waited anxiously, hoping that God would put His Spirit upon some and use them as instruments of righteousness to awaken and set in order His church. . . . I ask: Wherein have those who profess confidence in the Testimonies sought to live according to the light given in them? Wherein have they regarded the warnings given? Wherein have they heeded the instructions they have received?” [46]

“Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people. . . .

“Are they [our people] heeding the messages of warning given them? Is it our greatest concern today that our lives shall be refined and purified, and that we shall reflect the similitude of the divine? This must be the experience of all who join that company who are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. They must be arrayed in the righteousness of Christ. . . .

“Never have testimonies been more clearly brought before the people than those that have recently been traced by my pen. God bids me urge upon the attention of our people the importance of their study. Let this work begin now. Then, whether I am permitted to labor or am laid away to rest until Jesus comes, these messages are immortalized.” [47]

ITEM 9.

E. G. White statements on-How to Read and Understand the Testimonies.” Referred to on page 261.

“Those who are indifferent to this light and instruction must not expect to escape the snares which we have been plainly told will cause the rejecters of light to stumble, and fall, and be snared, and taken.” [48]

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“Perilous times are before us. Everyone 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 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?” [49]

“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.’”

“I bear you the testimony of the Lord. All will hear His voice who are willing to be corrected; but those who have been deceived by the enemy are not willing now to come to the light, lest their deeds shall be reproofed. Many of you cannot discern the work and presence of God. You know not that it is He. The Lord is still gracious, willing to pardon all who turn to Him with penitence and faith.

“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. . . .

“Neither the word of God nor the testimonies of His Spirit make any lasting impression upon them. Just according to the light, the privileges, and opportunities which they have slighted will be their condemnation.” [50]

“So it is with many among our people who have drifted away from the old landmarks and who have followed their own understanding. What a great relief it would be to such could they quiet their conscience with the belief that my work is not of God. But your unbelief will not change the facts in the case.

“If you seek to turn aside the counsel of God to suit yourselves, if you lessen the confidence of God’s people in the testimonies He has sent them, you are rebelling against God as certainly as were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.” [51]

“Let none entertain the thought that I regret or take back any plain testimony I have borne to individuals or to the people. If I have erred anywhere, it is in not rebuking sin more decidedly and firmly. . . . I do not expect that all will accept the reproof and reform their lives, but I must discharge my duty all the same. I will walk in humility before God, doing my work for time and for eternity.” [52]

“Those who are reproofed by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin.” [53]

ITEM 10.

Quotations to accompany statements on “The Wrong Use of the Testimonies.” Referred to on page 263.

(1) 1855. “Some have taken an injudicious course; when they have talked their faith to unbelievers, and the proof has been asked for, they have read a vision, instead of going to the Bible for proof. I saw that this course was inconsistent, and prejudiced unbelievers against the truth. The visions can have no weight with those who have never seen them and know nothing of their spirit. They should not be referred to in such cases.” [54]

“You who have been educating yourselves and others in a spirit of criticism and accusing, remember that you are imitating the example of Satan. When it suits your purpose, you treat the Testimonies as if you believed them, quoting from them to strengthen any statement you wish to have prevail. But how is it when light is given to correct your errors? Do you then accept the light? When the Testimonies speak contrary to your ideas, you treat them very lightly.

“It does not become any one to drop a word of doubt here and there that shall work like poison in other minds, shaking their confidence in the messages which God has given, which have aided in laying the foundation of this work, and have attended it to the present day, in reproofs, warnings, corrections, and encouragement. To all who have stood in the way of the Testimonies, I would say, God has given a message to his people, and his voice will be heard, whether you hear or forbear. Your opposition has not injured me; but you must give an account to the God of heaven, who has sent these warnings and instructions to keep his people in the right way. You will have to answer to him for your blindness, for being a stumbling-block in the way of sinners.

“To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the word of God. The

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Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.” [55]

“The Testimonies can have no weight with those who know nothing of their spirit. They should not be referred to in such cases.” [56]

(2) 1862. “In the last vision given at Battle Creek I was shown that an unwise course was taken at - in regard to the visions at the time of the organization of the church there. There were some in who were God’s children, and yet doubted the visions. Others had no opposition, yet dared not take a decided stand in regard to them. Some were skeptical, and they had sufficient cause to make them so. The false visions and fanatical exercises, and the wretched fruits following, had an influence upon the cause in Wisconsin to make minds jealous of everything bearing the name of visions. All these things should have been taken into consideration, and wisdom exercised. There should be no trial or labor with those who have never seen the individual having visions, and who have had no personal knowledge of the influence of the visions. Such should not be deprived of the benefits and privileges of the church, if their Christian course is otherwise correct, and they have formed a good Christian character.

“Some, I was shown, could receive the published visions, judging of the tree by its fruits. Others are like doubting Thomas; they cannot believe the published Testimonies, nor receive evidence through the testimony of others; but must see and have the evidence for themselves. Such must not be set aside, but long patience and brotherly love should be exercised toward them until they find their position and become established for or against. If they fight against the visions, of which they have no knowledge; if they carry their opposition so far as to oppose that in which they have had no experience, and feel annoyed when those who believe that the visions are of God speak of them in meeting, and comfort themselves with the instruction given through vision, the church may know that they are not right. God’s people should not cringe and yield, and give up their liberty to such disaffected ones. God has placed the gifts in the church that the church may be benefited by them; and when professed believers in the truth oppose these gifts, and fight against the visions, souls are in danger through their influence, and it is time then to labor with them, that the weak may not be led astray by their influence.” [57]

(3) 1863. “I have been shown that some, especially in Iowa, make the visions a rule by which to measure all, and have taken a course which my husband and myself have never pursued. Some are unacquainted with me and my labors, and they are very skeptical of anything bearing the name of visions. This is all natural, and can be overcome only by experience. If persons are not settled in regard to the visions, they should not be crowded off. The course to pursue with such may be found in Testimony Number 8 [Volume 1], Pages 328, 329, which I hope will be read by all. Ministers should have compassion of some, making a difference; others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire. God’s ministers should have wisdom to give to everyone his portion of meat and to make that difference with different persons which their cases require. The course pursued with some in Iowa who are unacquainted with me has not been careful and consistent. Those who were, comparatively, strangers to the visions have been dealt with in the same manner as those who have had much light and experience in the visions. Some have been required to endorse the visions when they could not conscientiously do so, and in this way some honest souls have been driven to take positions against the visions and against the body which they never would have taken had their cases been managed with discretion and mercy.

“Some of our brethren have had long experience in the truth and have for years been acquainted with me and with the influence of the visions. They have tested the truthfulness of these testimonies and asserted their belief in them. They have felt the powerful influence of the Spirit of God resting upon them to witness to the truthfulness of the visions. If such, when reproved through vision, rise up against them, and work secretly to injure our influence, they should be faithfully dealt with, for their influence is endangering those who lack experience.” [58]

(4) 1863. “Some of our ministers feel but little disposition to take upon them the burden of the work of God and labor with that disinterested benevolence which characterized the life of our divine Lord. The churches, as a general rule, are farther advanced than some of the ministers. They have had faith in the testimonies which God has been pleased to give, and have acted upon them, while some of the preachers are far behind. They profess to believe the testimony borne, and some do harm by making them an iron rule for those who have had no experience in reference to them, but they fail to carry them out themselves. They have had repeated testimonies which they have utterly disregarded. The course of such is not consistent.” [59]

(5) 1857. “I saw that many have taken advantage of what God has shown in regard to the sins and wrongs of others. They have taken the extreme meaning of what has been shown in vision, and then have pressed it until it has had a tendency to weaken the faith of many in what God has shown, and also to

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discourage and dishearten the church. With tender compassion should brother deal with brother. Delicately should he deal with feelings. It is the nicest and most important work that ever yet was done to touch the wrongs of another. With the deepest humility should a brother do this, considering his own weakness, lest he also should be tempted.” [60]

(6) 1911. “Many from among our own people are writing to me, asking with earnest determination the privilege of using my writings to give force to certain subjects which they wish to present to the people in such a way as to leave a deep impression upon them. . . .

“In taking account of such an enterprise, there are many things that must come into consideration; for in using the testimonies to bolster up some subject which may impress the mind of the author, the extracts may give a different impression than that which they would were they read in their original connection.” [61]

ITEM 11.

Uriah Smith’s attitude toward the writings of E. G. White. Referred to on page 267.

“They lead us to Christ. Like the Bible, they set Him forth as the only hope and only Savior 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.”

“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.”

“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 Savior, 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 bath 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 Savior, ‘Why, what evil hath he done?’” [62]

ITEM 12.

E. G. White statements on which my personal attitude toward her life and work are based.

“Our happiness comes not from what is around us, but from what is within us; not from what we have, but from what we are.” [63]

“The surrender of all our powers to God greatly simplifies the problem of life. It weakens and cuts short a thousand struggles with the passions of the natural heart. Religion is as a golden cord that binds the souls of both youth and aged to Christ. Through it the willing and obedient are brought safely through dark and intricate paths to the city of God.” [64]

“The Christian’s life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.” [65]

“From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. . . . In cleansing the temple from the world’s buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin, from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. . . . No man can of himself cast out the evil throng that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple. But

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He will not force an entrance.” [66]

“The grace of Christ is to control the temper and the voice. Its working will be seen in politeness and tender regard shown by brother for brother, in kind, encouraging words. An angel-presence is in the home. The life breathes a sweet perfume, which ascends to God as holy incense. Love is manifested in kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.

“The countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the heart shines out in the faces of those who love Him and keep His commandments. Truth is written there. The sweet peace of heaven is revealed. There is expressed a habitual gentleness, a more than human love.

“The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Through its life-giving power it brings all there is of mind and soul and strength into harmony with the divine life. Man with his human nature becomes a partaker of divinity. Christ is honored in excellence and perfection of character. As these changes are effected, angels break forth in rapturous song, and God and Christ rejoice over souls fashioned after the divine similitude.” [67]

ITEM 13.

E. G. White statements which aptly describe your experience and mine. Referred to on page 272.

“If the people who now profess to be God’s peculiar treasure would obey His requirements, as specified in His word, special testimonies would not be given to awaken them to their duty and impress upon them their sinfulness and their fearful danger in neglecting to obey the word of God. Consciences have been blunted because light has been set aside, neglected, and despised.” [68]

“I was shown that many had so little spirituality that they did not understand the value of the Testimonies or their real object. They talked flippantly of the Testimonies given by God for the benefit of His people, and passed judgment upon them, giving their opinion and criticizing this and that, when they would better have placed their hands upon their lips, and prostrated themselves in the dust; for they could not appreciate the spirit of the Testimonies, because they knew so little of the Spirit of God.” [69]

“If you lose confidence in the testimonies you will drift away from Bible truth. . . . As you now hold the testimonies, should one be given crossing your track, correcting your errors, would you feel at perfect liberty to accept or reject any part or the whole? That which you will be least inclined to receive is the very part most needed.” [70]

“My brethren, beware of the evil heart of unbelief. The word of God is plain and close in its restrictions; it interferes with your selfish indulgence; therefore you do not obey it. The testimonies of His Spirit call your attention to the Scriptures, point out your defects of character, and rebuke your sins; therefore you do not heed them. And to justify your carnal, ease-loving course you begin to doubt whether the testimonies are from God. If you would obey their teachings you would be assured of their divine origin. Remember, your unbelief does not affect their truthfulness. If they are from God they will stand.” [71]

“I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies of warning, encouragement, and reproof is shutting away the light from God’s people. Unbelief is closing their eyes so that they are ignorant of their true condition.” [72]

“The question to be settled with them is: Shall I deny myself and receive as of God the Testimonies which reprove my sins, or shall I reject the Testimonies because they reprove my sins?” [73]

“It is a lack of moral courage—a will, strengthened and controlled by the Spirit of God, to renounce hurtful habits.” [74]

“Satan has ability to suggest doubts and to devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue, a mark of intelligence in them, to be unbelieving and to question and quibble. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief.” [75]

“God gives sufficient evidence for the candid mind to believe; but he who turns from the weight of evidence because there are a few things which he cannot make plain to his finite understanding will be left in the cold, chilling atmosphere of unbelief and questioning doubts, and will make shipwreck of faith.” [76]
“Many now despise the faithful reproof given of God in testimony. But opposition to God’s threatening will not hinder their execution.” [77]

“God has set me as a reprover of His people; and just so surely as He has laid upon me the heavy burden, He will make those to whom this message is given responsible for the manner in which they treat

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it. God will not be trifled with, and those who despise His work will receive according to their deeds. I have not chosen this unpleasant labor for myself.” [78]

“Many are going directly contrary to the light which God has given to His people, because they do not read the books which contain the light and knowledge in cautions, reproofs, and warnings. . . . An account must be rendered to Him for every ray of light He has let shine upon our pathway, whether it has been improved to our advancement in divine things or rejected because it was more agreeable to follow inclinations.” [79]

“What reserve power has the Lord with which to reach those who have cast aside His warnings and reproofs, and have accredited the testimonies of the Spirit of God to no higher source than human wisdom? In the judgment, what can you who have done this, offer to God as an excuse for turning from the evidences He has given you that God was in the work.” [80]