

Test Questions – Lesson 22

1. Answer these questions:

- 1. Why is reproof of sin needed?
.....
.....
- 2. To whom did Mrs. White say her plain testimonies would not bring discouragement?
.....
.....

2. Supply the missing words here:

- 1. "My commission embraces the work of a, but it does notthere."
- 2. "I have had no to make, only that I am instructed that I am the"

3. Do you believe that these statements are correct?

- 1. Sometime Mrs. White expressed similar thoughts in different languages because she wished to give the best possible expression to the messages God gave her.
.....

- 2. Mrs. White and the church have never purposely suppressed important materials with intent to deceive.

4. Circle the T after each true statement; the F after each false statement:

- In reprinting the Ellen G. White books, the trustees feel free to –
- 1. correct faulty grammar. T F
 - 2. use only the same pictures as early edition. T F
 - 3. bring the punctuation up to date. T F
 - 4. use modern spelling and capitalization. T F

5. Answer these questions:

- 1. Are the Spirit of Prophecy messages out of date?
.....
.....
- 2. How long will they speak to authority to the remnant church?
.....
.....

- 6. Could you believe that such books as Desire of Ages and Great Controversy resulted from a "nervous disorder" brought on by a childhood blow in the face?
.....

7. Underline the correct word in parentheses to complete each sentence:

- 1. Candidates for baptism should be taught the doctrine of spiritual gifts (before) (after) baptism.
- 2. Candidates who have read Ellen. G. White's books and learned the results of her ministry usually (reject) (accept) her writings as the expression of God's will through the Spirit of Prophecy.

THINK ON THESE THINGS (N6 written answer)

Is the light of eternity, have you seriously come to grips with a testimony that strikes clearly at a personal need?

Dare you risk delay in seeking Christ's pardon and deliverance?

Can one be in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist Church yet ignore or actively oppose the writings of Ellen. G. White?

As far as the Spirit of Prophecy is concerned, do we gather with Christ? Or scatter abroad?



PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. - Isaiah 21:12.

This lesson is in the nature of a Question Box, and all the questions relate to the Spirit of Prophecy. Our first question concerns Mrs. White's role in dealing with sin.

Why Do the Testimonies Deal so Plainly With Sins of Believers?

ANSWER: Reproof is needed to arouse the soul from its sinful stupor. Mrs. White spoke plainly against sin, declaring that, a profession of godliness without deep love and the power of a changed life "is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery." *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 163. Then she continued:

Many of you may retain a notion of religion in the head, an outside religion, when the heart is not cleansed. God looks at the heart; "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Will He be satisfied with anything but truth in the inward parts? Every truly converted soul will carry the unmistakable marks that the carnal mind is subdued.

I speak plainly. I do not think this will discourage a true Christian; and I do not want any of you to come up to the time of trouble without a well-grounded hope in your Redeemer. Determine to know the worst of your case. Ascertain if you have an inheritance on high. Deal truly with your own soul. Remember that a church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, will Jesus present to his Father. - *Ibid.*

Did Mrs. White Ever State That She Was Not a Prophetess?

ANSWER: When speaking before a large audience in the Battle Creek Tabernacle, on October 2, 1903, Ellen White stated, "I do not claim to be a prophetess." Some, thinking that she thereby disclaimed the prophetic gift, found it difficult to harmonize this declaration with other of her own statements and the understanding of the church about her work. She cleared this point in a communication addressed to the elders of the Battle Creek church, in which she said: "My commission embraces the work of a prophet, but it does not end there." *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 36. And in an article which she wrote for the Review and Herald she discussed this matter further:

Some have stumbled over the fact that I said I did not claim to be a prophet; and they have asked, Why is this? I have had no claims to make, only that *I am instructed that I am the Lord's messenger*; that He called me in my youth to be His messenger, to receive His word, and to give a clear and decided message in the name of the Lord Jesus. Early in my youth I was asked several times, Are you a prophet? I have ever responded, I am the Lord's messenger. I know that many have called me a prophet, but I have made no claim to this title. . . . Why have I not claimed to be a prophet? - Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ: and because my work includes much more than the word "prophet" signifies. - *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 32.

Is There Any Truth in the Charge That the E. G. White Writings Have Been Suppressed?

ANSWER: In two ways this charge has been brought against Mrs. White and the church.
1. First, the suggestion has been made that because some book was allowed to go out of print, or a periodical article has not been reprinted, the counsels given therein are being suppressed. The superficiality of such reasoning is easily apparent. In some cases early works have been replaced by later books which have presented the matters more fully. Many pamphlets and periodical articles dealt with local situations of the time, and the need for the counsel they contained no longer exists. Surely a decision not to keep all such matter in print and urge its sale could not fairly be identified as suppression.

2. Second, some have asserted that because in later printings of certain visions or books, some portions of the original statements are left out, the matter is thereby suppressed. Mrs. White answered any such assertion in a single sentence penned in 1883:

So far from desiring to withhold anything that I have ever published, I would feel great satisfaction in giving to the public every line of my writings that has ever been printed. - *Ibid.*, p. 60.

On the same point Uriah Smith declared in 1887:

It is an interesting point to inquire when this work [of suppression] was done, and under what circumstances, and what method were adopted to accomplish it. On the first day of May, 1853, we entered upon a connection with the *Review* office, which, with the exception of two brief intervals, has continued to the present time. During all these thirty-four years, therefore, we speak from personal knowledge when we say that there has not been the first suggestion, or the least indication of any desire or intention, to conceal or modify or in the least degree change anything revealed through Sister White in vision. - *Review and Herald*, July 19, 1887, p. 456.

The relationship of Ellen White's early visions as printed in her first book (*Experience and Views*) in 1851, to their first appearance as articles in the *Day-Star* in 1846, is the case usually cited in charges of suppression. Introducing the visions in *Experience and Views* (p. 9), Ellen White stated:

Here I will give the view that was first published in 1846. In this view I saw only a very few of the events of the future. More recent views have been more full. I shall therefore leave out a portion and prevent repetition.

F. M. Wilcox, who was for many years editor of the *Review and Herald*, looked at this matter considerately, and noted that helpful changes which Mrs. White herself made cannot be equated with suppression:

While we freely and frankly admit that in the revisions of her books, Mrs. White sometimes expressed her thoughts in different language and sometimes added or omitted altogether phrases and sentences and even paragraphs, yet *we deny the charge of suppression, which carries with it the implication of the purpose to deceive*. . . . Mrs. White never claimed perfect understanding of all that was given her of God, and was far from claiming perfection or inerrancy of expression in communicating to others that which was revealed to her. There were given to her visions and dreams and revelations; there were brought before her mind pictures of conditions that existed, of scenes in this earth and in heaven. In the fear of God she conscientiously described these revelations, but was sometimes misunderstood and even misinterpreted.

In later editions she endeavored in certain cases to improve these descriptions, and in doing so made changes in some expressions and omitted others. Every such change was made by her or by her personal authorization. She is to be honored for this earnest effort on her part to express in the best possible form the instruction which she had received. . . . She declared. . . . that the words she employed in describing what she had seen were her own. If, therefore in her expression of the truth of God, she felt that words other than those she first used could better express the message she had to give, surely it was not only her privilege but her duty to make such changes as her judgment dictated. - *The Testimony of Jesus*, pp. 90, 91. Italics supplied.

The Great Controversy is a book in point. The edition we have today presents an expanded form of the great controversy story as compared with the first recital in the tiny 219-page *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 1, as it appeared in 1858. For a review of the development of this book through the years, turn back and reread Lesson 6.

Have Changes Been Made in Mrs. White's Books Since Her Death in 1915?

ANSWER: This question is of great importance to the church. It has been rumored that the content of Mrs. White's books has been changed as new printings are made. This rumor is without foundation. *Mrs. White's books are not being changed, nor will they be changed*. Why should the Spirit of Prophecy books be changed? Or why would anyone *wish* to change them?

As explained in Lesson 19, Mrs. White made provision in her will, committing her writings to a Board of Trustees who, after her death, were to be responsible for their safekeeping and their continued publication. Before God and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, this board has labored diligently to keep the E. G. White messages before the church as they were given to us.

In her commission to the trustees, Mrs. White made provision for the "improvement of the books." This has been understood by all to mean only mechanical improvements, such as typographical appearance and illustrating, and has never been construed as authorization to alter the text in any way.

When it is necessary to reset type for the reprinting of any E. G. White book, if it is found that the old printing contained misspelled words or faulty grammar, these are corrected, and punctuation, capitalization, etc., are brought into keeping with present usage. But this cannot be construed to be a change in her writings. Mrs. White herself once declared that there was no salvation in misspelled words or faulty grammar.

To bring a number of the E. G. White books into the Christian Home Library series and thus make them available at the lowest possible price, the type has been reset, but no changes whatever are made in the text. This point is carefully guarded. The paging remains unchanged except for an occasional line or two on a page.

Now it is true that one may compare an early printing of *a certain few* E. G. White books with later printings, and find a few changes. *But these changes were made by Mrs. White herself before 1915*, the year of her death, to give a clearer, more accurate expression of thought. This is particularly true of *The Great Controversy*, of which there were several distinct editions - 1858, 1884, 1888, and 1911.

In the 1888 edition, many copies of which are still being used, references were made to the lapse of time. For instance, Ellen White wrote concerning spiritualism-

But its utterances from the platform and the press have been before the public for nearly forty years, and in these its real character stands revealed. - *Great Controversy*, 1888 edition, p. 558. Italics supplied.

This statement, penned in 1887 and published in 1888, would carry the reader back to 1848, the time of the first mysterious knockings in the Fox home at Hydesville, N.Y. But if the statement were unchanged when the book was reprinted in 1911, it would refer the reader to around 1871, a date which had no significance in this case. To make the book convey the correct idea and the intent of the author, not only in 1911 but through the years ahead for which the book would serve, Mrs. White authorized a change of wording, making it read: "But its utterances have been before the public for many years," etc.

Concerning the changes made in the 1911 edition of *Great Controversy*, Ellen White wrote on July 25, 1911:

Recently it was necessary for this book to be reset, because the electrotype plates were badly worn. . . . When I learned that "Great Controversy" must be reset, I determined that we would have everything, closely examined, to see if the truths it contained were stated in the very best manner, to convince those not of our faith that the Lord had guided and sustained me in the writing of its pages.

As a result of the thorough examination by our most experienced workers, some changing in the wording has been proposed. These changes I have carefully examined, and approved. I am thankful that my life has been spared, and that I have strength and clearness of mind for this and other literary work. - *E. C. White Letter 56, 1911*.

When anyone asserts that the Ellen G. White messages are being changed, *ask for the proof*. Check editions carefully. If there is still question, write for information to Ellen White Estate, General Conference of S. D. A. Washington 12, D. C.

Did Mrs. White Say That There Would Be "Another Prophet"?

ANSWER: Mrs. White was given no special light on this question. However, she did say that her writings would speak and bear their witness till the close of time:

Abundant light has been given to our people in these last days. Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last. - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 55.

Mrs. White's books have not been outdated. Nor can they be outdated. They apply with living force today. God has given light to guide us through to the kingdom. Let the church follow the light of His Word, and treasure also the counsels of His chosen messenger to His remnant people.

Could Mrs. White's Visions Be Accounted for as the Result of a Nervous Disorder Brought on by the Accident in Her Childhood?

ANSWER: No! But let us look at the supporting facts.

At the age of nine, Ellen Harmon was struck in the face by a flying stone, and knocked unconscious. She undoubtedly suffered a brain concussion. She was in a coma for three weeks. For a number of years her health was impaired; but she gradually recovered a good measure of health, and lived to the ripe age of eighty-seven.

One critic of Mrs. White's work has suggested that her childhood injury accounted for the physical phenomena which accompanied the visions, and to the superficial observer this may seem plausible. In times past it was commonly thought that an injury to the head, as in a fall, could cause convulsions, epileptic fits, and hysteria.

One important question in any such consideration is, Do severe injuries to the face or head result in such abnormal actions as the physical phenomena which were commonly observed in connection with Mrs. White's visions?

The opinion popularly entertained that injuries to the head are a frequent cause of mental disease is distinctly an error. . . Not over one-half of one per cent of admissions to hospitals for mental diseases are to be considered as traumatic [injury] psychoses in the correct sense of the word. - Arthur Percy Noyes and Edith M. Haydon, *A Textbook of Psychiatry*, p. 126; quoted in *Ellen White and Her Critics*, p. 63.

Modern neurological studies which more clearly delimit the motor area of the brain reveal that the chance that a head injury will result in convulsions, or fits, depends on the relation of the injury to the motor center. The head injury suffered by Mrs. White, when she was struck by a stone on the nose, was *remote from this motor area*. - Footnote by F. D. Nichol, *Ibid*. Italics supplied.

The work that Mrs. White did, the life that she lived through seventy years of service to the church are the supreme proof that she possessed a sane, rational mind and that she was not the victim of any mental disease. It is absurd to suggest that the blow which nine-year-old Ellen Harmon received on the face was responsible for the inspired authorship which gave to the church such remarkable books as *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, and *The Great Controversy* - when she was a woman of 60 or 70 or more! Review Lesson 15, "Glimpses of a Noble Christian Life."

Should Faith in the Doctrine of Spiritual Gifts Be Made a Test of Discipleship or Acceptance Into Church Membership?

ANSWER: The doctrine of spiritual gifts is one of the "fundamental beliefs" of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, as set forth in the *Twenty Eight Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Church Manual and the Yearbook*.

19. That God has placed in His church the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. That these gifts operate in harmony with the divine principles of the Bible, and are given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. 4:12. That the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church. (1 Cor. 1:5-7; 1 Cor. 12:1-28; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 19:10; Amos 3:7; Hosea 12: 10, 13) They [Seventh-day Adventists] recognize that this gift was manifested in the life and ministry of Ellen C. White. - *Church Manual*, p. 34; 1960 *Yearbook*, p. 6.

It is also listed as a point on which inquiry should be made in connection with the baptismal vow:

8. Do you accept the doctrine of spiritual gifts, and do you believe that the Spirit of Prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church? - *Church Manual*, p. 57.

To receive as members of the church, individuals who do not accept all the doctrines of the church would be inconsistent and unfair both to those who might be thus accepted and to the church which would receive them.

While serving as editor of the *Review and Herald*, F. M. Wilcox wrote on this point, summing up the denominational position as set forth from time to time by leading ministers of the church and by Ellen White:

Inasmuch as the labors of Mrs. E. G. White have entered so largely into the development of the second advent movement, candidates for church membership should be made acquainted with the divine ministry to which she was called, and the influence of her labors and writings through the years. Opportunity should be afforded for them to read her published books. When this instruction has been given candidates, but little question ever will be raised as to faith in the doctrine of spiritual gifts being made a test of church fellowship.

If, as the result of this investigation, the one contemplating church membership arrives at settled convictions in opposition to this doctrine, he naturally will not wish to unite his interests with a church that holds it as a part of its religious faith. In any event he should be encouraged to wait until he has had time and opportunity for more mature study of the question.

If, on the other hand, while in full sympathy with his Adventist brethren regarding their faith and objectives and their church policy and organization, he still feels doubts over the doctrine of spiritual gifts and their exercise in the church, but has no opposition to the fullest and freest exercise of faith in these gifts on the part of his brethren, and to the free use of the instruction which has come to the church from the gift of prophecy, he need not necessarily be excluded from church membership. - *Testimony of Jesus*, p. 137.

Mrs. White declared the Spirit of Prophecy to be "the very means that God has chosen to fit up a people to stand in the day of God." - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 45. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18.

Those who accept the Spirit of Prophecy as "the testimony of Jesus," and therefore the voice of the Lord to His people, place themselves in a position where they cannot disregard the authority of the Ellen White writings. How are you as a church member relating yourself to this gift? God grant that the testimony and influence of every believer shall uphold this gift He has so graciously given to us.

Suggestion: Secure a copy of F. M. Wilcox's *Testimony of Jesus*, and read especially pages 136-143.

Lesson 23 carries the title, "The Prophetic Searchlight on Future Events." It will deal with Ellen White predictions of events which are now in process of fulfillment or soon to be fulfilled. Only two more lessons in this series.