

Bible evidence supporting the reappearance of the prophetic gift in the last days, are clearly seen by the pioneers, prepared the way for whole-hearted acceptance of the gift of prophecy by the Sabbath-keeping Adventists. The ministry of Ellen White was recognized at that time, and is acknowledge today among both Adventists and many non-Adventists, as the ministry of one upon whom the prophetic gift was bestowed.

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE IN THE ADVENT MOVEMENT

BIBICAL PLATFORM OF THE PROPHETIC GIFT

Test Questions - Lesson 1

1. Complete the following statements:

1. Before the writing of the Scriptures, knowledge was handed down from.....to
2. During the time the Bible was being written,..... appeared whose utterancesincluded in the canon of Scriptures .
3. The work of the Holy Spirit.....end when the canon of Scripture was closed.

2. Cross out the incorrect word or words in parentheses:

Dreams and visions (are) (are not) among the signs of the great day of the Lord.



From J.N. Andrews' 1870 articles, pp. 13-15 in the Treasure Chest complete the following statement:

"In the reception of members into our churches, we desire to know two things: (1)

that they believe in the Bible doctrine of

(2) that, they will candidly acquaint themselves with

the.....

3. Answer the following questions:

1. By what standard are spiritual gifts to be tested?
2. Do true spiritual gifts conflict with Bible teachings?
3. The Bible is our rule of faith. Why, then, do God's last-day people need the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy?

4. Complete this quotation from Uriah Smith:

"We do not then, discard, but obey, the Bible by....."

5. Answer the following questions:

1. What was Joseph Bates' attitude when he first learned of the visions given to Ellen Harmon?
2. What was the subject of the vision which persuaded him that the visions were of God?

6. Complete the following statements:

1. Satan tried to defeat the work of the Spirit of Prophecy by introducing.....
2. The existence of the.....assures us that the genuine also exists.
3. Two examples of false manifestations are in the works of.....and.....

7. Quote here Revelation 12:17 and 19:10, last part:

.....

.....

.....

THINK ON THESE THINGS (No written answer) ✓
Does one show loyalty or disloyalty to God by rejecting that portion of the bible which foreretell the reappearance of the prophetic gift in the last days?

Should we not prize and cherish membership in the church which keeps the commandments of God and holds the testimony of Jesus?

Biblical Platform of the Prophetic Gift

1

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: Quench not the spirit. Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. – 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

In our modern world it is important that essential communications get through – and on time. In secular life we humans depend upon the internet, emails, cell phones, ipods, telephones, TV, radio and even snail mail, for communication with one another. How much more important is it that our heavenly Father shall have ready access to His people here, to communicate to them the precious saving light of heaven.

How God Communicates Truth
Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret upon his servants the prophets. – Amos 3:7.

Through the ages prophets have been the principal means employed by God in bringing light to His people! And the gift of prophecy, wrote A. G. Daniells, “ranks next to the supreme gift of His only-begotten Son and of His Holy Spirit to a world estranged and separated by sin. ” –*The Abiding Gift of Prophecy*, p. 15.

In the highest sense the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. - Education, p. 46.

Let us think of how God communicated light to his people in three distinct periods of time:

1. Before the writing of the Holy Scriptures
God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. – Act 3:21. See also Luke 1:70.

At the fall of Adam, face-to-face communication between heaven and earth was cut off. Thereafter, from time to time the Lord chose godly persons to serve as His prophets or spokesmen. There were times also when angels appeared to men, or God even spoke by an audible voice from heaven.

Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Job, Jacob, Joseph, and others of the patriarchal age received communication form God and passed the message on to their children.

During the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, there was no written revelation. Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations. – Great Controversy, Introduction, p. v.

2. During the Writing of the Holy Scriptures
God has spoken to men “by his prophets in the holy scriptures.” Roman 1:2. This represents a period of about sixteen centuries. But the ministry of the prophetic office was not limited to those who gave us the books of the Bible.

The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years, -from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel. – *Ibid.*

During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. *Ibid.*,p. viii.

3. After the Writing of the Holy Scripture
And it shall come to pass afterwards, 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. – Joel 2:28.

There is also a relationship between the church’s obedience to God’s law and the manifestation in it of the Spirit of Prophecy! See Revelation 12:17; Lamentations 2:8, 9. Paul’s admonition to Christians, “Despise not prophesying,” has real significance today, especially in the light of Revelation 12:17 and 19:10. Since prophecy is the Lord’s time-honored way of guiding His people into the kingdom, we should sincerely and earnestly “make room” for the counsels of God’s messenger.

Foundation for Faith in the Gift of Prophecy

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 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. – Ephesians 4:11-13. See also verses 13-15.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. – 1 Corinthians 12:28.

The Scriptures were the foundation upon which the Adventist pioneers built. These verses quoted above introduced one of the earliest statements on the subject of spiritual gifts, by a Sabbath-keeping Adventist leader. In the Review and Herald of April 21, 1851, its first editor, James White, wrote:

When the design of the gifts is clearly seen, then the importance of this subject will be understood. They were given for the perfecting of the church of Christ. When the apostolic church was pure and holy, having just learned the gospel form the Great Head of the church, and having been baptized with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the gift of the Spirit were given to them, for their edification and profit. And we have no Scripture evidence that they were designed for a limited portion of the gospel ages, to be taken away form the church in a few years; but the *proof is abundant that they were designed to exist in the church as long as the saints in their mortal state needed the teaching of the Bible and the Holy Spirit.* –*Review and Herald*, April 21, 1851, p. 69. Italics supplied.

At least once before, in a pamphlet, “A Word to the ‘Little Flock,’” issued in May of 1847, James White had published his views on the subject of spiritual gifts. Here he prefaced his comments by quoting Joel’s prophecy as repeated in Acts 2:17-20. Read this text.

In the next paragraph Elder White referred to the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Then he continued:

A part of this [Joel’s] prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost; and ALL of it is to be fulfilled “IN THE LAST DAYS, SAITH GOD.” Dreams and visions are among the signs that precede the great and notable days of the Lord. And as the signs of that day have been, and still are fulfilling, it must be clear to every unprejudiced mind, that the time has fully come, when the children of the God may expect dreams and visions from the Lord. – “A Word to the ‘Little Flock,’” p. 13.

Here James White identified the prophecy of Joel 2:28-31 with the appearance of visions and dreams in the last days. On the next page he placed Mrs. White’s first vision as it had appeared the day before in Editor ‘Jacobs’ little journal, *The Day-Star*, adding Scripture references, as he said, “for the benefit of the little flock.”

I hope that all who may read it, will take the wise, and safe course, pointed out to us by the following passages of scripture. “Despise not prophesying. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” Paul. “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20. –*Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14.

Harmony Between Bible and Spirit Prophecy

The pioneers recognized the *position of the Holy Scriptures* in the field of divine revelation, and they taught that spiritual gifts, including the gift of prophecy, were to be tested by the Bible, not the Bible to be tested by spiritual gifts. But since the gift of prophecy was bestowed by the same Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible writers, there could only be unity and harmony, never disagreement, between the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy.

In 1851 Ellen White wrote, in the closing chapter of his first book, *Experience and Views*, which was later incorporated into *Early Writings*:

I recommend to you, dear reader, the word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that word we are to be judged. God has, in that word, promised to give visions in the “LAST DAYS,” *not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.* Thus God dealt with Peter when He was about to send him to preach to the Gentiles. Act 10. – *Early Writings*, p. 78. Italics supplied.

James White stated in his early article dealing with the appearance of the prophetic gift:

The Bible is a perfect, and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice. But this is no reason, why God may not show the past, present, and future fulfillment of his word, in these *last days*, by dreams and visions; according to Peter’s testimony. [Act 2:17-20] *True visions are given to lead us to God, and his written word;* but those that are given for a new

rule of faith and practice, separate from the Bible, cannot be from God, and should be rejected. – “A Word to the ‘Little Flock,’” “ p. 13. Italics supplied.

Both James and Ellen White recognized that the Bible is the great rule of faith and duty, but that the Spirit of Prophecy was employed by God in our day to comfort His people and to correct those who erred from Bible truth.

The early leaders, including the Whites, Joseph Bates, J.H. Waggoner, M.E. Cornell, and others who were gathered in a conference at Battle Creek, Michigan, in December of 1855, expressed their convictions in a joint statement, as follows:

Nor do we, as some contend, exalt these gifts or their manifestation, above the Bible; on the contrary, *we test them by the Bible*, making it the great rule of judgment in all things; so that whatever is not in accordance with it, in its spirit and its teachings, w unhesitatingly reject. But as we cannot believe that a fountain sends forth at the same place sweet eater and bitter, or that an evil tree brings forth good fruit, so we cannot believe that that is of the enemy which tends to unite the hearts of the saints, to lead to meekness and humility and holy living, and incites to deep heart-searching before God, and a confession of our wrongs. – *Review and Herald*, Dec. 4, 1855, p. 79, col. 1. Italics supplied.

Belief in Spirit of Prophecy Not Rejection of the Bible

For nearly fifty years Uriah Smith was the editor of The *Review and Herald*. He was associated with Elder and Mrs. White from the early days of the printing work in Rochester, New York. The following statement form his pen is one of the most vital made by the pioneers:

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

We do not, then, discard, but obey the Bible by endorsing the visions; while we should just so far reject and disobey it, as we should refuse to receive the provisions it has made for our comfort, edification, and perfection. - *Review and Herald*, Jan. 13, 1863, p. 52.

Captain Bates’ attitude Towards the Visions

Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain prominent among Adventist pioneers, was prejudiced against dreamed and visions, and at first was not inclined to accept Ellen White’s visions as of divine origin; yet he did not assign to them an evil source. He was honest in his position, struggling with doubt. His caution and reticence represented a wholesome skepticism typical of honest persons who did not understand Mrs. White’s work.

But the evidence needed to convince Captain Bates was not long in coming. A meeting was held in Topsham, Maine, in 1846, at which Captain Bates and Mrs. White were both present and a vision was given to Ellen White. While in vision she began to talk about the starry heavens and certain heavenly bodies which Captain Bates readily recognized. From former conversations he realized that Mrs. White has no knowledge of astronomy. Her description of what she saw fully convinced Elder Bates that the visions were completely outside of her knowledge and control.

In relating his transition from doubt to faith in the revelations, Joseph Bates wrote in April of 1847:

It is now about two years since I first saw the author [Ellen Harmon], and heard her relate the substance of her visions as she has since published them in Portland (April 6, 1846). Although I could see nothing in them that militated against the word, yet I felt alarmed and tried exceedingly, and for a long time unwilling to believe that it was any thing more than what was produced by a protracted debilitated state of her body.

I therefore sought opportunities in presence of others, when her mind seemed freed from excitement, (out of meeting) to question, and cross question her, and her friends, which accompanied her, especially her elder sister, to get if possible at the truth. During the number of visits she has made to New Bedford and Fairhaven since, while at our meetings, I have seen her in vision a number of times, and also in Topsham, Me., and those who were present during some of these exciting scenes know well with what interest and intensity I listened to every word, and watched every move to detect deception, or mesmeric influences. And I thank God for the opportunity I have had with others to witness these things, I can now confidently speak for myself. I believe the work is of God, and is given to comfort and strengthen his “scattered,” “torn,” and “pealed people.” – “Remarks,” in broadside, “A vision,” vol. 1,no. 1, April 7, 1847. Reprinted in “A Word to the ‘Little Flock,’” p. 21.

Elder Bates’ new attitude of confidence reflected the thinking of many who at first doubted and then, after studying the evidence, accepted the work of Ellen White as from the Lord.

Satan Worked Against the Spirit of Prophecy

Satan prejudiced minds against Mrs. White by introducing counterfeit visions, as Jesus had foretold:

For there shall arise a false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. – Matthew 24:24, 25.

James White was ever alert to the work of the enemy, and aware that some honest minds would reject the true gift of prophecy because of the influence of false prophets. He wrote:

Be assured, Satan understands his work full well. His counterfeits are out at the right time, and are of the right sort to accomplish his purpose. He, knowing “that he hath but a short time” to sink men in perdition, determined to pre-occupy the field, and draw as many as possible to his bewitching snares, then try to make all other doubt the genuine, because of the counterfeit. But this subject viewed correctly, the *existence of the counterfeit assures us that the genuine also exists*.... God save us from throwing all away because of the spurious. But, rather, let us “prove all things, and HOLD FAST that which is good.” – *Review and Herald*, Oct. 16, 1855, p. 61. Italics supplied.

A few of the extraordinary manifestations *outside* of the Adventist group that, 100 to 150 years ago, prejudiced minds against genuine manifestations of the Spirit, included: (1) the spiritualizing ministry of Emmanuel Swedenborg; (2) the spiritualistic manifestation of Ann Lee; (3) the visions of Joseph Smith; (4) the mysterious Rochester rappings, at Fox home in New York Sate.

George I. Butler, who was for eleven years president of the General Conference (1872-1874, 1880-1888), wrote concerning the attitude of people adversely influenced by those counterfeit movements:

Perhaps there is nothing in this age of the world that excites greater prejudice than the claim that visions and miraculous manifestations of God’s Spirit are to be witnessed in our time. There are a variety of reasons why this is so. So many have put forth claims to supernatural powers who have given evidence either of fanaticism or downright infidelity that it is not to be wondered at that sensible people who believe that the Bible should look with great suspicion on everything of the kind. – *Review and Herald*, May 12, 1874.

Elder Butler saw in the spiritualistic movements of Swedenborg, Ann Lee, and others, a fulfillment of Mathew 24:11, 23, 24. He wrote:

It is remarkable that these have all arisen in this late age of the world, and all of them hold views on the subject of the Lord’s coming calculated to blind the minds of the people in regard to that event, and that the Scripture has placed their appearance in close proximity to the time when the Saviour shall come at that very point when the sign should be seen. Shall we argue that there certainly will be no genuine manifestation because we know that false ones are in existence? Does the presence of counterfeits demonstrate the absence of all genuine money? Satan has most generally wrought in the world most powerfully when the Lord has been at work.- *Ibid*.

In the unbiblical and sensational manifestations of the false prophets, many honest Christians found a reason for rejecting all who claimed to have visions. This unreasoning attitude made Ellen White’s work particularly difficult, for she was made the scape goat of many cries of fanaticism. So, for that matter, were all Seventh-day Adventists. As Elder Butler wrote:

It is a well-known fact that Seventh-day Adventists have believed that true visions were in existence among them for years in the past. This claim has subjected them to no small amount of obloquy. – *Ibid*.

Despite all opposition, it became crystal clear that there was in the life and ministry of Ellen White a genuine manifestation of the prophetic call.

Scripture Prophecies Provide Strong Evidence

And 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.... The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy. – Revelation 12:17; 19:10, last part.

These scriptures declare that the “remnant” church against which Satan’s wrath was stirred, will be distinguished by two doctrines of singular import: (1) “the commandments of God,” and (2) “the testimony of Jesus,” which the angel declared to be “the Spirit of Prophecy.” These two characteristics, among others, identify the true church in the last days. It is also distinguished by the “faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12. George I. Butler associated the ministry of Ellen White with the Biblical designation “Spirit of Prophecy”:

The Spirit of Prophecy here referred to [Rev.12:17] as being in the last church is evidently that spirit which causes certain persons to prophesy. This Spirit comes upon certain ones. They speak as they are moved upon by this Spirit...

It is a fact that for nearly thirty years, Mrs. Ellen G White, the wife of Elder James White, both of them pioneers in this movement, has had visions which are regarded by those in sympathy with this church as being from the Lord; and it is freely admitted that they have exerted a large influence in making Seventh-day Adventism what it now is. – *Review and Herald*, June 2, 1874.

For a fuller presentation of the marks of the true church and the testimony of Jesus, see Lesson 13.