

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY



INTRODUCTION: “The history which **the great I AM** has marked out in His word, **uniting link after link in the prophetic chain,** from eternity in the past to eternity in the future, **tells us where we are today in the procession of the ages,** and what may be expected in the time to come. **All that prophecy has foretold as coming to pass, until the present time, has been traced on the pages of history,** and we may be assured that all which is yet to come will be fulfilled in its order. “(Ed 178.3)

Prophecy, which is but a revelation from God regarding future events, has been misused by many, even in Adventism. How is it related to Spiritual gifts, what is it's purpose, and who can be a prophet?

“Prophecy the Foundation of Our Faith—Ministers should present the sure word of prophecy as the foundation of the faith of Seventh-day Adventists. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation should be carefully studied, and in connection with them the words, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”(Ev 196.2)

Thus you see that you can't separate prophetic lessons from the main theme which is but “Christ and Him Crucified.”

What are Spiritual Gifts Given To The Church?

“For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: “(1Corinthians 12:8-10)

“...he[Christ)..gave gifts unto men...And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; “(Ephesians 4:8,11)

What Was The Purpose Of These Spiritual Gifts?

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying[instructing or teaching] 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 fulness of Christ:.”(Ephesians 4:12-13)

Notice that spiritual gifts are given not for self satisfaction, but for the sake of the church and her members. Doing anything that doesn't edify the church doesn't come from God but from self.

What Was The Purpose Of The Gift Of Prophecy In Particular?

A prophet is someone who speak by **direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he has received from God**. The one who prophesies, therefore, has the Gift of Prophecy or the Spirit of Prophecy.

“And thou, child, shalt be called **the prophet of the Highest**: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord **to prepare his ways**; **To give knowledge of**

salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”(Luke 1:76-79)

A true prophet, here we see, isn't just someone whose predictions come to pass, who speaks with God in visions and dreams, but **also one who preaches the message of repentance, telling people to come out of darkness into God's light of truth.** He lifts up Christ and His law. Moreover, the Bible says that “**Ye shall know them by their fruits**”(Matt 7:15-20, compare with Deuteronomy 13:5, Numbers 12:6, Isaiah 8:20, 1 John 4:2,3)

Can All Be Prophets?

“Are all apostles? **are all prophets?** are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of

healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?
But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I
unto you a more excellent way..”(1Corinthians
12:29-31)

The Bible does not teach that one can have all the gifts or that all can have the same gifts. The Lord gives gifts to one, then to another “**as it hath pleased him**”(1 Cor 12:18). Clear it is, then, that one cannot choose himself to be a prophet, which is equally true with other spiritual gifts. The Lord Himself chooses. The Lord also warns those self appointed prophets that they shall be “consumed” unless they repent.(Jer 14:14-16, 23:13-16).

These facts debunk the idea held by many charismatic and Pentecostal movements today, that speaking in tongues is the sign that one has the Holy Spirit.

Moreover the Bible here tells us to covet the best gifts, “faith, hope, charity, these three; **but the**

greatest of these is charity..”(1Corinthians 13:13)

Again we read “From the earliest times, **prophets had been recognized as teachers divinely appointed.**

In the highest sense **the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God..”(Ed 46.1)**

Though one is directly chosen by the Lord as a Prophet, yet the name can be used to those who are divinely called to instruct (teach) God’s people. Prophesying is, therefore, **sometimes** synonymous to teaching.

Will the Gift Of Prophecy Exist Forever?

“Charity **never faileth**: but **whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.** For **we know in part, and we prophecy in part.** But **when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away..**”(1Corinthians 13:8-10)

The statement “**For we know in part, and we prophecy in part**” shows that our knowledge and prophecy(about Christ and the world to come) are limited. We don’t know much about Christ and Heaven. “**But when that which is perfect is come**” that is when Christ comes to give us enough knowledge about heaven, more than what we now know through the present knowledge and prophecy, when we see heaven in its beauty, then “**that which is in part[Prophecy and present limited knowledge] shall be done away**”. When Christ comes, therefore, the Gift of Prophecy(Spirit of prophecy), as well as other gifts, shall cease while Charity or Love shall survive.

“The manifestation of the spirit of prophecy was designed for all dispensations. The sacred record nowhere restricts it to any particular period of time, from the fall to the final restitution....We have seen that the manifestation of the spirit of prophecy in dreams and in visions became necessary in consequence of man's being separated from the visible presence of God. But when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell with them, and God himself shall be with them, Revelation 21:3; when Christ shall come again with all the holy angels, and receive his people unto himself, that where he shall be, there they may be also, John 14:3; and when man redeemed shall walk and talk with God, and Christ, and angels, in Eden restored; then there will be no further need of the spirit of prophecy.”(1SP 7.3,11.4)

The Gift Of Prophecy In The Christian Era.

“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.”(Matthew 11:13) This scripture does not mean, as some teach, that John the Baptist was the last prophet, that no other prophet was to come after him. It doesn’t teach that the law was not valid after John either. **“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached,** and every man presseth into it. And **it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.”**(Luke 16:16-17). Though the law was until John, yet Christ emphasized that it couldn’t pass away, and the same is true for the prophets, because Christ himself was a prophet(Luke 24:19), and there were many other prophets after John the Baptist including the writer of Revelation. Moreover we’ve already seen that God put “some” prophets in the Church of the New Testament.

This scripture, therefore , is teaching that **there are two divisions of the prophets, those of the Old**

Testament who were until John and those of the New Testament after John.

Sacred history shows that the prophets in the first division **received the Word directly from God through the medium of His Spirit**. They were not obliged to prove any part of their prophecies by the writings of the preceding prophets. Whereas the prophets in the second division are appointed by the unction of the Spirit **to interpret the writings of the prophets of the first division**. This all-important distinction and division shows that **the Old Testament Scriptures contain the light of our salvation for both periods** — Jewish and Christian. And when one considers that the former period is called the “typical” dispensation, and the latter the “antitypical,” then evidence upon evidence rivets the conclusion that **the New Testament gospel is based on the gospel of the Old unfolded**. Consequently, as the Gift of prophecy was needed in the Old Testament Church, so it is needed in the New Testament.

Remember, too, that the Old Testament

testified of Christ(John 5:39), so the New Testament is the unfolding of the Old Testament Christ. Since this is true, then Hebrews 1:1,2 is clear when it says “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers **by the prophets**, Hath **in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.**”(Hebrews 1:1-2). And as he has revealed Himself to us by **the testimony** of the Apostles and the prophets, then the Testimony of Jesus (which is the Spirit of prophecy- Rev 19:10) is what we need at the present time for guidance .

The Purpose Of Ellen White’s Ministry.

“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..”(Revelation 12:17)

The characteristics of the remnant Church, as you know, are keeping the commandments of God and having the testimony of Jesus. These people, the remnant, must cherish this spirit of prophecy among them as they wait for Christ’s second coming. We read,

“Even as the testimony of Christ was

confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; **waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:**”(1Corinthians 1:6-7)

Therefore, “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..”(Testimonies for

the Church vol5:661.)

And since the “**Spirit of truth**” is the one who guides “into all truth”(John 16:13), and since “**The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures and of the Spirit of Prophecy..**”(3SM 30.3), then to reject either is to sin against the Author, the Holy Spirit. And to reject one truth is to reject the whole truth. Let’s see the relationship between the Bible and the Writings of Ellen White.

“Little heed is given to the Bible,

and the Lord has given **a lesser light**
to lead men and women to the
greater light.(The Review and Herald,
January 20, 1903.)

“The Spirit was not given—nor can
it ever be bestowed—to **supersede**
the Bible; for the Scriptures
explicitly state that **the Word of**
God is the standard by which all
teaching and experience must be
tested.... Isaiah declares, “ 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).”(3SM 30.5)

“The written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the truths of inspiration already revealed. Man's duty to God and to his fellow man has been distinctly specified in God's word, yet but few of you are obedient to the light given. **Additional truth is**

not brought out; but God has **through the testimonies simplified the great truths already given....**

The testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it, and

attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.”

(CCh 25.4)

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

bringing them back to the Word that they have neglected to follow.

The Word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles.”(3SM 31)

Testimonies to Bring Plain Lessons From the Word—In the Scriptures God has set forth practical lessons to govern the life and conduct of all; but though He has given minute

particulars in regard to our character, conversation, and conduct, yet in a large measure, **His lessons are disregarded and ignored.** Besides the instruction in His Word, **the Lord has given special testimonies to His people, not as a new revelation,** but that He may set before us **the plain lessons of His Word,** that **errors may be corrected,** that **the right way may be pointed out,** that **every soul may be without excuse.**(3SM 31.3)

The writings Spirit of Prophecy, you

see, are not part of the Bible, neither are they above or equal to it. We read these precious testimonies to get a clearer view of the Bible principles. It is perilous to neglect them.

What is the very last Deception Of Satan?

“Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings.”(1Thessalonians 5:19-20)

It is Satan who wants us to despise and reject prophecy. The Bible, however, is telling us not to do so.

“The very last deception of Satan will be

to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. The enemy has made his masterly efforts **to unsettle the faith of our own people in the Testimonies....** This is just as Satan designed it should be, and those who have been preparing the way for the people **to pay no heed to the warnings and reproofs of the Testimonies of the Spirit of God will see that a tide of errors of all kinds will spring into life.’**(LDE 177.5,178.1)

“Doubt, and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have

it thus. The testimonies are unread and unappreciated. God has spoken to you. Light has been shining from His word and from the testimonies, and both have been slighted and disregarded. The result is apparent in the lack of purity and devotion and earnest faith among us.”(5T 217.2)

The Lives Of Those Who Appreciate The Testimonies.

“Secure From Satan's Seductive Delusions — Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White, and has given her a message, will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days.”(3SM 83.5)

“Although many of her writings **are directed to the Seventh-day Adventist Church**, large portions have been appreciated **by wider audiences**. Her popular book **Steps to Christ** has been translated into more than 100 languages and has sold more than 15 million copies. Her greatest work is the well-received five-volume **Conflict of the Ages Series**, which details the great controversy between Christ and Satan from the origin of sin till its eradication from the universe.

The impact of her writings on individuals is profound. Recently the Institute of Church Ministry of Andrews University did a study **comparing the Christian attitude and behavior of Adventists who regularly read her books and those who do not.** **Their research strongly underscores the impact her writings have on those who read them.** The study reached these

conclusions: ‘Readers have a closer relationship with Christ, more certainty of their standing with God, and are more likely to have identified their spiritual gifts. They are more in favor of spending for public evangelism and contribute **more heavily to local missionary projects. They feel more prepared for witnessing** and actually engage in more witnessing and outreach programs. **They are more likely to study the Bible daily, to pray for specific people, to meet in fellowship groups, and to have daily family worship..**”(Seventh Day Adventist Believe 227,228)

Was Ellen White the Last Prophet?

Ellen White herself never said she was the

last prophet, and neither has the Bible said so. The Bible tells us that the spirit of prophecy, **not one prophet**, will be with God's Church till the very end. She wrote,

“Many Gems Yet to Be Discovered — New light will **ever** be revealed on the word of God to him who is in living connection with the Sun of Righteousness.

Let no one come to the conclusion that there is no more truth to be revealed. The diligent, prayerful seeker for truth will find precious rays of light yet to shine forth from the word of God. Many gems are yet scattered that are to be gathered together to become the property of the remnant people of God. — Counsels on Sabbath School Work, 34 (1892).

“Investigation of Doctrine — There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed,

and that **all our expositions of Scripture are without an error.** The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, **is not a proof that our ideas are infallible.** **Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation.”**(CW 35.)

“As never before, we should pray not only that laborers may be sent forth into the great harvest field, but that **we may have a clear conception of truth,** so that when the messengers of truth shall come, **we may accept the message and respect the messenger.”**(6T 420.3)

Read the article below and see if you

can learn something..

The question of a successor to Mrs. White naturally became even more acute upon her death in 1915. It was a matter of interest not only to the church, but also to the world. What would her death mean to her writings? Would someone else favored with the prophetic gift follow as a successor? On the day of her funeral at Battle Creek, Michigan, **her son, W. C. White, was interviewed** by a reporter from the Battle Creek Enquirer. We quote from the issue of July 25, 1915, under the bold-type heading: **“Mrs. White Had No Idea of Successor.”**

“William C. White, of St. Helena, son of the late Mrs. Ellen G. White, who for the last 34 years has been the manager of her business affairs, and who for a quarter of a century has been a member of the general

or world conference committee of the Seventh-day Adventists, was interviewed yesterday as to the probable effect of Mrs. White's death upon the denomination with which she was so closely connected. To the question, **‘ Has Mrs. White chosen anyone to be her successor?’** he replied:

“ ‘ No, she has never considered that that was a matter over which she had any control, and has never expressed herself with reference to any individual as a probable candidate for this work.’

“**‘Did she know who her successor would be?’** he was asked.

“‘That is a question that has been asked her many times,’ continued Mr. White, ‘and she always has stated that it is a matter that has never been revealed to her, and that she had no knowledge and no information upon the subject to impart.’

“**‘Does she know another person will be chosen to take up the work she lays**

down?’

“ ‘ That is another question that has been asked her many times, and **she always has said she did not know.** At the same time she expressed full confidence that **God would care for His work, and that there was no need for her or others to be anxious about this matter.**’

“ ‘ **Will the leading men of the denomination select a person to take up the work she has carried?**’ was the next question asked him.

“ ‘ **No. It is their belief that God will choose His messengers, and that it would be presumption for men to undertake to choose the persons through whom the Spirit of Prophecy should be manifested.**’ ”

—The Battle Creek Enquirer, July 25, 1915.
The understanding of W. C. White on this matter was in harmony with that of other of the contemporary workers. J. N. Loughborough was asked if Mrs. White

knew who her successor would be. In reply he referred to an answer given by S. N. Haskell, who had reported a late conversation with Mrs. White in which she told him that it was her conviction that the denomination already had received instruction sufficient to guide them all the way through if they would follow it.

F. M. Wilcox, in an editorial in the Review and Herald shortly after Mrs. White's death, dealt with this question of general interest, which was in the minds of so many, stating: **“ This is a question which only the Lord Himself can answer, and so far as we know He has never given to anyone any intimation of His will in the matter.”**—The Review and Herald, August 19, 1915.

It is clear, then, that **neither Mrs. White nor her contemporaries had any light as to just what the future might hold.** The question was one which was left open. **God might or might not choose to speak again as He had through**

Mrs. White. We are no nearer to an answer to this question today than we were on July 16, 1915.

It is true that since then, as before, several have arisen claiming the prophetic office, but their work has not stood the test. We cannot give credence to just anyone who may present himself, claiming to have had visions or revelations from God. On this point we have been specifically warned and admonished:

“There will be those who will claim to have visions. When God gives you clear evidence that the vision is from Him, you may accept it, but do not accept it on any other evidence, for people are going to be led more and more astray in foreign countries and in America. The Lord wants His people to act like men and women of sense.”—The Review and Herald, May 25, 1905 (Evangelism, 610).. ASM 3.1-ASM 4

This article has been put here only to help you

understand that anyone who tries to teach that Mrs White was or claimed to be the last messenger or prophet to the Church is a liar, for she never made such claims. Any true prophet of God, however, must stand the test.

Warning Against Private Interpretations.

“We have also **a more sure word of prophecy;** whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: **Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”**(2Peter 1:19-21)

Since Bible truths are made clear and simple by the Spirit of prophecy, thereby becoming a

more sure word of prophecy, then anyone who tries to teach or interpret the scriptures in his own way becomes an impostor, practicing the act of “private interpretation” which is clearly condemned by the scriptures. Except for those scriptures which need no interpretation, do not put in your own ideas and opinions. Read the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy to understand the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, especially the prophecies of the Bible. Do so with an humble and teachable spirit, lest you become a false teacher and found wanting at the end of the day.

Trying to explain the scriptures according to your own feelings and what you heard from other uninspired men can only end in disappointment. Furthermore, the very ones who usually become involved in the practice of altering the Scriptures, **are those who talk the loudest about exercising great care not to be enmeshed by false doctrine.** And, to back up

their talk, they very carefully keep themselves aloof from everything new **which does not come through themselves.** Such will never recover from their terrible blindness until they begin to search for “eyesalve” (Inspiration) as they do for gold, **for only new truth can open their eyes, unmask their errors, and woo them to the truth.** Satan, though, well knowing that their sight will quickly recover **if they come with an open heart to the light,** consequently fills them **with prejudice to keep them from making an unbiased personal investigation of unfolding truths.**

