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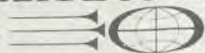
Messages
for the Week
of Prayer
and Church
Fellowship,
September 11-18,
1982

General topic:
The Gift of
Prophecy



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and Advent World Survey



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A message from the officers of the General Conference

Among the numerous works of art found within an ancient church in the city of Hamburg, Germany, is an imposing marble statue representing the Apostle John, seer of Patmos. With remarkable imagination and extraordinary artistic ability, the sculptor depicts the beloved disciple in a writing position inclined intently over a parchment, a pen in his right hand. Behind the apostle is the majestic figure of an angel watching the inspired writer in his endeavour to describe the visions received from God.

This work of art fittingly illustrates the untiring literary work of Ellen White, who, according to her testimony, also was assisted by the counsel and guidance of one she called "my accompanying angel," "my guide," or "my instructor."

Her messages imparted faith and confidence to the perplexed and confused pioneers who, after the disappointment of 1844, prayed earnestly for light. Her testimonies of censure silenced fanaticism that in the beginning threatened the success of the church. Her counsels stimulated the adoption of a vibrant and victorious program of worldwide evangelism. Her writings guided in the founding of schools, the construction of medical institutions, and the establishment of publishing houses for the purpose of giving greater power to the proclamation of the third angel's message.

But in affirming our belief in the writings of Ellen White, we do not in any way suggest that they are a second Bible, thus lessening the authority of God's Holy Word. The Bible and the Bible only is our supreme rule of faith.

Ellen White never claimed that her writings were another Bible or an addition to the Sacred Canon. In her first book, published in 1851, she declared: "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 the 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."—"Early Writings," page 78.

Several years later the *Review and Herald* published a significant statement by George I. Butler, at that time president of the General Conference: "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."—*Review and Herald Supplement*, Aug. 14, 1883.

During this Week of Prayer, dedicated to the gift of prophecy, we reverently give honour to God for His gift of the Bible, which guides us in the path of life. Also, we express our gratitude for the manifestation of the Spirit of Prophecy in the remnant church—the "lesser light" that leads men and women to the "greater light," God's Sacred Book.

Sabbath, September 11

God speaks through His prophets

By C. E. BRADFORD

The God who is love is eager to communicate. Love always seeks expression. By His very nature our God is outgoing, communicative, expressive. From all eternity there was perfect communion within the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were turned toward one another. As God enlarged His family, extended His creation, this communication was continued with the angels and also with human beings. And even after sin fouled the atmosphere and shrouded the earth, this unselfish, outgoing God so loved that he continued to reach out, to communicate with His rebellious creation. Love always finds a way! A way to penetrate, a way to break through.

More marvellous still, God adapts His speech to our condition. Because of sin, our hearing is greatly impaired and God's message becomes garbled and scrambled. We cannot understand His speech. We misinterpret His words. But love unlimited refuses to give up. (Anything less would turn away in disgust.) This is love's way, and God is love.

The Biblical writers understood this even better than we. They were convinced that God's communications are evidences of His love. God has not chosen to reveal Himself in works of art, paintings, and sculptures, but in His words. And that word is spoken through His prophets. "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets." Hebrews 1:1.*

"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, nonetheless, 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."¹

Account of God's Efforts

Salvation history, then, may be summed up as the account of God's efforts to get His message through to man—how He overcomes the barriers and obstacles and how He uses human agencies and makes men and women His spokespersons, His prophets. For a prophet is someone who speaks to the people on behalf of God. He bears the Lord's message. He is part of heaven's communication system. "I spoke to the prophets." Hosea 12:10. So we are admonished, "Touch not My anointed ones, do My prophets no harm!" Psalm 105:15. We begin to understand, now, how important is the ministry of the prophets in the economy of redemption. "In the highest sense the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God."² "Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." 2 Peter 1:21.

The Old Testament narrative is essentially the story of God's activity through the prophetic ministry. The word borne by the prophets is the basic ingredient, the key element. It sets the course of history, it is more powerful than armies, earthly government, principalities, or powers. This is how God described Jeremiah's prophetic ministry: "I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms . . . to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." Jeremiah 1:9, 10. And, as in the experience of Elijah, even nature is not exempt: "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 1 Kings 17:1. The authentic

prophet in Old Testament times is an awesome figure, not because of rank or status but because he conveyed God's word.

It pleased God from the earliest time to choose these human instrumentalities, called prophets, to make His will known. We do not have all the reasons why He chose flawed human beings rather than angels. He could have used other methods perhaps more spectacular or impressive, such as skywriting or voices speaking from the heavens. Human reasoning and speculation will not add to our knowledge. Suffice it to say, God selected men and women to speak His word to His own covenant people and to the nations. From Enoch to Malachi they bore witness.

Some of their words are recorded and preserved for our admonition. Some of these prophets are merely mentioned in passing reference; others unnamed are simply referred to as "prophet" or "man of God." Many of their prophecies—some written, some oral—are not recorded in the Bible, probably because they were limited to a particular time and place. Nonetheless, their inspired utterances were as much the word of God as the messages of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah.

And what a variety of persons they were—priests, kings, scribes, farmers, musicians, herdsman, prime ministers! But one thing was always the same; the word of the Lord came to them with compelling force. They could not keep silent; it had to be spoken. From our vantage point in time we are led to conclude, as we review the Old Testament period, that "The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place." 2 Chronicles 36:15.

C. E. Bradford is vice-president of the General Conference for North America.

* All Scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

"Christ was the teacher of His ancient people [in Old Testament times] as verily as He was when He came to the world clothed in the garments of humanity. Hiding His glory in human form, He often appeared to His people, and talked with them 'face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.' He, their invisible Leader, was enshrouded in the pillar of fire and of cloud, and spoke to His people through Moses. The voice of God was heard by the prophets whom He had appointed to a special work and to bear a special message. He sent them to repeat the same words over and over again. He had a message prepared for them that was not after the ways and will of men, and this He put in their mouths and had them proclaim. He assured them the Holy Spirit would give them language and utterance. He who knew the heart would give them words with which to reach the people."³

Jesus is God's final,
authoritative word, His
ultimate statement.

Because He loved them, pitied them, had great concern for them, God refused to withdraw and turn away from them. He did not leave them without some word about Himself, His character, His nature, and His purposes for them. Many tried to escape these piercing, penetrating messages from heaven. They tried to silence the messengers. No matter. Love never gives up. In the voice of the prophets, God's voice was known, His anguished cry heard, His great heart revealed.

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son. The more I called them, the more they went from Me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and burning incense to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk. . . . I led them with cords of compassion, with the bands of love. . . . How can I give you up, O Ephraim! How can I hand you over, O Israel! . . . My heart recoils within Me, My compassion grows warm and tender." Hosea 11:1-8. Authentic prophetic ministry is always redemptive, healing, expressive of divine love.

"But in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son." Hebrews 1:2. There came a day when the prophets of Old Testament times spoke no more. A strange and menacing silence extended through four centuries. Thick darkness, heavy gloom, settled on people and nations. The faithful clung to the record of God's dealings with their forefathers. Isaiah's word became especially precious: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined." Isaiah 9:2.

Inadequate Revelation

But the sum total of all the communications through all the prophets through all the centuries was inadequate to reveal fully the character of God, His great love for mankind. It took One who was in perfect relationship with the Father to bring God's self-revelation to completion.

"But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son." Galatians 4:4. "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known." John 1:18.

Jesus is God's final, authoritative word, His ultimate statement. The greatest of all the prophets, He is the supreme and unsurpassable revelation of the character of God. The apostles were thrilled and excited as they read the prophecies and saw in their Lord the great antitype of the ages, the fulfilment of "all that the prophets have spoken."

"Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as He raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.' " Acts 3:22. The disciples were fully convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was that prophet—"mighty in deed and word." Luke 24:19.

"All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son."⁴

"Love was when God became a man,
Locked in time and space without rank or
place. . . .

Love was when God became a man,
Down where I could see love that reached
to me; . . .

Love was God, only He would try,
To reach and love one such as I."

—John E. Walvoord.

He came from the world of light, speaking new and life-giving words. He spoke words of truth, highlighting reality. His was a new vocabulary with new, vital meaning—illuminating, dynamic, and powerful. His words magnify the law, giving it freshness and clarity. The earlier prophets had spoken, but "No man ever spoke like this man!" John 7:46.

Now that God has spoken His final word in His Son, all prophetic ministry becomes the revelation of Jesus Christ or the testimony of Jesus. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants what must soon take place; and He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:1, 2. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Chapter 19:10.

The New Testament church had the gifts of the Spirit in abundance. "And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry." Ephesians 4:11, 12.

Prophets in the Early Church

Agabus "stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world" (Acts 11:28) and also predicted Paul's arrest and imprisonment. "In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon, . . . Lucius, . . . Manaen." Chapter 13:1. And then there were Philip's "four unmarried daughters, who prophesied" (chap. 21:9), "and Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words and strengthened them." Chapter 15:32. So Paul could say with confidence: "You were enriched in Him with all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift." 1 Corinthians 1:5-7. God's communication system, the Spirit of prophecy, was active in the early church, and this church is the pattern for all to come.

Striking parallels exist between the church in the first century and the church in the last days. In each instance believers are earnestly proclaiming and looking for the

blessed hope. Truth is remarkably restored "raising the foundations of many generations." And to each the Spirit is promised in large measure. We are to look for another visitation, a special manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy.

"And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on My menservants and My maidservants in those days I will pour out My Spirit; and they shall prophesy." Acts 2:17,18.

The experience of the day of Pentecost did not exhaust Joel's prophecy. The greatest witness to Jesus Christ is to take place before the end. The people who join in heart and mind in this final testimony are described as having the Spirit of prophecy. They are to lack no "spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:7)—that is, His revelation as King of kings and Lord of

lords. Before face-to-face communication with heaven and God is restored, there is to be a restoration of the truth about Jesus and God. We are privileged to have part in that restoration and reformation, and to aid us in revealing Him the Spirit of prophecy (testimony of Jesus) is given.

The ministry of Ellen White meets all the Biblical requirements. She exalts the sin-pardoning Saviour in His power and beauty, His Word as the only rule of faith and doctrine, His atoning death and intercessory ministry as our great high priest as sufficient, and His culminating work of final judgment. Her writings are a final testimony to Jesus Christ!

"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."⁵

Paul's words apply again in a special way to us: "In every way you were enriched in Him with all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony to

Christ was confirmed among you." 1 Corinthians 1:5, 6.

In the end love will triumph—love that overcomes all obstacles and barriers, love that speaks so that we may understand and know Him, love that guides and directs so that we may find Him, and love that makes us like Him so that we may see Him as He is, with no "darkening veil between."

But until then "we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19. □

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1. "The Great Controversy," pages vi, vii.
2. "Education," page 46.
3. "Testimonies to Ministers," page 405.
4. "Testimonies," Vol. 8, page 286.
5. *Id.*, Vol. 4, pages 147, 148.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does God speak to us today?
2. From time to time people claim that God has "spoken" to them. How may such claims be tested?
3. On Biblical grounds, is the S.D.A. belief to have a prophet (Ellen White) something strange?
4. What is the relationship of Biblical prophecy to Jesus Christ?
5. What should be our attitude to the messages God has given us through His prophets?

Sunday, September 12

"Fire . . . in my bones" —the prophetic gift

By WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

The Biblical prophets were men and women raised up by God to declare His will to mankind. They were ambassadors extraordinary, representatives of the King of heaven who acted as His messengers to individuals and to nations. Called of God, imbued with divine power, entrusted with the word from above, they "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21. Like Jeremiah, they could say: "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire

shut up in my bones . . . and I could not stay." Jeremiah 20:9.

Biblical prophecy has been well described as threefold in its nature: *for*-telling, *forth*-telling, and *fore*-telling. The prophets, first of all, stood in the place of Yahweh—they spoke *for* Him. The case of Aaron, who was called Moses' "prophet," that is, his mouthpiece (Exodus 7:1, 2), is a clear example of this function. Likewise, the prophets were communicators; they did not merely stand in the place of God but set forth His will so that none might go unwarned or uninstructed. Indeed, the boldness and

forthrightness of the men and women raised up by God is one of their outstanding characteristics. Finally, the Biblical prophets conveyed divine messages concerning the future as well as rebuke and counsel for the present. This element of prediction (*fore*-telling) is the foundation of the familiar saying of Amos 3:7: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."

Over and over the prophets prefaced their messages with statements such as, "The word of the Lord came to me, saying . . ." (e.g., Isaiah 8:1; Jeremiah 1:1, 2;

Ezekiel 1:3). By such expressions they voiced both their certainty that the counsels they brought were not merely of human origin and also their claim to divine authority. Some Biblical prophets, like the shepherd Amos, came from humble backgrounds, but all were sure of one thing: God had given them a message, made them "watchmen" on the walls of Zion (Ezekiel 3:17; compare Amos 3:8).

How did "the word of the Lord" come to the prophets? In many instances we are not told. Sometimes the prophets were given dreams (e.g., Daniel 7:1) or visions (e.g., Revelation 1:10, 4:1). God Himself had set out these two ways by which He would reveal His will to His spokesmen: "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.

But often divine messages came without dreams or visions. Paul, for instance, in his letters occupied a prophetic role, rebuking sin, admonishing, warning, comforting, encouraging, predicting. He was conscious that what he wrote was endowed with the Spirit (e.g., 1 Corinthians 7:40; 14:37). But he made no references to having received his ideas through dreams or visions. Rather, the Holy Spirit impressed his mind, revealing truth and counsel; the divine Mind fused with the human mind.

Indeed, Biblical prophecy clearly shows a blending of the divine working with the thought processes and sources of information accessible to all human beings. Paul, for example, found out about the problems of the church at Corinth through the visit of some fellow-Christians ("them which are of the house of Chloe") and also from a letter that the Corinthians themselves sent to him (chapters 1:11; 7:1). God did not reveal these things to him through supernatural means, but He activated his mind to address the problems and to provide counsel to meet them.

Thus, Biblical prophecy is always an intermingling of divine message and human instrument. God did not dictate His words to the prophets; rather, by the Spirit He impressed His message upon their minds, leaving them to struggle with the process of communication of the message. The prophets used their own words; they

selected materials and illustrations according to the fund of information available to them and to the needs of their hearers as they understood them.

For this reason, some expressions of the prophets at times seem harsh and even coarse to us. They come from a different era, a different culture. We should remember that *God* has not framed such expression; He is not on trial for His language! His message is being conveyed through human channels—channels whose thought patterns are not passive during the process. But though the messages came in the prophets' own words, they were nonetheless from God—He inspired the prophets and superintended the process so that His will might be accurately communicated.

"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 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."

Many of the messages of the Biblical prophets were first given orally to the recipients. Later, these same messages were written down (e.g., Jeremiah 30:1, 2), sometimes with the help of a scribe (e.g., Baruch, who wrote for Jeremiah—chapter 36:4). Sometimes the prophets' messages were written out first (e.g.,

chapter 29:1). At times prophets used actions and visual aids to communicate the divine purpose graphically (e.g., Ezekiel 4:1, 3, 4, 9; 5:1-4). But whether oral or written, whether proclaimed or acted out, the source and authority was the same—God Himself.

It was the Lord's goodness that lay behind all Biblical prophecy. God wished to help His people, to guide them in their lethargy, to call them back to Himself, to show them His way. Because He is merciful, He sent Amos to Bethel, Jonah to Nineveh, and Isaiah to Jerusalem. Likewise He stirred up Peter, Paul, James, and John to write to the churches, and He gave the aged John visions of the trials and triumphs of the church to encourage the New Testament people of God. Like every spiritual gift, prophecy is for the purpose of building up the body of Christ—"for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:12.

In contrast to some of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament, however, prophecy especially edifies the church. "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." 1 Corinthians 14:3, 4.

The messages of the Biblical prophets often were directed to the leaders of God's people. In the Old Testament the king (e.g., 1 Kings 18:1; Isaiah 7:3), the priests (e.g., Jeremiah 20:1-6), or the magistrates (e.g., Micah 3:1, 11) received warning and direction from God's appointed messengers. Likewise in the New Testament the church leaders were counselled by means of the prophetic word, as in the decision to separate Paul and Barnabas for missionary work (Acts 13:1, 2) and the prediction of Paul's arrest and imprisonment at Jerusalem (chapter 21:10, 11).

While the messages of the Biblical prophets were concerned with the people of God generally and therefore often were directed to their leaders, they also brought encouragement and counsel to individual followers of Yahweh. Thus, God sent word through Jeremiah to his scribe, Baruch (Jeremiah 45:1-5); Elisha gave hope to the childless couple (2 Kings

4:8-17); Elijah's counsel preserved the widow and her son through the famine (1 Kings 17:8-16); Paul wrote to Philemon on behalf of the runaway slave Onesimus (Philemon 8-21); and Philip was led by the Spirit to bring salvation to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). And we should not forget the ministry of the greatest Prophet of all, He who was the divine Word made flesh—Jesus. His was a ministry *par excellence* to the individual.

The Biblical prophets, then, were a line of men and women without parallel in the history of the religions of mankind. Raised up by God, inspired by God, they declared His will by voice and pen. Despite the weaknesses of human temperament and the frailties of human speech, they became bold for Him and communicated His messages alike to leaders of His people and to individuals.

But God's care for His people did not cease with the end of the Biblical era. Just as in His mercy He anciently sent messages of counsel, warning, and rebuke, so the prophetic gift continues. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church this gift has been manifested in the life and work of Ellen White.

While Ellen White's writings are not an

addition to the canon of Scripture, her work and messages in nature and scope conform to the pattern of the Biblical prophets. She preferred to be called the Lord's "messenger" because of popular misconceptions associated with the term *prophet* (see "Selected Messages," Book 3, page 74), but she was as certain of the divine call, the divine source of her messages, and the divine authority behind them as were the men and women whom God raised up long ago. She too was a *for-teller*, God's representative; she too was a *forth-teller*, proclaiming by word and pen God's counsels; she too was a *fore-teller*, looking beyond the immediate present to events that would affect the people of God.

"I Was Shown"

Like the Biblical prophets, she at times received the divine messages through dreams and visions. Often she used the expression "I was shown" to introduce her counsels. Much of her instruction, however, came by means of the Holy Spirit's direct impress on her mind. Regardless of the means used, she had a deep conviction that God had given the messages. Of this she wrote: "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."²

Ellen White was an active public speaker and a prolific writer. By voice and pen she declared the counsel God had imparted to her, seeking to edify the church, to give direction to church leaders, and to encourage, guide, rebuke, and strengthen individuals. The scope of her concerns was vast, encompassing health, education, publishing, ministry, and evangelism, as well as spiritual nurture. She was in constant touch with the leaders of God's church, but she also spent much time in counselling individual church members.

As with the Biblical writers, God did not dictate His messages to her. The word of God was filtered through the human vessel. Like the Biblical prophets, at times she employed material already prepared by others. Not the credit, not the words were important, but the message—and that was from God!

Thus, Ellen White is a modern representative of that intrepid band of men and women raised up of old by God to declare His will. Like them she received the divine Spirit; like them, she felt the "fire . . . in my bones" and could not be silent. □

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Questions for Discussion

1. Can we accept only prophetic messages that were given by means of dreams or visions?
2. Adventists believe in "thought inspiration" rather than "verbal inspiration." What is the difference?
3. Explain Ellen White's statement: "The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen."
4. What purposes does divine prophecy serve today (a) for the church in general? (b) for individual believers?
5. Does Ellen White's refusal to call herself a "prophet" mean that she was not a prophet?



Jeremiah was one of the Biblical prophets raised up by God to declare His will.

Monday, September 13

The integrity of the prophetic gift

By GERHARD F. HASEL

The prophetic gift is one of the most profound gifts of God to the human family. A prophet is a person chosen by God to communicate authentically and authoritatively the divine will and purpose through the processes of supernatural revelation and divine inspiration. While there are many facets to the task of the prophet, one of the outstanding aspects is the predictive element. Thus prophets are both the proclaimers of events that are to take place in the near future, the more distant future, or even the very distant future. Predictive prophecy and historical fulfilment are essential parts of God's Biblical revelation. In this way God could address through His inspired instrument the prophet's own situation, as well as the near or distant future.

The fact of predictive prophecy demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Lord is all-powerful and in ultimate control of history. The Creator of the world (Genesis 1:1-3; John 1:1-3, 14; Hebrews 1:1-3) also is the Lord over history (Daniel 2:1-45; 7:1-27; 12:1-3). The prophet Isaiah emphasised this in the following way: "For I am God, there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.' . . . Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it." Isaiah 46:9-11, N.A.S.B.

In His grace God has chosen to speak and to declare the end from the beginning so that His followers may know what will take place. The God who in the beginning started history also knows and controls history, directing His plan of salvation to its final goal of a new heaven and a new earth (chapters 65:17; 66:22, 23; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1).

Some people may have the impression that the predictive element of the Bible is small or limited, when compared with the total content of the Bible. But an investigation of the predictive material contained in Scripture shows that this is not the case. It has been suggested that out of the total of 31,124 verses of the Bible, 8,352 are predictions—5,457 straight forward predictions and 2,895 typological predictions. This means that almost 27 per cent of the Bible is predictive in nature.

Reliability an issue

The reliability of Bible prophecy is an important issue. After the assassination attempts on the President of the United States and the pope, there were several reports that certain individuals had predicted these events. The curious fact is that these "predictions" were made known after the deplorable events occurred. Bible prophecy does not function in this way. Before the events happened or are to happen, divine predictions were communicated to the prophets, and they were carefully recorded. The mark of a true prophet is clearly stated: "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken presumptuously." Deuteronomy 18:22, N.A.S.B. The criterion of the truth of predictive prophecy rests in its historical fulfilment.

The Bible is such a vast reservoir of information about prophetic predictions and their fulfilment that we can mention but a few. The prediction that God would give to Abraham's descendants the Promised Land was made first to Abraham (Genesis 12:7), then repeated to him (Genesis 13:14, 15; 15:7, 18; 17:8), to Isaac (Genesis 26:2-4), to Jacob (Genesis 28:13, 15), and to Moses (Exodus 3:8, 17; 6:6-8).

By the time of the death of Joshua the Lord had fulfilled His predictions about

the reception of the Promised Land, so that the Biblical record could state explicitly: "Not one of all the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass." Joshua 21:45, R.S.V.

When Jericho was destroyed the prediction was made that its rebuilder would do so at the loss of his oldest and youngest sons (chapter 6:26). About 500 years later the fulfilment took place (1 Kings 16:34) exactly as predicted.

Nathan prophesied that David's son would succeed him on the throne and build the Temple (2 Samuel 7:12, 13) if his son would be faithful (1 Kings 2:4; 6:12). In his son Solomon "the Lord . . . fulfilled His word which He spoke." Chapter 8:20, N.A.S.B.

The prophet Ahijah predicted that ten tribes would be taken away from Solomon (chapter 11:11-13, 32-37), and it was fulfilled exactly as stated (chapter 12:15-19). A prophecy in the time of Jeroboam foretold that a descendant of David named Josiah would act against the altar at Bethel (chapter 13:2, 32). About 300 years later King Josiah fulfilled "the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed." 2 Kings 23:16.

Only in one other instance does a Biblical prediction identify a person by name a long time before he appeared on the scene of history. Isaiah refers to Cyrus, who would decree that Jerusalem be rebuilt (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-7), an event that took place about 150 years later (Ezra 1:1-4).

The prophecy that the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel would be taken from "this good land" and scattered "beyond the [Euphrates] river" (1 Kings 14:15) was fulfilled by Assyria about 200 years later (2 Kings 17:6, 7, 22, 23). Such examples could be multiplied many times over.

These and other examples in the Old Testament reveal several beautiful truths: (1) The Lord gave the predictions through His servants the prophets and fulfilled His

predictions in history (1 Kings 8:20; 12:15; 2 Samuel 7:25), so none of His predictions and promises failed (Joshua 21:45; 23:14; 1 Kings 8:56; 2 Kings 10:10). (2) The predictions were fulfilled in history in detail, point by point, so that every feature counts in its fulfilment. (3) Some predictions were fulfilled immediately (1 Kings 13:5; 13:24; 14:18; 17:6, 15), others within a few years (chapters 18:1; 22:1), others decades (2 Kings 9:24; 9:35, 36; 10:7) or centuries later (chap. 17:6, 7, 22, 23). But whenever they were fulfilled it was with uncanny exactness. Thus the Lord establishes that He is Lord of time and history and that His revelation can be trusted.

Messianic Prophecies

Messianic prophecies interlace the Old Testament from its first pages onward. The earliest Messianic prophecy appeared from the mouth of God in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15) after the entry of sin. From then on Messianic predictions came at various times and through various prophets. Indeed, the proof from the Scriptures that Jesus of Nazareth was the predicted Messiah, or Christ, was a powerful means used by the disciples and apostles for convincing the Jews of the truth of Christianity. The Apostle Paul "powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." Acts 18:28, N.A.S.B.

Each new Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament complements and supplements previous ones, revealing aspects and details vital for the identity of the future Messiah. Genesis 3:15 predicts that He who would come of the seed of the woman would crush the head of Satan. Isaiah 11:1 states that He would come from the family of Jesse. Isaiah 7:14 reveals that He would be born of a virgin. Micah 5:2 claims that He would have to be born in a specific town, Bethlehem Ephrathah in Judah (and not in the other Bethlehem, the one in Galilee; see Joshua 19:15). Hosea 11:1 says that "out of Egypt I called My son" (N.A.S.B.), indicating in typological prediction that as Israel was called from Egypt, so Jesus, who is Himself the embodiment of all true Israel, as "son" also would be called out of Egypt. Isaiah 53 reveals that Jesus was to die a

substitutionary death for sinners as the Suffering Servant. Daniel 9:24-27 reveals with uncanny exactness the time of Christ's first coming.

Many other Messianic prophecies could be added. Each and every aspect of the Messianic prophecies was to be fulfilled and, indeed, was fulfilled in the One who is the Christ. The beauty of it all is that the coming of the Messiah, His birth, infancy, life and work, suffering, death, and resurrection, even His installation as heavenly High Priest—all took place exactly in fulfilment of the Old Testament predictions. Thus we know who Jesus of Nazareth is. He is the promised Christ (Messiah) of the Scriptures, in whom all the sacrificial system found its fulfilment. He is the promised Saviour and Redeemer, in whom and through whom God reconciles the world unto Himself. Jesus Christ is the surety of our redemption.

As we look back over the centuries and see how God has brought about His will, fulfilled His predictive prophecies, and worked out His plan of redemption, we have confidence that the predictions that yet are to be fulfilled will surely come to pass. The dream of Daniel 2 reveals the succession of four world empires, the last of which is followed by the iron-clay period of divided kingdoms. As we observe in history the detailed fulfilment,

we are certain that the stone-kingdom, which will destroy all earthly powers, will also be established as the kingdom of God that will last throughout eternity (verses 34, 35, 44, 45). This kingdom is of divine origin, eternal duration, and universal extent. It brings about a cataclysmic end to every world kingdom, while it "will itself endure forever" (verse 44, N.A.S.B.).

Vision Expands and Supplements

The vision of Daniel 7 expands and supplements the dream of Daniel 2, emphasising the investigative pre-Advent judgment in preparation for the handing over of the kingdom of God to the saints (chapter 7:21, 22, 24-27). In Daniel 8 appears another vision, one that enlarges upon aspects of the former. It pinpoints the time element of the pre-Advent judgment and reveals additional aspects of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. The vision of Daniel 11-12 reaches from the time of the Persian period to the time of trouble when Michael shall stand up to rescue His faithful remnant people (chapter 12:1) and death will be overcome through the resurrection (verses 2, 3). The amazing fulfilment of portions of these dreams and visions is the guarantee that the aspects that as yet remain unfulfilled will surely come to pass.



Every aspect of the Messianic prophecies was fulfilled in the One who is the Christ.

The Bible speaks clearly about conditional prophecy. The promised blessings made to Israel were conditional upon obedience (Leviticus 26:1-33; Deuteronomy 28:1-37), in harmony with the conditional nature of God's covenant with His people. Prophecies about the destruction of a nation can be averted if that nation genuinely repents from its evil (Jeremiah 18:7, 8); conversely, the nation to which blessings are to come from the Lord will not experience them "if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice." Verse 10, N.A.S.B.

While the conditional element of prophecy must be carefully studied, it clearly goes against the plain intent of Bible prophecy to suggest that all prophecy is conditional. There was nothing conditional in the Messianic prophecies. There is nothing conditional

about the historical outline visions of Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9, 11-12, with their sequence of successive world empires and the events leading up to "the time of the end" (chapter 8:17; cf. 8:19, 26; 11:40; 12:1, 4, 9, 13), when the everlasting kingdom that will never be destroyed (chap. 2:34, 35, 44, 45; 7:14, 18, 27; 12:1-3) will be ushered in.

Students of the Word of God, with its rich treasure of predictive prophecies and their fulfilment, thus are assured of the truthfulness of the divine revelation. Inspiration provides its own testimony to the veracity and accuracy of the prophetic gift. In looking back we can see how God has worked out His predictions with astounding accuracy. This gives us full comfort and a sure anticipation of the fulfilment of events that are yet to transpire until we share in the glory of a new heaven

and a new earth in the presence of God and our Lord and Saviour.

In the prophetic gift we have a firm foundation for our faith and a revelation of the will of God for our lives as we serve Him who is the world's hope. The utterances of the prophets provide divine truth that gives comfort, guidance, and power of a dynamic Christian life today. Through the prophetic gift we can be sure of a future that will extend throughout eternity. □

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the purpose of predictive prophecy?
2. Our reading for today mentions many predictions from the Old Testament. Can you think of some New Testament predictions?
3. Did Ellen White predict any events? If so, give examples.
4. How may we tell which prophecies are conditional?
5. Which Bible characters were foretold by name many years before their birth?

Tuesday, September 14

Ellen White: Defence against error and apostasy

By V. NORSKOV OLSEN

The Apostle Paul gives the following pastoral counsel: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. . . . Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Timothy 4:13-16. The purpose of special spiritual gifts within the church is stated as follows: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. . . . But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all

things, which is the head, even Christ." Ephesians 4:12-15.

Ellen G. White, as one who ministered the Word and was endowed with spiritual gifts in accord with the pattern of New Testament church life, fulfilled the Pauline injunctions just quoted.

Belief in God's Leadership

The formative and formulative period of what became the Seventh-day Adventist Church was from 1844 until the time of organisation in 1862-1863. Although our forebears did not have church organisation, finances, or unity, they had a strong belief in God's leadership. Through Bible study and Bible conferences, marked by the presence of the Holy Spirit, they reached consensus and agreement. During those days Ellen White was a unifying force and remained so throughout her life.

By the middle of the 1850s the doctrinal

foundation was laid. It was referred to as "a firm platform," "a solid, immovable platform," the "pillars of truth," "the old landmarks," "the great waymarks," or "the present truth." The foundation truths were five: (1) the imminent advent of Christ; (2) the binding claims of the seventh-day Sabbath as a part of the immutable law of God; (3) the theological significance of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12 as related to the historical Advent movement; (4) the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as our mediator, advocate, priest, and judge (a special emphasis was placed on the pre-Advent judgment as a significant aspect of Christ's heavenly administration); and (5) death as a sleep, and the conditional immortality of the soul. We may refer to these specifics as structural or constitutive truths for the new movement. Ellen G. White identified herself with this

"present truth" from the very beginning and continued to do so during the ensuing years until her death in 1915.

In the development of present truth it became apparent to our founding fathers that the gift of prophecy was manifested in the life of Ellen G. White. Decade after decade her associates and fellow believers were convinced of this. The question is: What part did she play in formulating basic doctrines?

The history of the early years clearly attests that our doctrines were introduced and accepted through Bible study, thus founded upon the Scriptures. Ellen White's role, as borne out by her own statement and our history, was to substantiate, confirm, bear witness to, attest, and testify to (these are her own expressions) truths discovered through Bible study, prayer, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

For example, some basic features of a pre-Advent judgment were conceived by others than our pioneers, and Hiram Edson's and O. R. L. Crosier's insight into Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary, at the time of the 1844 disappointment, was arrived at prior to any vision of Ellen White. Her vision became supportive of the doctrine. Among the Advent believers Ellen and James White were not the first who kept the Sabbath. It was Joseph Bates's tract that persuaded them to become Sabbath-keepers in 1846, and the next year she had a confirmatory vision.

Referring to the origin of doctrines and prophetic interpretation, James White declared in 1846: "Apostolic order . . . was, first, investigation, then the testimony of the Holy Ghost." He explained this principle: "The revival of any, or all of the Gifts, will never supersede the necessity of searching the Word to learn the truth. . . . In our opinion, the error never would have been pointed out by any of the Gifts, unless the Word had first been thoroughly searched on the question. It is not God's plan to lead out His people into the broad field of truth by the Gifts. But after His people have searched the Word, if then individuals err from Bible truth, or through strife urge erroneous views upon the honest seekers for truth, then it is God's opportunity to correct them by the Gifts. This is in harmony with our entire

experience on this subject."¹

Ellen White's life and writings illustrate the truth of the above statement. While our pioneers were united in the distinctive doctrines of "present truth," they had variances in other doctrinal areas. This is understandable when we remember that the pioneers came from different denominational backgrounds. Further, the eternal salvation truths were taken for granted and not examined. So among our founding fathers were different concepts concerning subjects such as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Ghost, and the atonement on the cross. Patiently, for more than half a century, Ellen White guided the church to a better Biblical understanding of the eternal salvation verities.

As an example, we will notice how she corrected doctrinal views taught by Uriah Smith and others. Originally he spoke about Christ as "the first created being." Later he repudiated this view, but maintained that Christ was not from eternity. Within the church this semi-Arian concept was held rather uniformly. The Holy Spirit was regarded as a "mysterious influence" rather than a person of the Godhead. In Smith's emphasis upon Christ's work in the most holy he de-emphasised the atonement of the cross. He wrote: "The death of Christ and the atonement are *not the same thing*."²

As early as 1869 Ellen White stated Christ's equality with the Father. Statements to this effect became more and more frequent. She called Christ the "eternal, self-existent, uncreated One."³ "In Christ is life, original unborrowed, underived."⁴ She referred to the Holy Ghost as "a divine person" and "the third person of the Godhead."⁵

Regarding Ellen White's understanding of the atonement and the cross, we read: "The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the Day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement."⁶ Further, "the sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths

cluster."⁷ She gives here a balanced view of the work of Christ as both the lamb and the priest, but places the emphasis on the cross for the atonement. She wrote: "The cross must occupy the central place because it is the means of man's atonement and because of the influence it exerts on every part of the divine government."⁸

A landmark in doctrinal development was the Minneapolis Conference of 1888, with its message of "righteousness by faith." The theological discussions centred on the meaning of "law" in Galatians. The question was whether the law of Galatians 3:19-24 was the ceremonial law or the Ten Commandments. Many had held that the reference was to the ceremonial law. On the other hand, A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner during the conference asserted in their sermons that it included the moral law, incapable as it was of redeeming man through obedience. Ellen White, who strongly supported Jones and Waggoner in their attempt to revive the essentials of the salvation doctrine, endorsed the "new view" of Galatians.

In passing, it should be noticed that at the conference a heated discussion took place over whether the Huns or the Alemanni constituted one of ten kingdoms into which Rome was divided. Uriah Smith stood for the old view—the Huns—while A. T. Jones advocated from clear historical evidence that it was the Alemanni. The latter has become the accepted view. Ellen White did not give any opinion in these peripheral historical matters.

In the setting of Minneapolis, where Ellen White with Jones and Waggoner emphasised that Christ is the embodiment of Christianity, Ellen White made the following statements: "We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed."⁹

Ellen White's writings and correspondence abound in examples of how decade after decade she sought to safeguard the

individual and the body of Christ from sin, fanaticism, and extremism. She showed how to avoid doubts, false accusations, and misinterpretations seeking to undermine confidence in the teaching and mission of the Advent movement.

Crisis Intervention

Her intervention in a crisis situation is seen *par excellence* in the Kellogg case (1901-1907), where we find church organisational, institutional, and theological issues intertwined. Her concept was that our institutions are but the lengthening shadows of God's saving work in and through His church. J. H. Kellogg sought institutional independence of the church. The Battle Creek Sanitarium, according to him, should be nondenominational and not peculiarly Adventist in doctrine.

Further, he placed overemphasis upon social welfare work and humanistic ethics

nary and Benevolent Association, controlled by Kellogg, went into bankruptcy, but the medical work was organised as a department of the General Conference. His American Medical Missionary College also became nondenominational. In the freshman class of 1908 only two students of thirty-eight were Seventh-day Adventists.

Loma Linda Medical School

Through divine intervention a new medical school was in planning, for it was at Ellen White's initiative that property was bought in Loma Linda in 1905. She declared, "This place will become an important educational centre." During the same year, 1909-1910, when Loma Linda had its first medical class, AMMC had its last class. In 1916 Kellogg wrote: "The future of the Loma Linda Medical School is absolutely hopeless. . . . The medical profession will not tolerate such a thing as a medical college under sectarian control, . . . which has for its purpose the education of men to engage in sectarian propaganda."¹¹ But how different is the record! As a General Conference institution Loma Linda University has made known to the world that medical missionary work is an integral part of the faith and practice of Seventh-day Adventists.

The collective decisions and advice of the General Conference, representing the church at large and guided by the counsel of the testimonies of Ellen White, have always brought blessings to the church. Our history testifies that as individuals and as a people our blessings and successes have been in direct proportion to our adherence to Bible teaching and Spirit of Prophecy counsel.

In whatever areas Ellen White gave counsel and to whomever—individually or collectively—she was always Christ-centred and Christ-motivated. Her chief concern was the salvation of persons. She epitomised her own words, "Lift up Jesus," and stimulated her fellow believers to grow into solid, mature Christians, exemplifying Christ in all aspects of life. Her own life witnessed to the fact that she was possessed by Jesus and always lived in His presence. She gave encouragement to exchange poverty of life for all the riches in Jesus Christ.

The corrective measures that Ellen White initiated regarding salvation doctrines resulted in a clearer Biblical understanding of the eternal salvation verities in Christ Jesus. Her understanding of the eternal deity of Christ, His divine-human nature, and the atonement at the cross (the doctrines around which Christology revolves) saved the church as a movement called to present Christ as the reality of all doctrine. That Christ is the embodiment of all doctrines is the primary defence against error and apostasy. With Christ we must begin and end, and without Him there is no saving knowledge and experience. Christ is to be not only the source but also the content of the message. This likewise will make the church more perceptive in meeting errors, as in the Kellogg case, that could bring into jeopardy the very basis of a Christian movement.

Further, with the eternal salvation truths corrected and re-emphasised, the church should be prepared to meet the challenge of preaching the everlasting gospel within the setting of the structural truths referred to as "present truth." "The priceless gift" of Christ's "own righteousness" is the message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.¹² □

In the prophetic gift we have a firm foundation for our faith and a revelation of God's will for our lives.

divorced from the power of the gospel. However, it was his pantheistic concept that brought the conflict to a head. His speculative and esoteric views were not detected by many members. Many church leaders who had not seen the subtleties of Kellogg's teaching were impressed and enlightened by the messages from Ellen White and took a united stand against Kellogg's ideas as expressed in his book "The Living Temple."

The sequel to the Kellogg crisis is significant.¹⁰ Kellogg himself lost faith in the doctrines of the atonement, the virgin birth, and the divinity of Christ, and became a Darwinian evolutionist. His mammoth sanitarium went into bankruptcy. During the Kellogg crisis the church was reorganised, with the institutions becoming an integral part of the church structure. The church headquarters and Review and Herald moved to Washington, D.C. The Medical Missio-

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11. Schwarz, "John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.," page 191.
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Questions for Discussion

1. Did Ellen White's preaching and writings fulfil the words of Paul in 1 Timothy 4:13, 16 and Ephesians 4:12-15?
2. Was Ellen White a unifying force in the church?
3. In what ways did adherence to her counsel bring blessings to the church and the individual?
4. Did she keep the church from fanaticism, extremism, and apostasy?
5. Did she bring confidence to the teaching and mission of the church?
6. Did she lift up Jesus in life and doctrine? Illustrate.

Wednesday, September 15

Prophecy identifies the remnant church

By **FERNANDO CHAIJ**

If Adventists today would follow the counsel given in the Spirit of Prophecy, we would experience a spiritual reform

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a united people. Wherever we travel in the world we find that, surpassing political frontiers and cultural levels, our heart beats in unison with those of our Adventist brothers and sisters, regardless of race, colour, nationality, or economic condition. We are a great worldwide family united in Christ.

Moreover, our people possess an authentic, universal sense of mission. On the basis of the Scriptures, we are aware that we have been raised up by God at a specific hour of history to proclaim a special message, as a fulfilment of some of the most meaningful prophecies of the Bible.

In fact, Daniel 8:14, the prediction that fixes 1844 as the beginning of the investigative judgment in heaven, also proclaims that the Biblical truth, cast down to the ground and trodden under foot during so many centuries by the little horn, would be announced again in all its original purity. For when the angel in the prophecy asked, "How long shall be the vision?" (verse 13), he was referring to the vision relative to the work of the little horn, whose activity included the casting down of the truth (verse 12).

In other words, in 1844 the truth no longer would be cast down to the ground and trampled upon, because it was going to be proclaimed again in completeness and clarity. That year would begin the most solemn hour of history, and with it the restoration of great Biblical doctrines ignored for centuries.

On the other hand, the rays of the 2300-day prophecy, pointing with mathematical clarity to the year 1844, converge over that date jointly with those of an important prophecy of the New Testament—Revelation 14:6, 7. In it we learn that when the judgment hour would begin, a religious movement—represented by the angel flying in the midst of heaven—would arise and announce: "The hour of His judgment is come."

With absolute precision in 1844, neither one year before nor one year after, and in fulfilment of these two prophecies, the Seventh-day Adventist movement had its inception. Based on the correct understanding and interpretation of the 2300-day prophecy, this people began to announce to the world not only the impending second coming of the Lord and the beginning of the investigative judgment but also a series of Biblical doctrines forgotten or distorted for centuries.

Eternal Designs

Thus our movement was initiated according to the eternal designs of the Most High, whose hand is on the helm of history. From an insignificant and local beginning, the proclamation of our message has reached worldwide proportions and very soon will culminate gloriously in the outpouring of the latter rain, lightening the whole earth with the glory of the Lord (Revelation 18:1).

This, then, is the prophetic foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a movement that was born by divine providence to announce a series of unique and distinctive truths. These teachings are characterised by their Biblical basis, their indisputable logic, and the conviction they create in the man or woman who wants to investigate the truth in this hour of confusion.

This special people, raised up by God at a precise hour, united, and possessing a

strong sense of mission, has been blessed mightily by God with the restoration of the gift of prophecy.

Two Prejudices

Let me make a confession. When at the age of nineteen I began to study present truth, I stumbled over two big prejudices that made it difficult for me to accept Ellen White as a special messenger of the Lord who had received the gift of prophecy: (1) God would not have chosen a woman for this important mission, and (2) there could not be prophets outside the Biblical canon. Fortunately, when I began to analyse more fully the evidence of the Bible, both prejudices were totally dispelled and my conviction of the divine calling of Ellen G. White was established. Through the years it has grown and taken root to the point that today nothing and nobody is capable of breaking it.

I found that the Bible mentions several women who discharged the prophetic role by divine calling. Here are some examples: Deborah (Judges 4:4); Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses (Exodus 15:20); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); Anna (Luke 2:36); and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8, 9).

On the other hand, the Scriptures mentioned a number of prophets who were not included in the Biblical canon. For example: Nathan and Gad (1 Chronicles 29:29), Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:22-24), Ahijah (2 Chronicles 9:29), Simeon (Luke 2:25, 26), and Agabus (Acts 21:10).

Further, we cannot find in the Scriptures anything that precludes the possibility of prophets appearing after the closing of the Biblical canon. To the contrary, the Lord inspired the prophet Joel to record the following important prediction: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Chapter 2:28.

In fact, the application of Joel's prophecy goes beyond the time in which the books of the Bible were written, since it refers to the time of the end. It predicts that in the final days, when great darkness and religious confusion prevail, there will be prophets in the midst of God's people.

If we go to Revelation and analyse the

outstanding characteristics of the remnant church, we find three distinctive marks of the people of God. Let us note the pertinent scriptures: "The dragon [Satan] was wroth with the woman [the true church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Chapter 14:12.

In other words, the features that distinguish the saints, the children of God of the last days, those who make up the remnant church, are three:

Distinguishing Features

1. They "keep the commandments of God." They do it because of their love for the Lord and as a fruit of their conversion (John 14:15).

2. They "keep . . . the faith of Jesus Christ." This is authentic saving faith that produces works (James 2:14-24). It is the secret of the saints' ability to keep the commandments.

3. They "have the testimony of Jesus Christ." What is this "testimony of Jesus Christ?" The prophet of Patmos does not leave us in doubt: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10. In other words, the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit that imparts to divinely called people the ability to prophesy. It is another designation of the gift of prophecy, because Christ gives testimony of His redemptive work through the teachings of the prophets.

The Adventist people comply not only with the first two features but with the third also. They proclaim and live the righteousness of Christ. Theirs is a faith that not only justifies but also works and produces a covenant of loyalty to God to keep His commandments.

The third characteristic of the remnant, namely the restoration of the gift of prophecy, is a hallmark that testifies to the quality, purity, and authenticity of the people of God of the last days. In fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, Joel, and Revelation, the Adventist people have been greatly enriched and benefited by the restoration of the gift of prophecy in their midst. This gift has been manifested

in the labours, the writings, and the leadership of Ellen White.

Special Leadership

As a church we would not be what we are without the special leadership of God through His servant. Her faithful ministry, her pious life, her frank counsels and inspired reproaches, her leadership in the formation and organisation of our church, along with her voluminous books, articles, and letters, have lent unity, cohesiveness, efficiency, consistency, and Biblical basis to the Advent movement. Aided by her work, it has developed from a restricted activity to become a spiritual revolution of universal scope, a movement that very soon will see its triumphant culmination.

The history of the gift of prophecy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church began in the very dawn of this people's activities. Ellen Harmon was called by God in 1844 at the age of seventeen. She lacked experience, she was frail, she had very limited education. Persecuted by the enemy even from the standpoint of her health, she was rescued from death by divine intervention in answer to prayer. She felt discouraged more than once because of the lack of receptivity to her messages, sometimes even by the leaders of the movement. Nevertheless, she remained loyal to her divine calling and faithfully discharged her mission as a special instrument chosen by God to give to the church the instruction the Lord wanted to convey to it in its difficult formative period.

As a prophetic messenger selected by the Lord, Ellen White during seventy wonderful years of ministry accompanied, oriented, and saved from many dangers the people whom she loved. Moreover, she left a voluminous production of inspired writings that continue to enlighten the people of God.

The first visions God gave her were to confirm the faith of the pioneers who had just discovered the real meaning of the cleansing of the sanctuary. This was in 1844, and it laid the foundations of present truth. Her last communications were to assure us of the final triumph of the church of God.

The revelations God gave to His people through her illuminated the historic and

prophetic panorama of the Word of God with the understanding of the agelong controversy between good and evil, the warfare that Satan is engaged in against Christ and His people. This insight strengthens our confidence in the infallible leadership of God and in the final victory of justice and the end of the reign of evil.

But the influence of the gift of prophecy in the remnant church did not end with the life and death of Ellen White. The servant of the Lord left thousands of pages that contain the inspired messages of God for His people in the world. These messages comprise counsels regarding the most diverse aspects of the work, material of a spiritual and devotional nature to strengthen Christian experience, messages that enable us to live a healthy and abundant life, principles related to Christian education, methods for successful evangelism, either through the spoken word or the printed page, directions for a happy home, and so on.

Nobody Is the Same

Nobody is ever the same after reading with meditation and prayer books such as *"The Great Controversy," "The Desire of Ages,"* or *"Steps to Christ."* Her books are like a magnifying glass that enables us to see with greater clarity and precision the wonderful truths of the Bible. Her writings allow us to become much more familiar with the life of Christ and to behold with open face as in a glass the glory of the Lord. In no other source do we find a more simple, clear, and complete explanation of the inexhaustible subject of the plan of redemption and of the righteousness of Christ. Outside the Bible itself no author or material uplifts, inspires, and stimulates us to live so near to God.

If the church as a whole, if every Adventist home, and if every one of us individually would follow the instructions given in the Spirit of Prophecy, we would experience a tremendous spiritual reform. This reform must take place soon to make possible the finishing of God's work—first in our hearts and lives, then in the world. Then we will see the accomplishment of the great longing of our hearts, the soon coming of Christ and the end of the evil in the world.

May God give us the will and the courage to dedicate the time necessary to examine, meditate upon, and put into practice the inspired messages of the Spirit of Prophecy, both the ones we find in the Bible and those that were left by His servant Ellen White. May God inspire us to pray more on behalf of our condition as

individuals and as a church and to seek with Him a new spiritual experience that, as never before, will prepare our lives for the final events of human history and allow us to meet joyfully our coming King. □

Questions for Discussion

1. How does the prophecy of Daniel 8 predict the restoration of truth in the last days?
2. What three features characterise the remnant church?
3. Did prophecy cease with the close of the Biblical canon?
4. Summarise the main contribution of Ellen White to the S.D.A. Church.
5. Are the writings of Ellen White still useful to the church today? Give reasons for your answers.

Thursday, September 16

How the gift of prophecy relates to God's Word

By **ROY E. GRAHAM**

The messages from God given through Ellen White attract us to the Scriptures.

The early leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church were conscious that their acceptance of Ellen White as a messenger of God was a position that brought criticism from other Christians. They believed that Ellen White received visions from God just as did the Biblical prophets. Consequently they considered her messages as counsel from God. But immediately they had to answer a basic question of their critics: How can you maintain your avowed position of "the Bible and the Bible only" as your rule of faith and practice while you give Ellen White's message and writings such a significant place in your faith?

Their response was to reaffirm their stand on "the Bible and the Bible only" as being the basis of their belief. This was indeed their position, and they did not intend to turn from it. However, they argued carefully that it was *because* of their confidence in the Scriptures that they accepted Ellen White's ministry as vital to them. They argued that belief in the Bible should lead to an acceptance of, and respect for, the spiritual gifts of which it speaks. So James White, then editor of the *Review*, wrote:

"We exhort you to shun the counsel of those who profess to take the Bible as the rule of faith and practice, but slight or reject that part of it which teaches us to seek and expect the power and gifts of the Spirit."¹ As believers followed the direction in which the Bible pointed, they would be led to recognise the continued ministry of the Holy Spirit until the end of time, and this ministry included the gift of prophecy.

Not Above the Scriptures

Recognition of the validity of the ministry of the Spirit through prophecy did not mean, however, that such manifestations should be placed above the Bible. So the writings of Ellen White were not to be placed above the Scriptures but were, in fact, to be tested by them. "Every Christian," declared James White, "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."²

It is equally clear that the reception of spiritual gifts, and thus the writings of Ellen White, did not mean that there was now no need for personal initiative and careful study of the Bible. In a conference address, Joseph Bates, J. H. Waggoner, and M. E. Cornell testified unitedly, "We test them [i.e., the gifts] by the Bible, making it the great rule of judgment in all things."³ James White reminded the

believers later, "The revival of any or of all the Gifts will never supersede the necessity of searching the Word to learn the truth."⁴

As the pioneers observed Ellen White's ministry and as they compared her messages with the Scriptures, they saw that her purpose was to teach people to love the Bible, to accept its teachings, and to live out in daily experience the truths it revealed. They saw the product of following this contemporary counsel as a life in harmony with the Scriptural principles. So Uriah Smith, longtime editor of the *Review*, wrote: "The Bible is able to make us wise unto salvation, and thoroughly furnish us unto all good works. Do the visions propose to invade this field, and erect a new standard, and give us another rule of faith and practice? Nothing of the kind. On the contrary, they are ever in harmony with the Word, and ever refer to that as the test and standard."⁵

Ellen White herself was in harmony with these positions of the pioneers. Her claim for the authority of what she said was based solely on her conviction that it was the Holy Spirit who was giving her messages for God's people. She had received little formal education and had not been trained as a preacher or communicator. She had no desire to exalt her writings above the Bible. She did not see them as an addition to the Bible, and they were certainly not a substitute for the Scriptures. She took her stand on "the

Bible and the Bible only" principle as outlined in the pioneers' convictions. All sources of revelation are subordinate to, and under the judgment of, Scripture. Her unequivocal assertion rings in our ears today: "The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience."⁶ A careful study of her writings indicates that she maintained this position throughout her life.

Today we also must relate to these same challenges to the gift of prophecy. The Scriptures clearly teach that God will minister by the Holy Spirit throughout all ages until time merges into eternity. Moreover the Bible emphasises that there will be a special work of the Holy Spirit in the final days of earth's history. Consequently, we are challenged by Scripture itself: "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21. Since God is concerned for His church collectively, and for the believers individually, it is only sensible for us to maintain an open, investigative attitude toward His ministry on our behalf. The Scriptures teach us to expect it, and they indicate repeatedly the safety in responding to God's loving concern.

Yet, the questions may persist: If we have the Scriptures, why do we need a subsequent prophetic ministry? How should we view Ellen White's work in relation to the Scriptures within this setting? Mrs. White anticipated these questions, and her answers are helpful to us today.

Human self-sufficiency is always a danger. People may be sincere, but they may be sincerely wrong. Sincerity is never a substitute for truth. This is especially important in relation to the study of Scripture. Often the mind can become set, the ideas frozen, the opinions settled, and the truth ignored. In the early days of this Advent movement, as the men and women who had prepared to meet their Lord wrestled with the perplexity of disappointment, they needed the specific ministry of God's Spirit to comfort them and assure them that God had led in the Millerite experience. Then they needed to

be kept from fanaticism and unwarranted conclusions that might have been engendered in the emotionally charged atmosphere of the time. Into their midst God sent a latter-day prophetic messenger with visions, just as He had said He would (Numbers 12:6). This messenger described her visions as "not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth."⁷

Biblical Counsel Neglected

In emphasising these aspects of her ministry, Ellen White on another occasion wrote as follows: "I took the precious Bible and surrounded it with the several 'Testimonies for the Church,' given for the people of God. . . . 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.' It is because you have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book that He has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings."⁸

Ellen White was concerned that every believer build his or her faith on a Scriptural foundation. Her messages were designed to bring minds to the blueprint and follow it in Christian development. No one must ever think that he could come to Ellen White for counsel instead of searching the Scriptures for himself. Nor were her writings designed to provide a shortcut to the meaning of Scripture and thus obviate the need of careful, taxing study. The Scriptures are their own interpreter, Ellen White maintained. "The hidden treasure," she assured us, "is discovered as it is searched for, as a miner searches for gold and silver."⁹

Some have been perplexed because she referred to her work as a "lesser light" in relation to the Bible. It seems clear that here, as in many other cases, she used a Biblical figure of speech to express herself. The moon is called in Scripture the "lesser light." We know that it shines with "borrowed light" from the sun. But this does not make the moon any less

"authoritative." It has its sphere and its appointed task in God's creation.

So when Ellen White uses this term to describe her work, she is not just being modest or humble; she is not saying that she is a second-class prophet; she is not saying that her messages are of a less important or less urgent nature than those of the Biblical prophets. Rather, she is emphasising the function of her role and her messages. The work of any one prophet cannot be compared to the cumulative light that shines across the centuries from the many prophets whose works are found in the Holy Scriptures.

But the source of her ministry is the same as theirs, and while her work was primarily for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this in no wise diminishes the importance of her role to that people challenged to "prepare . . . the way of the Lord." She is one and the canonical prophets are many. But both she and they were commissioned by the Holy Spirit to accomplish specific tasks for God's people. It is important to discern the distinctive function of both and to respond to the goodness of God in His continuous leading of those willing to respond to His initiatives.

Harvest

By HELEN ANDREW CATE

*What have I garnered from the years?
Only these few sparse sheaves,
This belated knowledge of who I am,
Was meant to be?
The diminished harvest of my life—
Whom will it nourish,
Who on the strength of it
Will reap a richer store
To feed the spirit hunger
Of the world?*

*God of the harvest, Source
Of the seed, the rain, the sun,
Bless the slender gift I bring—
The waning strength, the shrinking years.
Lord who multiplied the loaves,
Let there be unsuspected fruitage
Of my toils, my tears, my prayers
That I may come rejoicing
Into eternity.*

What, then, will a balanced acceptance of this ministry of the Spirit through prophecy produce in the life of the believer? How will it teach him or her to relate to the Word of God? The messages of Ellen White attract us to the Scriptures. Her intent is that all may see the "beautiful simplicity of truth" within the pages of Scripture. The Bible is supreme, superior, and sufficient, but, as she explains, "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."¹⁰

It is clear, then, that as we study the Ellen White writings we will be reminded of the great Biblical principles. Many case

studies will be presented to us, and we will then return to the Scriptures with that necessary enlightenment as we work out the application of the Bible teachings to our everyday experiences. These messages from the Lord will impress upon us that which has already been revealed and send us to the Scriptures with a new and vivid realisation of their appropriateness in this day and in our lives.

Let us pray that we may understand better the relationship of the Ellen White writings to the Scriptures. Let us pray that we may avoid extreme positions. Let us pray that we may be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and recognise that it is still true that when we believe in the Lord our God we will be established and when we believe His prophets we shall prosper (2 Chronicles 20:20). □

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2. *Id.*, Oct. 3, 1854; Oct. 16, 1855.
3. *Id.*, Dec. 4, 1855.
4. *Id.*, Feb. 28, 1856.
5. *Id.*, June 12, 1866.
6. "The Great Controversy," page vii.
7. "Early Writings," page 78. (Italics supplied.)
8. "Testimonies," Vol. 2, page 605.
9. *Id.*, Vol. 8, page 157.
10. *Id.*, Vol. 2, page 455.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why can we accept the concept of the "Bible only" and still believe in Ellen White's authority?
2. How should Ellen White's ministry be tested by Scripture?
3. How do you relate the concepts of the all-sufficiency of Scripture and the necessity of subsequent revelation?
4. What was Ellen White's distinctive function as a messenger of the Lord?
5. Think of an illustration where a Biblical principle is amplified and classified in Ellen White's writings. Be prepared to share this with your group.
6. What practical suggestions would you offer for a balanced approach to the study of the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White?

Friday, September 17

A message of comfort and hope

By ELLEN G. WHITE

Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ.

Dear Friend,

The Lord has given me a message for you, and not for you only, but also for other faithful souls who are troubled by doubts and fears regarding their acceptance by the Lord Jesus Christ. His word to you is, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." Isaiah 43:1. You desire to please the Lord, and you can do this by believing His promises. He is waiting to take you into a harbour of gracious experience, and He bids you, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. You have had a time of unrest; but Jesus says to you, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. The joy of Christ in the soul is worth everything. "Then are they glad," because they are privileged to rest in the

arms of everlasting love. Psalm 107:30.

Put away your distrust of our heavenly Father. Instead of talking of your doubts, break away from them in the strength of Jesus, and let light shine into your soul by letting your voice express confidence and trust in God. I know that the Lord is very nigh to give you victory, and I say to you, Be helped, be strengthened, be lifted out of and away from the dark dungeon of unbelief. Doubts will rush into your mind, because Satan is trying to hold you in captivity to his cruel power; but face him in the strength that Jesus is willing to give you, and conquer the inclination to express unbelief in your Saviour.

Do not talk of your inefficiency and your defects. When despair would seem to be sweeping over your soul, look to Jesus, saying, He lives to make intercession for me. Forget the things that are behind, and believe the promise, "I will come to you," and "abide with you" (see John 14:16, 18; 15:1-11).

God is waiting to bestow the blessing of

forgiveness, of pardon for iniquity, of the gifts of righteousness, upon all who will believe in His love and accept the salvation He offers. Christ is ready to say to the repenting sinner, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. The blood of Jesus Christ is the eloquent plea that speaks in behalf of sinners. This blood "cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

It is your privilege to trust in the love of Jesus for salvation, in the fullest, surest, noblest manner; to say, He loves me, He receives me; I will trust Him, for He gave His life for me. Nothing so dispels doubt as coming in contact with the character of Christ. He declares, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37); that is, there is no possibility of My casting him out, for I have pledged My word to receive him. Take Christ at His word, and let your lips declare that you have gained the victory.

Is Jesus true? Does He mean what He says? Answer decidedly, Yes, every word. Then if you have settled this, by faith claim every promise that He has made, and receive the blessing; for this acceptance by faith gives life to the soul. You may believe that Jesus is true to you, even though you feel yourself to be the weakest and most unworthy of His children. And as you believe, all your dark, brooding doubts are thrown back upon the arch-deceiver who originated them. You can be a great blessing if you will take God at His word. By living faith you are to trust Him, even though the impulse is strong within you to speak words of distrust.

Grace of the Spirit Supplied

Peace comes with dependence on divine power. As fast as the soul resolves to act in accordance with the light given, the Holy Spirit gives more light and strength. The grace of the Spirit is supplied to cooperate with the soul's resolve, but it is not a substitute for the individual exercise of faith. Success in the Christian life depends upon the appropriation of the light that God has given. It is not an abundance of light and evidence that makes the soul free in Christ; it is the rising of the powers and the will and the energies of the soul to cry out sincerely, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Mark 9:24.

I rejoice in the bright prospects of the future, and so may you. Be cheerful, and praise the Lord for His loving-kindness. That which you cannot understand, commit to Him. He loves you and pities your every weakness. He "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Ephesians 1:3. It would not satisfy the heart of the Infinite One to give those who love His Son a lesser blessing than He gives His Son.

Satan seeks to draw our minds away from the mighty Helper, to lead us to ponder over our degeneration of soul. But though Jesus sees the guilt of the past, He speaks pardon; and we should not dishonour Him by doubting His love. The feeling of guiltiness must be laid at the foot of the cross, or it will poison the springs of life. When Satan thrusts his threatenings upon you, turn from them, and comfort your soul with the promises of God. The cloud may be dark in itself, but when filled

with the light of heaven, it turns to the brightness of gold; for the glory of God rests upon it.

God's children are not to be subject to feelings and emotions. When they fluctuate between hope and fear, the heart of Christ is hurt; for He has given them unmistakable evidence of His love. He wants them to be established, strengthened, and settled in the most holy faith. He wants them to do the work He has given them, then their hearts will become in His hands as sacred harps, every chord of which will send forth praise and thanksgiving to the One sent by God to take away the sins of the world.

Christ's love for His children is as tender as it is strong. And it is stronger than death; for He died to purchase our salvation, and to make us one with Him, mystically and eternally one. So strong is His love that it controls all His powers, and employs the vast resources of heaven in doing His people good. It is without variableness or shadow of turning—the same yesterday, today, and forever. Although sin has existed for ages, trying to counteract this love and obstruct its flowing earthward, it still flows in rich currents to those for whom Christ died.

God loves the sinless angels who do His

service and are obedient to all His commands; but He does not give them grace: they have never needed it, for they have never sinned. Grace is an attribute shown to undeserving human beings. We did not seek after it; it was sent in search of us. God rejoices to bestow grace upon all who hunger and thirst for it, not because we are worthy, but because we are unworthy. Our need is the qualification which gives us the assurance that we shall receive the gift.

It should not be difficult to remember that the Lord desires you to lay your troubles and perplexities at His feet, and leave them there. Go to Him, saying, "Lord, my burdens are too heavy for me to carry. Wilt Thou bear them for me?" And He will answer, "I will take them. 'With everlasting kindness I will have mercy on thee' (Isaiah 54:8). I will take your sins, and will give you peace. Banish no longer your self-respect; for I have bought you with the price of My own blood. You are Mine. Your weakened will I will strengthen. Your remorse for sin I will remove."

"I, even I, am He," the Lord declares, "that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put Me in remembrance: let us plead



Peace comes with dependence on divine power, on Christ's strong—yet tender—love.

together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified." Chapter 43:25, 26. "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." Chapter 45:19. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Verse 22.

Respond to the calls of God's mercy, and say: "I will trust in the Lord and be comforted. I will praise the Lord; for His anger is turned away. I will rejoice in God, who gives the victory."¹

It is the privilege of every one . . . to know that his sins are forgiven, and to rejoice in the assurance of a higher life in the courts above. This hope is more precious than silver or gold or precious stones. Keep this hope ever bright, and seek to impart it to others. In the knowledge that God's smile rests upon you, your heart will be filled with joy and peace. . . .

Let all seek for that rest which Christ has promised. You are to reveal to the world the truth of His words. You are to show that in wearing the yoke of Christ, there is genuine happiness.

Do Not Dishonour God

Do not, by doubting God's words, dishonour Him. As you believe in Him, He will cooperate with you in your efforts, and in union with Him, you may perform an acceptable work. Through the righteousness that He imparts, you may escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4. O that we might hear more of the praise of God proceeding from thankful hearts! We need Christians who constantly live in the sunshine, who under all circumstances can praise the Lord. With the hope and assurance that Christ has promised, how can we be unhappy?

There is no excuse or justification for any Christian to be discontented. Never give the impression that you are disappointed with the way that Christ has marked out for you to follow.

Our characters are to be conformed to the image of Christ. In deed and in truth we

are to be amenable to the law of God. Then He can demonstrate through us the blessings that come through obedience to the principles of His Word. The King of heaven stands ready to acknowledge the humblest soul that serves Him. . . .

Put your whole soul into the performance of the work that is essential. True service involves a faithful discharge of the daily duties. Even as you engage in your daily tasks, you may reflect the divine image. Those who will faithfully cultivate a spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice, learning from the Saviour the lessons of meekness and lowliness of heart, will be in a position where God can use them in His work of reflecting to the world the glory of the divine image. . . .

God Will Strengthen

God will strengthen and encourage you, if you will look constantly to Him. If He smiles upon you, it is worth more to you than silver or gold. Let all recognise their dependence upon the guidance of God. Let the heart be hopeful and peaceful. Do not permit yourselves to cherish any feelings of discontent. It is the duty of each to endeavour to impart courage and good cheer to those who are connected with him.

In your morning worship consider the thought that our Saviour was a carpenter, and worked with His father, Joseph. The Prince of heaven worked as you are working with the hands. He had been the exalted Commander in heaven, but He laid aside His kingly crown, and came to our world, living a life of toil and hardship, that He might enter into full sympathy with the human race. By receiving Him, you are given power to become the sons of God. . . .

All may cultivate a cheerful disposition in the discharge of their respective duties. Remember that the Lord observes your every movement, and hears every word that you speak. . . .

Each is to respect every other worker, and to cultivate the graces of patience, and of speaking kind, encouraging words to those with whom he is connected.

Do not dwell on the imperfections or the mistakes of the past. Press forward, looking to the glorious things that are before. Let your conversation be in

heaven, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 3:20. Put away all discontent, all murmuring, all disagreeable words. We do not honour Christ when we dispute and quarrel one with another. No one will enter heaven with a spirit of faultfinding, and we desire to have a foretaste of the principles of heaven manifested here below.

Let every professed believer advance. We are to have sanctified, refined aspirations, worthy ambitions. Ever press onward, seeking for a character that will represent that of the Lord Jesus. We are to recognise the perfection of His character, and demonstrate in our lives the principles of that character.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." 1 John 3:1-7.² □

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1. These words, written on June 14, 1914, at "Elmshaven," Sanitarium, California, are believed to be the last written by Ellen G. White before her death there on July 16, 1915. They were originally printed in a small tract, and later added as the final chapter of "Testimonies to Ministers" (1923), pages 516-520.
2. Letter 299, 1905, from Sanitarium, California, to the helpers at the Paradise Valley Sanitarium. The first seven paragraphs of this letter were published in "This Day With God" (1979), page 304.

Questions for Discussion

1. How may we be sure that God accepts us?
2. Why do doubts arise?
3. In what way do our words influence our spiritual condition?
4. What should we do with our troubles and perplexities?
5. How is it possible to be cheerful even in adverse circumstances?
6. What encouragement should Jesus' life as a carpenter bring to us?

Sabbath, September 18

Believe His prophets

By NEAL C. WILSON

Like the Holy Scriptures, the words that come from the pen of Ellen White bear fruit for the kingdom of God.

One of the greatest blessings we have in the Christian faith is the confidence we can place in God and His Word. From personal experience and from reviewing more than 6,000 years of recorded human history, I am satisfied that God keeps His word. Furthermore, I am convinced that He loves us and that He is working out for us what in His providence seems best.

Inherent to this relationship of trust is God's declared provision for maintaining communication with us. Ever since man's first sin separated him from his Creator, God has been calling after His children. He has prepared signs in the heavens and on earth that speak of His will. He has given dreams and visions. He has sent angels. And He has sent prophets.

How good and how great it is of God to show such intimate concern and to keep in touch! We can know what His will is for us; we can know the meaning of His works and His involvement in our world; we can know what the future holds, or at least that part that directly affects our spiritual well-being. It was through prophets that He confirmed the faith of the early church and then later provided strength and guidance for the church in the wilderness to withstand terrible persecution. And it is through prophecy, including that of Jesus Himself, that we may see in advance the final victory of God's church.

Prophecy tells us that the worst times of earth's history are still to come. To a certain degree we may not need prophecy to tell us that. Some things seem to be self-evident. Population growth, for instance, brings its own spectre of famine and human tragedy. The weapons with

which men fight are becoming more barbaric and more lethal every day. Strange as it may be, along with man's growing ability to wipe himself from the earth is his growing willingness even to consider this option.

But political and economic difficulties pale in comparison with the spiritual trauma that awaits this world. Said the angel to Daniel in speaking of the last days, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Daniel 12:1. Jesus confirmed this: "In those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time." Mark 13:19. Peter said, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8.

I do not bring this to your attention to discourage or frighten you. My purpose is much more worthy. The Lord has told us these things so that we may be prepared. We must not close our eyes to what God has revealed or engage in self-deception.

Satan Grows Desperate

As the end draws near and as the great controversy between Satan and the Ruler of the universe reaches its culmination, Satan grows more desperate, more vindictive, more vicious. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12.

The twelfth chapter of Revelation is specific as to the object of Satan's wrath: "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Verse 17.

Using every resource at his command and employing every artifice and every tactic, Satan will attack the church from within, from without, and from all sides. He will use force; he will use deception; he

will use blandishments. He will try to compromise and diminish the influence of spiritual leaders. Working through people inside the church, Satan will try to blunt the church's mission, alter its direction, blur its identity, and change its pillars of faith and doctrine. At the very least, he will partially succeed in bringing doubt and disharmony into the minds of some members.

Objects of Satan's Attacks

Notice that prophecy pinpoints precisely the main objects of Satan's attacks: "the commandments of God" and "the testimony of Jesus Christ." The angel further identified "the testimony of Jesus" as the "spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10. In harmony with this warning in Revelation, we have another in "Selected Messages," Book 1, page 48: "The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. . . . Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony."

But the foundations of the church are sure. Every point of doctrine has been hammered out through careful study and prayer. We base our faith on the Word of God. Even our belief in Ellen White as a prophetess of the Lord is based solidly on Scripture. It is the Bible that tells us how to distinguish false prophets from the genuine, and it is the Bible that sets up guidelines by which to verify every true prophet.

The Bible warns us, "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21. It is as important to hold that which is good as it is to cast aside that which is false. We cannot be sceptical of everything. We must test and try, but we must then act affirmatively, positively.

Because of God's gift of prophecy, as

embodied in the writings of Ellen White, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Bible-oriented church. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy leave no option but for the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be a Christ-centred church. The Spirit of Prophecy confirms and strengthens our belief in the Bible's description of a literal creation and a literal second coming. The Spirit of Prophecy beautifully endorses the belief that the joy of salvation—freedom from the guilt of sin (justification) as well as victory over sin (sanctification)—is available by faith in Christ Jesus alone.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church, in its proclamation of the everlasting gospel of Jesus, has the heaven-ordained commission to declare this gospel within the context and framework of the three angels'

messages of Revelation 14. This is our sacred charge, and these are our marching orders! The Spirit of Prophecy, as revealed through the testimonies of Ellen White, has amplified all these messages for us, and helps us to focus our energies. Without this unifying, prophetic voice, our message soon would become diffused and muted, and finally silent.

God has signally blessed the growth of the church because it has followed divine counsel. Our worldwide network of publishing houses is a direct result of appeals and urgings by Ellen White. Our system of schools is a product of her tireless work of encouragement, counsel, and support. Our health message and our health institutions are the result of her visions and testimonies. The history of our

spiritual travels has made it evident that if at any point we have failed in our mission, it is largely because we have failed to follow the divine instruction that is available to us.

Simple Path of Truth

It is the Spirit of Prophecy that opens up to us the origin of rebellion in Lucifer's heart even before man was created. It is the Spirit of Prophecy that pulls aside the heavenly veil and reveals the councils of God in countermanding Satan's rebellion. It is the Spirit of Prophecy that unravels the complicated skeins of Daniel and Revelation and other prophecies, that we may find a simple path of truth and see how God's way is vindicated.

The King rides forth

By JOHN E. NEFF

*Down the path of heaven's splendour,
Through the vaults of glories rare,
Sweeps our Lord engulfed in brilliance,
Shouts of victory rend the air!*



*This is not the dying Saviour
With the thorns upon His brow;
Forth He rides as King triumphant,
Crowns of honour deck Him now.*

*Angel hosts are all about Him,
Angel wings are everywhere;
On each face is adoration
As they hover in the air.*

*All earth is in convulsion,
Mountains move before His face;
Islands sink, and heaven shudders
In a horror of disgrace.*

*Wrapped in flames of heavenly fire,
Jesus looks upon the graves;
"Wake! Awake!" He calls His children,
"Be of death no longer slaves!"*

*Earthly vaults are rent asunder,
Ground is cracking everywhere;
From its dark and dreaded stillness,
Forth they come, immortal, fair.*

*Then amid the sound of trumpets,
And the harp's celestial chord,
'Twixt the angel columns upward,
We shall rise to meet our Lord.*

*O the rapture of that moment
When we see His lovely face!
O the thrill of heart elation
In the wonder of His grace!*

*While we yearn toward that hour
When our Saviour shall appear,
Just one question you must ponder,
'Tis, my friend, Will you be there?*

One thing more, and this point permeates all that has gone before: Seventh-day Adventists are indebted to Ellen White for the lucid and singular understanding of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. This concept is unique with us. It integrates and systematizes our understanding of man's nature, of the purpose of Christ's sacrifice, and of the final solution for the sin problem.

But the most important evidence of the authenticity of the Spirit of Prophecy writings is intensely personal. Like the Holy Scriptures themselves, the words as they come from the pen of Ellen White bear fruit for the kingdom of God. Sometimes they cut, but they also heal. Their overall effect is to elevate the Lord Jesus Christ. They are soul-saving. If we doubt them or ignore them or denounce them, we do so at the peril of our souls. It is the Holy Spirit who works out the precepts of those writings in us, just as He does with the canonical writings of the Scriptures. When we deny the Spirit on one point, we have weakened His authority and blunted His power in the overall spiritual fabric of our lives.

This is not to say that there are no problem areas in the way God reveals His will through the writings of Ellen White. But that does not daunt our faith. There is sufficient internal and external evidence of their divine origin. There are problem areas in the Scriptures, too, and some who have concentrated on these have made shipwreck of their faith. When we keep our eyes focused on the beacon of truth, the billows of doubt will sweep harmlessly aside.

There have been those who, singly or in small groups, have allowed doubts about the Spirit of Prophecy to cause them to stumble and to criticise. It was not long before they were in opposition on other points as well.

The efforts we have seen of the adversary to undermine the Spirit of Prophecy most certainly will be multiplied in the days just ahead. Those who can be shaken will be shaken. We cannot afford to dally in doubt. The issues at stake are too central for cynicism. It is our privilege to prove the testimonies, and it is our duty to hold them fast. With the witness of the Word of God, with the evidences of God's blessings on our church through the Spirit of Prophecy these many years, we may, with the power of God, so build our faith that nothing can shake it—*nothing*.

Several times the children of Israel faced almost certain annihilation. Once, during the reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, the armies of Moab, Ammon, and Seir massed against Judah—"a great multitude." Jehoshaphat, a man of peace, had not built an army that could match them and withstand such an invasion. Reminding the Lord that these very nations had been shown mercy and had been spared by Israel on their march from Egypt, Jehoshaphat called on the Lord to keep His promise in behalf of His people. "We have no might against this great company," said the king. "Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." That was the secret of deliverance: "Our eyes are upon Thee."

Then, according to the divine record, the Spirit of the Lord came upon one of the Levites present. "Be not afraid nor

dismayed," he encouraged. "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: . . . stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . . ; to morrow go out against them." Jehoshaphat and the people rejoiced at this word from God.

The next morning the king encouraged his army with these words: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chronicles 20:20. Then he set at the head of his army, not his cavalry, not his bow-and-arrow artillery, not his crack infantry troops, but a choir singing praises to the Lord. True to God's promise, they did not have to raise a hand in offence or defence. God's word and His honour were vindicated.

What a lesson this is for God's people today! "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."—"Life Sketches," page 196.

When Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as "another Comforter" who would abide with us "for ever," I believe He was including the gift of prophecy that the Spirit would bring. Believe, then, in His prophets. So shall you prosper! □

Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you consider to be the clearest indication that the second coming is near?
2. As we contemplate the perils that lie ahead for God's people, should we be fearful? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Why does Satan especially attack "the commandments of God" and "the testimony of Jesus Christ"?
4. What blessings have the writings of Ellen White brought to you? Try to be specific.
5. How should we deal with problem areas in the Bible or the writings of Ellen White?

Annual Week of Sacrifice Offering to be taken at this time

CHILDREN'S MESSAGES FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER

God's Special Love

By VIRGINIA D. CASON

Sabbath, September 11

Dear Wonderful God

Hello, boys and girls. When was the last time you told somebody that you loved him? Was it this morning? That's a lovely way to begin the Sabbath day! And when you told Mom or Dad—or whoever it was—that you loved him, what happened? I can guarantee it made him happy. I think it made him happy because he loves you, too. People who love each other find many ways to say "I love you."

All week long we are going to be talking about God's Special Love. His love is *very* special.

Every time I eat Sabbath dinner—or any meal, for that matter—I can't help thinking what it would be like if we had been made with a big funnel instead of a mouth with taste buds on a tongue. Think about it for a minute. That funnel would be just a way of getting food into our bodies in the fastest way possible. No teeth to chew and chew and chew. No tongue to taste. No swallowing. Just shovel the food in as fast as you can—keep the engine going!

Instead we have a mouth that holds just so much food at a time. We have teeth that must chew the food into smaller pieces and then into mush before it is swallowed. And all this time we can enjoy our family around the dinner table. All this time we can taste the delicious flavors. On top of that, there are hundred and hundreds of flavors.

But the point is, we get to *choose*. We are not bound to just one food. There is such variety, so many flavors to choose from, that we can always get the vitamins and minerals our bodies must have in order to stay healthy. It would be terrible if there

were only persimmons, or only spinach, or only pears, or only . . . turnips! (I must tell you that I am practicing on turnips. One of these days, after trying a little each time they are served, I really think I might begin to like them.) The more flavors we like, the more we have to choose from. Right?

What if everyone were just like me! Or what if everyone were just like you? What if we all looked exactly alike and acted exactly alike? What if we all talked the same way? Wouldn't that be dull? I'm sure you have a lot of nice friends, as I do. Are any of your friends just alike? Well, of course, if any are twins, they are pretty much alike. But otherwise, they are different, aren't they? One of my friends is from the south in the United States of America, and I wish you could hear her talk. I love to listen to her. I have some friends from England, too. Their accent is different from mine also. However, when I visit their country, everyone speaks that way, and I am the one whose accent is "different."

When you go for a walk—which, incidentally, is nice to do on Sabbath afternoon—take a look. Take a close look around. Maybe you can walk in the country or in a park, or just down the street. Do you see some trees? Are they all the same kind of trees? No, they're not, are they? See how many you can find that don't drop their leaves. Are there some really big ones? Can you find any little trees? Look closely now. Do you see any trees whose needles are more bluish than they are green? Do you see any trees with white bark? With shaggy bark? Sometimes we don't really see the things we look at almost every day. Trees have their own "personalities." One of my favorites is the willow. Another is the golden wattle—at spring time, their blossoms are a wonderful sight. I like the lofty gum, too, and the mighty oak. They are so big! Do you have favorite trees?

How about a favorite flower? I think mine is the rose. Sometimes I have wished I could be a little bug and creep way inside the petals where I could just breathe and breathe and *breathe* all that delicious fragrance clear to the bottom of my lungs. And I especially like violets. And daisies . . . and rain.

When I was in the third grade, our class gave a program for the parents. It was in the springtime. I don't remember much more about the program than the rainbow song we girls sang. The nine girls in our class wore dresses in rainbow colors, and mine was lavender. I do remember how beautiful those colors were—just matching the colors in the rainbow. I never see a rainbow, or look at a tall tree, or smell a rose, or taste a juicy peach but what I wonder at how much God must love me—how much He must love you—to bother to make things all so different. Just so we wouldn't be bored. Just because He loves us and wants so badly to tell us so! Are you listening to Him?

Today is Sabbath. The Sabbath is a special day. A special day for listening. Enjoy Sabbath dinner (remember the funnel?). Have a happy time on your walk. Look. Listen. I think Somebody wants to hear you say, "I love You, too."

Sunday, September 12

Ways to share

The natural beauty all around us is just one of the many ways God communicates with us. He's given us many ways to communicate with Him and one another, too.

I just took my big, fat dictionary down from the bookcase and looked up the word *communicate*. Have you learned to use a dictionary yet? It's really a very helpful book. I use mine all the time when I want to find out exactly what a certain word means.

Virginia Cason, mother of four children, is a volunteer worker in the gift shop at St. Helena Hospital and Health Centre, Deer Park, California. A Sabbath school worker for 30 years, she is the author of Mini People and Maxi Messages for Mini People.



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COME TO OPEN HOUSE DAY
OCTOBER 10

Do you know what that word *communicate* means? The first meaning given in my dictionary was this:

"To make another or others partakers of; to impart; to transmit, as news, a disease, or an idea."

In other words, that long word means to "give" or to "share." The thing being given or shared could be news and information. It could be measles or a cold (that wouldn't be on purpose, though!). It could be the fact that you're tired. And it could be love.

For a few minutes let's talk about some of the different ways we can communicate with others and they can communicate with us. There's a word for that, too—*communication*, the ways we communicate.

I suppose the first way people learn to communicate is by speaking. But I think babies communicate by crying, don't you? They certainly are able to let Mother know when they are hungry or need to be changed. Then, after a while, they learn to talk. And not long after that, they usually become real little chatterboxes.

Sometimes I just sit for a while with a good friend, or with my husband, and we don't talk much at all. Imagine! Have you ever done that? It's not because we're mad at each other. It's because we know each other so well that we can almost "read" each other's thoughts. We almost know what the other is thinking because we think so much alike about certain things. But that's communicating too, isn't it? We are letting another person know we like to be with him.

The minister communicates with us when he preaches the sermon. And we communicate with him when we say "Amen." When we thank him for his sermon after church, we are letting him know we listened to him carefully and enjoyed his message.

When we talk with our friends, or with anybody, for that matter, we are communicating. That's face-to-face sharing. That's "in-person" communication. I think that is the best kind of communication. But sometimes the people we would like to speak to are far away from us.

My grandmother told me about the Pony Express men, who carried the mail sacks and rode their horses across the Western

United States to deliver the letters. When the man and the horse got tired, they stopped at special Pony Express relay stations, and the mail sack was handed to another rider who rode another horse until they got tired, and they . . . well, I'm sure you've already heard all about that. But it was wonderful for the pioneers who went west in those early days to be able to hear news from home folk who lived *miles* in the opposite direction.

And we still write letters, don't we? Although they are delivered in a different way, it's always fun to get a letter addressed to *me*. That's written communication. So is the newspaper, and so are books.

Have you ever stopped to think about how we use our bodies to communicate? We do. When we smile, we let others know we are happy. When we yawn or stretch, they know we are tired. Or bored. When we raise one shoulder and duck our head at the same time, it can mean "I don't know," "I don't care," "Maybe," or possibly something else. When we squeeze a hand or pat an arm, we say "I care about you." People can tell by our actions a lot about us. That's "body language." It's another way of communicating, of sharing or giving information to someone else.

We've talked about only four methods of communication today. Before we're together again tomorrow, see how many more kinds you can think of.

Monday, September 13

God speaks to us

You didn't lose sleep last night trying to count up more ways that God has given us to communicate with each other, did you? I hope not.

Did you think of the special language that blind people use to communicate? Of course God gave us that. He is the one who puts ideas into people's minds so they can figure such things out. The "language" is called Braille, and it's truly wonderful. When a blind person learns this way of communicating, he can "read" books and "write" letters too. It's marvellous! Maybe you have seen a sample of Braille—the little raised bumps on the

paper that the blind person can feel with his fingertips. And there are other devices to help the blind write with a pencil or pen so sighted people can read their messages.

Another method you probably thought of right away is the telephone. It's faster than a letter, isn't it? A telephone saves Mum and Dad a great deal of time when they need information quickly. Their words travel over a wire instead of on a piece of paper, almost anywhere. Amazing!

The radio is just beginning to be more important in my own life. Of course, I grew up listening to the news and other programs on the radio, just as you are probably doing. We don't have to *understand* everything that makes the telephone work or that makes the radio work in order to use it. We just use the telephone and the radio and enjoy talking and listening.

Recently I have begun to learn something about how radio waves work, and it's really interesting! The next time you look up into the sky, just imagine hundreds of voices flying back and forth through the air. But no wires. People talking with other people, sometimes to places on the other side of the world—on radio waves. The possibility for radio waves has always been there; it just has taken us a long time to learn much about them. Of course, God has always known about radio waves, for He made them. The trick has been for people to learn how to make a machine that will give sound to those radio waves and push them out far so they can hear the message the waves bring back to us.

I'm studying hard to become a "ham" radio operator, so I can use shortwave radio to communicate too. I have passed the first test and must use the International Code when I communicate. I am not allowed to transmit my voice until I pass another, harder test. Then I will be able to use my own voice to communicate with new friends and family, some of whom are very far away from me.

When I was in primary school, some of my friends and I made up a number/letter code so that we could write notes to one another and our other classmates couldn't read what our notes said if they should find one. We called it our "secret code." Have

you ever done that? It's fun, isn't it? Would you like me to share with you some of the code that I am learning now? All right, I will.

The International Code is done by sound. The dots are little short sounds and the longer marks, the dashes, are longer sounds about twice as long as the dot sound. Make the sounds with your "whistle voice" and give a little pause between the letters that I have put inside the parenthesis marks. Here we go—
(.) (-.-) (---) (...-) (.) (-.-) (---) (-.-)

Now, maybe you would like to know what you have "said." You have said, "I love you."

(.) (-.-) (---) (...-) (.) (-.-) (---) (-.-)
I L O V E Y O U

It really isn't very hard, is it? You can learn those letters in just a few minutes and surprise your family by telling them in code that you love them.

Every time I use my shortwave radio to send out the little dots and dashes of the code into the sky, I am more sure than ever before of God's love for me. If people can communicate in all these different ways—ways God Himself has given us—I know He can communicate with me, too. I think that is really exciting! Don't you?

Tuesday, September 14

God speaks through people

God can, and does, communicate with us. God has always communicated with His people, and He made us so we can communicate with Him. In the very beginning, God spoke to His people. Remember? He used the person-to-person method in the beautiful Garden. Then Satan ruined everything—as he always does. Now, because of sin, we can't talk face to face with God any more. But He still sends messages to those who love Him.

Sometimes He has used angels to carry His message. Sometimes He has sent special dreams, called "visions," to someone He trusts with His message and instructions either to *tell* people the message or to *write* it out for them to read. And sometimes both.

I'm thinking of Noah. He was one of

God's first messengers, wasn't he? God sent an angel from heaven with a message for Noah to preach, and Noah preached it faithfully for 120 years! That's such a long time! You remember the story, I'm sure: how God sent a warning through Noah to the people, a warning that He was going to send a great flood of water that would wash the earth clean of wickedness. Only those inside a special boat would be saved.

I can almost hear Noah raising his loud voice as he stood up before the people. "Listen, everybody," he must have said, "this is a special message from God."

"Who?" I can image them saying back to him with a sneer.

"Listen to me, my friends. It's true. There is a great wickedness in the land. God is losing His patience with us."

"Oh, come on, Noah! Things aren't as bad as all that," I can hear them say.

And Noah delivered the message to them, not forgetting any of it. I'm sure he used his own words to tell them what God had said. Then Noah began to build the great big boat exactly the way God had told him to build it.

I suppose the townspeople would come by every day to see how much progress Noah had made on the building project. I imagine they shook their heads and said to one another, "Noah is out of his mind! *Everybody* knows our moisture comes up from the ground each evening to water our crops. It doesn't come down from the sky! Ha! Ha! Oh, Noah, you've really done it now!"

"I tell you, friends, it's true," I'm sure he told them. "Please believe me. God wants to save all of you. Please repent of your evil ways and get ready to come into the boat." But nobody listened, and they laughed all the way home.

The years went by. The people went on about their business and living their wicked lives. Noah and his sons kept working on the boat, and Noah kept on delivering God's message. Some people paid no further attention to the building project. Some people laughed every time they passed by. Some people thought, It hasn't happened yet—and it won't.

Well, you remember the story, don't you? It *did* happen. The rains did come; but only after Noah and his family (the only ones, incidentally, who believed the

message) were safely inside the boat.

Just because the people laughed didn't mean God could not be trusted to do what He had said He would do. Just because the people didn't believe Noah's message didn't make it a false message. Because the message was a strange one (it had *never* rained before, remember?) and it took such a long time before the Flood happened didn't mean that it wouldn't.

As the winds blew and the rain poured down and the boat began to float I'm sure Noah and his family were happy they had listened to the message God sent—no matter how strange it must have sounded to them.

Finally, when the earth was dry again and the big boat rested on a high mountain, God sent an angel to open the heavy door so Noah and his family (and all those animals that had been passengers too) could come out into the sunshine.

Noah was so grateful for God's warning—and for His protection—that he gave a special Thank-You offering to let God know how happy he and his family felt.

Then God communicated with Noah, and He said, "Because I love you, Noah, and all those who will choose to be My children, I will never again destroy the world with a flood of water." Then He said it all again with a rainbow to help us remember His promise. He still says it—with yellow, and with rose, and with blue . . . and with lavender!

Wednesday, September 15

Ways God uses to speak to us

I have to smile when I hear folks say things like "Gravity is one of nature's laws" or "The sun shining through the rain is what makes the rainbow." I guess they're right, but God is the one behind it all, isn't He? Without certain rules or "laws" that He has placed on everything He has made, things would really be in a big mess.

I think He must have told the ocean: "You can go only this far and no farther." If he hadn't placed some kind of limit, we wouldn't be safe walking on the sandy beach, would we? And what about the

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Good Reading for you from your Adventist Book Centre

planets that turn and spin their way through space? They have a set pattern. What would it be like if they didn't? It's a little scary to think about, isn't it? I'm glad for those rules that God has placed on nature. They keep our world and our universe safe for us to live in.

God placed loving rules upon all nature. And He placed loving rules upon His created beings as well. The first place where Satan caused trouble was in heaven. Can you imagine it? He started the whole thing by telling the other angels that God's rules were unnecessary. He said God was stingy and selfish and didn't want anyone to be like Him. He said God was mean and hard to please. Well, Satan fooled *one third* of all the angels into believing his big lie!

Then he told that lie again, in the beautiful Garden. Remember? And the story of humanity became one long, sad tale after another. A story of people choosing. Some choosing to believe God and some choosing to believe Satan's lie.

After the Flood, things got bad again. Even those who had chosen to serve God became careless and forgetful of God's loving directions. Famine drove them to Egypt. It was there in Egypt that God spoke to one of His faithful people—in prison, of all places. Remember Joseph? What a thrilling story! God spoke to Joseph in a dream—in several dreams, in fact. And finally Joseph was taken from prison and made second in command over the whole country. Think if it. Dear, faithful Joseph! While he was the second ruler things got better for the people of God. But when Joseph died, a Pharaoh who didn't know Joseph or anything about his God came to the throne, and things became worse than ever for God's people.

They eventually became slaves. It was hard to live in a heathen country as a slave and remember the God of heaven. Though many of the slaves had forgotten Him, God did not forget them.

Life was almost unbearable for them, when God sent another faithful one to help them. He sent Moses. And this time, through Moses, God led His poor, sad, discouraged people out of Egypt. Do you get excited when you hear the story? I do. At first Moses didn't really want the job, you know, and I don't blame him. It's a

marvellous example to all of us what God can do with someone who says, "All right, Lord. You can have all of me—you can use me if You want to."

God talked face to face with Moses! Up on the mountain, in the dark cloud with lightning flashing and the thunder rolling, God spoke His law of love. Once more, He gave His rules for happiness. And the second time, He wrote them on a tablet of stone *with His own hand*.

We've been talking all week about communication—how God communicates with us and how we communicate with Him and with one another. But can you just imagine God writing with His own finger on the stone?

God has spoken face to face. God has written with His own hand. God has sent messages to His people by an angel. He has given information to His faithful ones in a dream. Why? There's only one reason. Can you guess what that reason might be? Be ready to tell me tomorrow.

Noah, one of God's first messengers, preached for 120 years.



Thursday, September 16

God's best message

The question I asked you yesterday: "Why has God spoken face to face? Why has God written with His own hand? Why has God sent messages to His people by an angel? Why has He given information to His faithful ones in dreams?" That's really more than one question, isn't it? But there's only one answer. Do you know what it is?

The answer is: The reason God has communicated with His creatures in so many ways is because He is trying to tell us something very important.

God is trying to tell us that He is not like Satan wants us to believe He is. God is trying to tell us that He wants us to be happy—actually, happier than any other created being. God is trying to tell us that He is giving and sharing and that He wants us to be like Him. God is trying to tell us that He is loving. He is trying to tell us He is not at all like Satan makes Him out to be, but that He is just the opposite! That's the very important something God wants us to know. That's why.

For many years, however, people had a

hard time getting God's message, and getting it straight. So God communicated once more, and this time He used body language. Something people could see. This time He sent a little Baby. This time He sent His very own Son (who is like His Father) to show everyone what God is *really* like. This time He sent Jesus, and nothing has ever been the same since.

You know the marvellous story. I get tears inside (and sometimes outside, too) when I think about it all. And the fact that Jesus didn't *have* to come to show us what His Father is like—He *chose* to come—makes the story all the more precious to me. I think you feel that way too, don't you?

Jesus lived on this earth just a short time, only about thirty-three years. But it was long enough to get God's message across to the people. (When you're eight years old, or ten, twelve, thirty-three years seems like a long time. But it really isn't.) Even though God's body language was plain to see, some decided to believe Satan's lie anyway. Those people who made the choice to believe that Satan is wrong about God became the followers of Jesus. People today who believe the truth about God are His followers too. They are called His church.

God has a special kind of love for His church, and He wants it to be well cared for (I don't mean cleaning or mowing lawns—we're talking about people, remember?). God wants His church to grow. He wants His church to be strong. He wants it to be all that He has planned for it to be. And He wants His church to be *with Him* someday. Forever.

Now, *that's* a long time!

Friday, September 17

Prophets speak for God

My watch stopped working a couple of days ago, and I'm using a little alarm clock on my desk instead. When I took my watch to the jeweller to be fixed, I saw many clocks and watches. Some were small, some large, some were fancy, and some were plain. But they were all doing the same thing. They were measuring time.

Clocks can count seconds and minutes.

They can count hours and days. Some can even count months. But none of them can measure Forever. They can't measure Forever, because Forever never ends.

That's how long God wants me and you—His church—to be with Him. I can't count Forever either, but it surely sounds good to me!

I love to read all about God's plans for us. Just think how much He must care about us, to have communicated with us in so many ways. The Bible is God's written Word. Not written with His own finger, but His communication given to people He could trust to deliver His messages clearly and to write them down for us to read. God told certain ones to write about what already had happened so we would know about it too. He told others to write about things that will happen in the future, so we will know what to expect. But the messages all came from God, His thoughts and the writers' words.

The amazing thing to me is that God used ordinary people, people like you and me and others we know, to carry His messages. But they were people who knew the truth about Him. They were people He could trust. He instructed some of these people to speak His messages to the people. He instructed others to write them down for others to read. God used a favourite son (1) He used a widow (2). God used a tentmaker (3). He used a doctor (4). He used a lady judge (5). He used a fisherman (6). He used . . . well, the list is almost endless. (For their names look in the box.)

These faithful messengers usually were called prophets (if they were men) and prophetesses (if they were women). God sent them many messages for His people. Sometimes He sent messages of warning, sometimes messages of hope and comfort. Sometimes He sent specific measurements and directions for something they were to build (like the travelling tabernacle and later the beautiful Temple in Jerusalem). Whatever the message might be, God's faithful ones delivered it to the people.

It was to the tentmaker God gave the idea that His church is something like the human body, with many different parts and each part having a particular job to do for the body. I think that is a good illustration. A human body wouldn't be a

body if it were all legs, or just arms, would it? Of course not. A body needs arms *and* legs *and* ears *and* a mouth *and* eyes *and* a head before it is a total and complete body. Agreed? (I'll have to admit that a caterpillar seems to be mostly legs, but that's OK for a caterpillar body.)

I think that maybe the legs of the church body might be the people who are busy going here and there taking help to those in need. Maybe they need food or clothing. Maybe they need someone to love them. Maybe they need to know about Jesus.

It seems to me that perhaps the arms or hands of the church body might be the healers—the physicians and nurses and dentists. The hands could be those willing hands ready to help with any hard job.

Perhaps the mouth of the church body would be the teachers and the preachers, letting us know and helping us learn what the great God of heaven is really like, telling us the truth about Him. The mouth might also be the ones who smile a lot and make us feel better just for being around them.

The ears? Well, I like to think that ears of the church body are those who listen—those who listen when I have a problem and need to talk it over with someone. They listen, and we feel good about ourselves again. They listen, and we know they care about what happens to us. They listen and never repeat what they hear. It's an important service for God's church.

And these members of the church body—these arms and legs of God's church—can bring help and blessing not only to the church itself but also to those who are not followers of Jesus. They can bring blessing to the whole world.

For what the tentmaker has to say about this body, read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and Ephesians 4:15, 16.

Answers to quiz

1. Joseph
2. Anna
3. Paul
4. Luke
5. Deborah
6. Peter

Sabbath, September 18

The see-er

God named Jesus to be the *Head* of the church. The head is where all the thinking, loving, knowing, and understanding are for a body. Jesus came to show us the truth about God so we can know what God is *really* like. Jesus *is* the truth, and when we know and love Jesus, we also know and love His Father, for They are alike.

When Jesus went back to His Father in heaven, He told His followers, "I can't be with you any more so that you can see Me, but I can be with you by My Spirit. I will send Him to you." And He did. Jesus always keeps His promises.

The Holy Spirit cannot be seen, but we can see what He does. We can't see the wind either, can we? But we can see what the wind does. We can't begin to know and understand all there is to know and understand about this wonderful Gift whom Jesus has given to the church. It's pretty much a mystery. It's a bit like electricity. The scientists don't know much about what electricity *is*—they just know a little about how it works and what it does, and we all are helped by it.

So God's church is helped by the loving gift of the Holy Spirit and all the other good things He brings with Him.

There's one particular gift, or good thing, we haven't mentioned. No, I didn't forget it. I just wanted to talk about it last. That's the gift of sight to God's church, His loved ones. Being able to *see* is a gift, believe me. Ask any blind person whether or not I'm right.

God has not left His church body without sight! He has given His church body eyes too. In Bible times those to whom God gave messages of warning, direction, and information about things to come were called prophets. Sometimes they were called seers—"see-ers"—because God helped them "see" and know what was coming in years ahead or helped them to understand a message that was hard to understand.

God has always communicated with His people. Not just in times long ago, but in our own age too. The Bible tells us that God's special people—His church body living in the last days before Jesus comes—will have eyes too. I think it's

great that God has not forgotten us—you and me—and all His church who are alive now in 1982. He has given His church at this time in history eyes—a see-er. Her name is Ellen White. I wish I could have known her, though, because I enjoy reading what she wrote down for us to read of God's messages to her.

I think Ellen White was a little like Moses—she really didn't want the job of carrying messages to God's people. She hadn't been able to attend much school (you remember the accident she had?) and thought God could find someone else who could do a better job than she could. But God wanted her to do it. After thinking it over and praying about it, Ellen agreed, and we have another example of what God can do with people who give all of themselves to Him and to His leading and direction.

The Holy Spirit gave Ellen dreams at night and sometimes visions during the day. Sometimes she "saw" scenes before her eyes to explain difficult Bible verses. Sometimes an angel brought the message to her. Sometimes she was talking to a group of people when a scene would be shown to her. Sometimes she was all alone. But the messages were not her own messages—they were God's messages. Ellen delivered God's messages in her own words.

Faithful Messenger

For seventy years Ellen faithfully wrote these messages down so people could read them over and over. She often spoke her messages too. Many times she would send a letter of instruction or warning to a church member, and if they followed her counsel they would be helped much.

Often she had messages for the leaders of our church to help them make the right decisions and to help them be good leaders. One time she even received a message for her own little grandchildren.

Like many of God's messengers in the past, Ellen has been criticised.

Like many of God's messengers in the past, some people didn't believe she really was God's see-er. Even today some don't believe Ellen received special messages from God for His church. But she did.

Ellen never did claim to be anything but a faithful messenger. And that she was.

Sometimes the messages were not happy ones, but Ellen still delivered them faithfully.

Down through the years many people have claimed to be God's prophet, or the see-er of God's church body, but it turned out that they weren't. Would you like to know five ways you can be sure whether someone is bringing a message from God? Open your Bible and find these texts. They will give you the five ways to be sure. The message is *not* from God if:

1. Isaiah 8:20—The message is not according to Bible truth.

2. 1 John 4:1-3—The messenger says Jesus the Son of God did not come as a man to this earth.

3. Deuteronomy 18:22—The messenger brings a message about the future and says it's from God, but it doesn't happen.

4. Deuteronomy 13:1-4—The messenger tries to turn you away from the God of heaven to false gods, or to himself.

5. 2 Thessalonians 2:9—The messenger will show "magic"—signs and wonders—to get you to turn to false gods or to himself.

All the messages that Ellen gave to God's people were according to Bible truth; never did she receive and deliver a message that was the opposite of God's previously written Word. Ellen's messages always repeated the wonderful story of Jesus and how He came from heaven to die for us on this earth. Ellen's messages about the future are still being fulfilled, one after another. Ellen always wrote about the wonderful, loving God of heaven and tried to help people understand how much He loved them—she never wanted people to notice her.

I am happy that God has communicated with His people in so many different ways. I'm glad He told us all we need to know about how to be ready to meet Jesus. He has given message after message down through all history, from Bible times to our own day. He wanted us to know all about it, all about how He loves us and wants us to be with Him someday soon. He hasn't forgotten us. What wonderful love! What special love!

It makes me want to smile and sing and shout with happiness to know He loves me so much. You feel that way too, don't you?

A Message from the General Conference President

Dear fellow-believers:

Anciently, the prophet of the Lord prayed, "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Habakkuk 3:2. This is the earnest petition that each of us should offer as we come to another Week of Prayer.

My brothers and sisters, it is time to seek the Lord! It is time for us to turn from our businesses and pleasures. It is time to turn from our self-sufficiency and selfishness. It is time to cast ourselves upon Him. It is time for us to plead, "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years" and to prepare our hearts individually that the work may begin in us.

We are a privileged people. We are a people blessed with marvellous light. The Lord has opened to us the treasures of the Scriptures, the pillar and the foundation of faith, which are able to make us "wise unto salvation." In addition He has seen fit to restore to us the gift of prophecy. We believe that Ellen White was used of God to convey His counsel to this people. While her writings are not an addition to the Scriptures and certainly should never be used to replace the Scriptures or to short-circuit the study of the Bible, they are messages from the Lord, and we neglect or reject them at the risk of great loss.

How good is our God! He has not left us in darkness, groping to know His will. Graciously He has spoken, communicating to us through human instruments. The eternal God, Maker of heaven and earth, has condescended to speak with weak, erring men and women!

The supreme communication of God, of course, was in Jesus Christ—God incarnate. But the written Word bears witness to the incarnate Word, instructing us in the truth about His life and work for us. And in these last days God again has given light through the prophetic ministry of Ellen White, to draw us back to the teachings of the Scriptures. True revival cannot take place apart from the Bible and the direct instruction of the Holy Spirit. Genuine refreshing cannot be received if we neglect the counsels from the Lord through the gift of prophecy. The study of the Scriptures and a readiness to receive His message are the only foundation upon which a new beginning can occur.

May this Week of Prayer mark a new beginning for each of us. May it be a new beginning of *deeper study* of the Word of God. May it be a new beginning of *deeper appreciation* for God's counsels through His last-day messenger, Ellen White. May it be a new beginning in *deeper love* for Jesus as we wait and work for His glorious soon-appearing. And may you maintain the blessings of this new beginning by reading our church paper, the AUSTRALASIAN RECORD, as it comes into your home throughout the year.

"O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years."

Sincerely your brother,

Neal C. Wilson.