

## *The First Battle of Manassas, July 21, 1861 And As Shown In Vision to Ellen G. White*

### *Eyewitness Account of W. W. Blackford:*

“It was now about four o’clock and the battle raged with unabated fury. The lines of blue were unbroken and their fire as vigorous as ever while they surged against the solid walls of gray, standing immovable in their front. It was on that ridge earlier in the day that Jackson won the name of Stonewall.

“But now the most extraordinary spectacle I have ever witnessed took place. I had been gazing at the numerous well-formed lines as they moved forward to the attack, some fifteen or twenty thousand strong in full view, and for some reason had turned my head in another direction for a moment, when someone exclaimed, pointing to the battlefield, ‘Look! Look!’ I looked, and what a change had taken place in an instant. Where those well-dressed, well-defined lines, with clear spaces between, had been steadily pressing forward, the whole field was a confused swarm of men, like bees, running away as fast as their legs could carry them, with all order and organization abandoned. In a moment more the whole valley was filled with them as far as the eye could reach. They plunged through Bull Run

wherever they came to it regardless of fords or bridges, and there many were drowned. Muskets, cartridge boxes, belts, knapsacks, haversacks, and blankets were thrown away in their mad race, that nothing might impede their flight. In the reckless haste the artillery drove over everyone who did not get out of their way. Ambulance and wagon drivers cut the traces and dashed off on the mules. In crossing Cub Run a shell exploded on a team and blocked the way, and 28 pieces of artillery fell into our hands.

“By stepping or jumping from one thing to another of what had been thrown away in the stampede, I could have gone long distances without ever letting my foot touch the ground, and this over a belt forty or fifty yards wide on each side of the road. Numbers of gay members of Congress had come out from Washington to witness the battle from the adjacent hills, provided with baskets of champagne and lunches. So there was a regular chariot race when the rout began, with the chariots well in the lead, as was most graphically described by the prisoners I captured and by citizens afterwards. We found, occasionally, along the road, parasols and dainty shawls lost in their flight by the frail,

fair ones who had seats in most of the carriages of this excursion. Some of their troops north of Bull Run did not participate in the panic, and some did not throw away their arms, but the greater part must have done so, from the quantities we found.

“Stuart was uncertain whether this was a general or a partial rout, at the moment, and told me to go as fast as I could to either General Johnston or General Beauregard, report what had happened and ask if he must pursue. He, like everyone else at that period of the war, did not feel the confidence in himself that we did a little later. I gave Comet the rein and struck a beeline to where he said I would probably find the generals, taking fences, ditches, and worse than all, some fearful gullies, as they came.

“I found General Beauregard, who, of course, knew what had happened before I got there, for by that time all musketry firing had ceased, though the batteries were still pounding away at long-range at the disappearing fugitives.”—W. W. Blackford, *War Years With Jeb Stuart*. New York: Scribner and Sons, 1946, pp. 32-35. (W. W. Blackford was a lieutenant colonel, C.S.A.)

*View Given to Ellen G. White:*

“God is punishing this nation for the high crime of slavery. He has the destiny of the nation in His hands. He will punish the South for the sin of slavery, and the North for so long

suffering its overreaching and overbearing influence.

“At the conference at Roosevelt, New York, August 3, 1861, when the brethren and sisters were assembled on the day set apart for humiliation, fasting, and prayer, the Spirit of the Lord rested upon us, and I was taken off in vision and shown the sin of slavery, which has so long been a curse to this nation. . . .

“The North and the South were presented before me. The North has been deceived in regard to the South. They are better prepared for war than has been represented. Most of their men are well skilled in the use of arms, some of them from experience in battle, others from habitual sporting. They have the advantage of the North in this respect, but have not, as a general thing, the valor and the power of endurance that Northern men have.

“I had a view of the disastrous battle at Manassas, Virginia. It was a most exciting, distressing scene. The Southern army had everything in their favor and were prepared for a dreadful contest. The Northern army was moving on with triumph, not doubting but that they would be victorious. Many were reckless and marched forward boastfully, as though victory were already theirs. As they neared the battlefield, many were almost fainting through weariness and want of refreshment. They did not expect so fierce an encounter. They rushed into battle and fought

bravely, desperately. The dead and dying were on every side. Both the North and the South suffered severely. The Southern men felt the battle, and in a little while would have been driven back still further. The Northern men were rushing on, although their destruction was very great. Just then an angel descended and waved his hand backward. Instantly there was confusion in the ranks. It appeared to the Northern men that their troops were retreating, when it was not so in reality, and a precipitate retreat commenced. This seemed wonderful to me.

“Then it was explained that God had this nation in His own hand, and would not suffer victories to be gained faster than He ordained, and would permit no more losses to the Northern men than in His wisdom

He saw fit, to punish them for their sins. And had the Northern army at this time pushed the battle still further in their fainting, exhausted condition, the far greater struggle and destruction which awaited them would have caused great triumph in the South. God would not permit this, and sent an angel to interfere. The sudden falling back of the Northern troops is a mystery to all. They know not that God’s hand was in the matter.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 264, 266, 267.

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