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**By evidences that have stood the test of time, God confirmed the presence of the prophetic gift in the remnant church, in the person of Ellen G. White.**

[Elder White, as a guest instructor at Andrews University, in his course Prophetic Guidance devotes some time to the testing of the claims of prophets, true and false, and in so doing frequently refers to experiences in our own history. At our request he has drawn this material together for REVIEW readers. This will appear in a series of four articles.—Editor.]

**S**EVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS believe in spiritual gifts. They believe in the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in the church. They believe that the church today may expect the Spirit to manifest Himself even as in apostolic times and in the days of ancient Israel.

Spiritual gifts are of many varieties. The apostle Paul lists some of them in 1 Corinthians 12:28: "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

One of the spiritual gifts is the gift of prophecy. From ancient times, prophets have been an important medium of communication between God and man (Heb. 1:1).

*Prophets, True and False—1*

## A People Sensitive to God's Special Leading

By ARTHUR L. WHITE

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These dedicated instruments "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21).

Since our beginning days, we as Seventh-day Adventists have been particularly sensitive to God's special leadings. We have believed that God may speak through selected

messengers today. Indeed, we believe there is convincing evidence that He has done so in these days through Ellen G. White, "by the testimonies of His Spirit" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 661).

George I. Butler, president of the General Conference, once wrote:

We firmly believe the visions of Mrs. White are a genuine manifestation of spiritual gifts. . . . When we have heeded them, we have prospered; when we have slighted them, we have suffered a great loss. —*Review and Herald Supplement*, Aug. 14, 1883, pp. 11, 12.

As the recurring November birthdays added years to Ellen White's life and it became clear that she would probably rest in the grave before the Lord should come, our people wondered—What of the future? There had not been a time when Seventh-day Adventists had not had a prophet in their midst. Would God lay His Spirit on another as He had on Ellen White? Or would the church be left without a living prophet in its midst? When asked, she would at times

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classified as Cambrian. At this site I have collected specimens several times, and have been impressed each time with the vast numbers and the good state of preservation. Frequently a thin film of carbonaceous material is seen covering the impression of the animal on a freshly exposed slab.

Many other sea animals have been found in Burgess Shale. The fine grain of the shale is ideal for preserving the details. Even soft bodies and internal organs have left their impressions. Perhaps most notable is the delicate impression of a jellyfish. Obviously, animals such as this would require sudden covering to prevent disintegration. Sediments on the floors of modern oceans are thoroughly reworked by burrowing worms, shells, et cetera. An impression on the sea bottom would be completely obliterated long before sedimentation under present conditions could cover it. Burial must have been quick, and it must have killed all organisms that would stir up the mud and obliterate impressions.

#### **Delicate Preservation**

The delicate points and ribs of sea shells, tiny bones of fish, small appendages of crustaceans, textured details of echinoderms, et cetera, are so frequently seen among fossils that one must conclude that there was no opportunity for abrasion by sand and there was no time for decay and disintegration. Francis gives this description of the remarkable Geiseltal lignite deposits in Germany: "Here also is a complete mixture of plants, insects, and animals from all the climatic zones of the earth that are capable of supporting life. In some cases leaves have been deposited and preserved in a fresh condition, the chlorophyll being still green, so that the 'green layer' is used as a marker during excavations. Among the insects present are beautifully colored tropical beetles, with soft parts of the body, including the contents of the intestines, preserved intact. Normally such materials decay or change in color within a few hours of death, so that preservation by inclusion in an aseptic medium must have been sudden and complete."<sup>4</sup>

The veins of the leaves, butterfly wings, caterpillars, even the hairs and bristles on the caterpillars, are all perfectly preserved. In certain areas of these deposits, bones and coprolites, in huge collections, give the impression of a burial ground.

The beautiful and detailed preservation of fossils is becoming more apparent as techniques are perfected. Wetzel describes microfossils in Cre-

taceous flints.<sup>5</sup> A number of kinds of one-celled organisms are represented, including forms without hard body coverings. One specimen illustrated in Wetzel's paper still shows the hair-like flagellum. It is a member of the class Mastigophora (Flagellata), genus *Ophiobolus*, and is only about 30 microns long. The necessity for speedy preservation of such a specimen is obvious. Other delicate fossil protozoan specimens in astonishing detail are described.

According to Newell, G. Arthur Cooper of the U.S. National Museum has been able to obtain, by working with dilute acids, great numbers of delicately preserved fossils from the Gläs Mountains of Texas: "From 30 tons of Permian limestone . . . he [Cooper] has extracted three million individual invertebrate fossils, almost all of which are exquisitely preserved. . . . A single control block of limestone weighing one hundred and eighty-six pounds yielded ten thousand excellent specimens of invertebrates, including Foraminifera, brachiopods, bryozoans, gastropods, and pelecypods."<sup>6</sup>

A good illustration of the rapid burial necessary to preserve delicate structure is provided by research done recently by Zangerl and Richardson.<sup>7</sup> In attempting to evaluate the rate of burial of fish and other organisms now present as fossils in the Pennsylvanian black shales of Indiana, they placed dead fish in wire cages and dropped them into the black muds at the bottom of several Louisiana lagoons or bayous. These black muds are thought to resemble the sediments from which the dark shales were derived. To the

great surprise of the investigators, fish weighing from one-half to three-fourths pound were found to have all the soft parts reduced and all the bones completely unattached in six and one-half days! Decay to the state of complete dismemberment apparently occurs at great speed; perhaps in less time than indicated above, since none were checked before six and one-half days. Delicate fossil fish showing every minute ray and bone in position are common and must represent a burial within hours of death, if this experiment is a valid indication.

The most reasonable explanation for the features of sediments and fossils listed in this article is one based on catastrophism. The Genesis flood is the most obvious cause of catastrophe. Believers in a literal universal flood as recorded in Genesis may support their beliefs with information certainly no less scientific than that used by most geologists to uphold the theory of uniformity. Next week the great coal deposits of the world will be examined for evidences of a flooding of the world by water.

*(Concluded next week)*

#### **REFERENCES**

- <sup>1</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 99.
- <sup>2</sup> *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 77.
- <sup>3</sup> H. Miller, *The Old Red Sandstone*, 1860, p. 221.
- <sup>4</sup> Wilfrid Francis, *Coal, Its Formation and Composition*, 2d ed., 1961, p. 18.
- <sup>5</sup> Otto Wetzel, "Résumé of Microfossils From Upper Cretaceous Flints and Chalks of Europe," *Journal of Paleontology*, 27:800-804.
- <sup>6</sup> N. D. Newell, "The Nature of the Fossil Record," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 103 (2):264-285.
- <sup>7</sup> Rainer Zangerl and Eugene S. Richardson, Jr., "The Paleocological History of Two Pennsylvanian Black Shales," *Fieldiana: Geology Memoirs*, vol. 4, p. 169.

## **SENSITIVE TO GOD'S LEADING**

*(Continued from page 1)*

pick up her Bible and some of her books and declare, "Here is light which will take the people through to the kingdom." To one of our workers in 1907 she wrote:

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. My writings are kept on file in the office, and even though I should not live, these words that have been given to me by the Lord will still have life and will speak to the people.—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 55.

But what the future held in store with respect to a prophet in our midst was not revealed to Mrs. White.

When in 1905 a Seventh-day Adventist sister in an overseas field laid claim to having had visions that led

her to give directions to various individuals, Ellen White wrote:

The word given me by the Lord during the past night is that God does not direct His people to look to this sister for counsel. If we should encourage this sister in the work she thinks she is called to do and in the message she bears, much confusion would be caused. . . .

The light given me regarding this case is that should this sister be encouraged to think that she has been given messages for others, the result would be disastrous, and the sister would be in danger of losing her own soul.

My message to this sister is, Walk humbly with God, and look to Him for yourself. God has not given you the work of pointing out the duty of others; but you can be a helper if you are a sincere Christian, seeking to encourage others, and not claiming supernatural revelations.—*Ibid.*, book 2, pp. 97, 98.

Doubtless Mrs. White's mind went

back a decade to the experience of Anna Phillips, an unmarried woman in our midst at Battle Creek at a time when Ellen White was in Australia. Anna Phillips claimed that visions were given to her and that she had the gift of prophecy. "Testimonies" were written to various church members in Battle Creek, some of these touching on the personal experience of husbands and wives. There was an earnest call for purity of life, with teachings that went beyond the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Some messages were directed to the leaders of the church. Elder A. T. Jones fully accepted her claims and assumed the responsibility of presenting her messages to the church.

In these messages she related what she "saw," often using the term as she described the views that passed before her. In some instances she told of how the "angel caused her to look," and she described what she saw.

Her first message called attention to the shortness of time and the need of a thorough preparation for the coming of Jesus. A large work was to be done quickly.

In warning testimonies sent by Ellen G. White to Elder Jones and others in Battle Creek—one of which was so providentially timed that it carried convincing evidences—the true nature of the work of Anna Phillips was unmasked. The counsel of Ellen White helped Elder Jones to see his mistake and led Anna Phillips to examine her experience. She repudiated the "visions," brought her life into harmony with the teachings of God's Word and the Spirit of Prophecy counsels, and became a trusted, fruitful Bible instructor.

Much of the counsel given by Ellen White in this case may be read in *Selected Messages*, book 2, pages 85-95.

Certain facts stand out as beacons to alert us to the genuineness of the experience of others who may claim to have visions:

### **Much in Harmony With the Message but Just a Little Error**

I know that we are living very near the close of this earth's history; startling events are preparing for development. I am fully in harmony with you in your work when you present the Bible, and the Bible alone, as the foundation of our faith. Satan is an artful foe, and he will work where he is by many least expected.

Do not belittle the work by mingling with it productions that you have no positive evidence are from the Lord of life and glory. . . . Do you not think I know something about these matters? All along our pathway to the heavenly Canaan we see many souls that have made shipwreck of faith, and in their false movements have led others astray through the supposition that they were led of God in special revelations. I have had to write many, many pages to correct these errors.

I have been burdened and oppressed night

after night, unable to sleep because of the agony of my soul for God's heritage. His people, who are in danger of being misled. *Many things in these visions and dreams seem to be all straight, a repetition of that which has been in the field for many years; but soon they introduce a jot here, a tittle of error there, just a little seed which takes root and flourishes, and many are defiled therewith.*

Oh, I wish that we had far greater wisdom in all things than we now have! One thing every worker in the vineyard of the Lord must learn, that is, to practice the prayer of Christ, to move as one in Christ Jesus. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one, as He is one with the Father. The enemy is at work, to divide, to scatter. Now as never before he will make determined efforts to scatter our forces.—*Ibid.*, pp. 85-87. (Italics supplied.)

### **The "Mingling of the Sublime and the Ridiculous"**

I have received from God the warning which I now send to you. Anna Phillips should not have been given the encouragement she has had; it has been a great injury to her—fastened her in a deception. I am sorry that any of our brethren and sisters are ready to take up with these supposed revelations, and imagine they see in them *the divine credentials*. These things are not of the right character to accomplish the work essential for this time. *Childish figures and illustrations are employed in describing sacred, heavenly things, and there is a mingling of the sublime and the ridiculous*. While the work has an appearance of great sanctity, it is calculated to ensnare and mislead souls.

Various things will appear claiming to be revelations from God, but *which flow from the imagination of a conceited and deceived mind*. We had to meet these things in our early experience. There were youth and children as well as those of mature age who claimed to be led and taught of God, having a special message to declare. They were springing up on every side, having the truth on some points, and error upon other points. For years the message from God came to me, "Believe them not, for they lead into false paths. God hath not sent them."—*Ibid.*, pp. 89, 90. (Italics supplied.)

### **Teachings Which Lead to Extremes and Wrong Actions**

As the report has been quite widely circulated that Sister White has endorsed what has been written and circulated as revelations from God to Miss Anna Phillips, I feel that it is my duty to speak. I have not endorsed these productions. Warnings have been given to me in reference to them, that they will most certainly mislead. Woven in them will be statements that will lead to extremes, and to wrong actions on the part of those who accept them. It would be well for our brethren and sisters to move more cautiously, in accordance with the light given them. They should test these so-called visions before accepting them, and presenting them in connection with the light God has given me.—*Ibid.*, p. 90.

One significant point made by Ellen White was that the fact that nothing objectionable had been discovered in the teachings of Anna Phillips did not constitute a sound basis for accepting them:

*The great wonder to me is that our brethren should accept these writings because they could see nothing objectionable in them. Why did they not consider what there is in them that is of a character to be endorsed and sent*

forth with the power of influence which gives them their force? . . .

You seem to think I should be able to point out just where the particularly objectionable sentiments lie. There is nothing so very apparent in that which has been written; *you have been able to discover nothing objectionable; but this is no reason for using these writings as you have done*. Your course in this matter is decidedly objectionable. Is it necessary that you should discern at once something that would produce harm to the people of God, to make you cautious? If nothing of this kind appears, is this a sufficient reason for you to set your endorsement to these writings? . . .

Do not spread abroad writings of this character without more consideration and deep insight as to the after consequences of your course of action. . . .

Fanaticism will appear in the very midst of us. Deceptions will come, and of such a character that if it were possible they would mislead the very elect.—*Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95. (Italics supplied.)

### **Others Claiming Special Illumination**

Again and again in the later years of her life, Ellen White recounted the many times the great adversary had attempted to mislead the Seventh-day Adventist Church through spurious visions and fanatical excitement. Some of these statements will be found in *Selected Messages*, book 2, pages 41-100.

When in 1908 an Adventist couple, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Makin, called on Mrs. White to solicit her support in their unusual experiences, she carefully listened. "They seemed to be honesthearted people," she commented, but "as this brother and his wife outlined their experiences, which they claim have come to them as the result of receiving the Holy Ghost with apostolic power, it seemed to be a facsimile of that which we were called to meet and correct in our early experience."—*Ibid.*, pp. 41, 42.

When Brother Makin volunteered the possibility of a demonstration which might enable Ellen White to determine the genuineness of their experiences she told them that to this she could not consent "because I have been instructed that when one offers to exhibit these peculiar manifestations, this is a decided evidence that it is not the work of God."

The various experiences through which the messenger of the Lord passed relating to claims to special enlightenment through vision or the special leading of the Spirit of God, and the many counsels given in meeting these situations are of very practical value to the church today. Ellen G. White in 1905 sounded this warning:

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.—*Ibid.*, p. 72.

(Continued next week)