

ELLEN G. WHITE ESTATE



THE SPIRIT  
OF PROPHECY  
IN THE ADVENT  
MOVEMENT

WILLIAM A. SPICER



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# **The Spirit of Prophecy in the Advent Movement**

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**Ellen G. White**

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**A Gift That Builds Up**

“For the edifying of the body of Christ.” [Ephesians 4:12](#).

By William A. Spicer

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## Chapter 1—Spiritual Gifts to the Church

Any one who has lived for a series of years with this advent movement—as we call the work that Seventh-day Adventists are doing in all the world today—might set down many experiences in which we have continuously seen the abounding tokens of God’s special care and guidance through the gift of the Spirit of prophecy in the church.

This small book will afford space for only the merest outline of facts and experiences in our history, serving to picture the wondrously helpful and constructive side of the working of this special gift in the everyday development and progress of our cause.

For that matter, other spiritual gifts bestowed upon the New Testament church have been in evidence all along in this closing gospel work. Along with the special message of the prophecy (of [Revelation 14:6-14](#)), the Lord gave to the church of the prophecy the gifts to equip it for carrying the gospel message of the judgment hour to all nations.

### All The Gifts Build Up

Of these gifts for service, left by Christ for His church, the apostle Paul wrote:

“When He ascended up on high, He ...gave gifts unto men.... 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.” [Ephesians 4:8-12](#).

To “edify” is to “build up,” and so the Revised Version renders it: “Unto the building up of the body of Christ,” the church. The story of the advent movement bears witness to the presence of these gifts building solidly on the gospel foundation. True men of God, called from all walks of life in those days of 1844 and onward, had

[8] evidently these gifts represented among them. In no other way can

we account for the wisehearted, sure way in which they built in the pioneering days. Those years were times of stress and confusion in the religious world, and all manner of curious and eccentric and often fanatical cults were springing up. By the gifts bestowed,—of apostleship and teaching of the Spirit of prophecy,—the early workers laid down a system of truth, drawn from the word of Holy Writ, that we stand for today in all the world. It is our defense and stay.

### A Sound Platform

Let an outside observer tell it. Some years ago the president of the International Association of Christian Workers wrote a book on erroneous cults and isms of the day. Some one asked him why he had not included Seventh-day Adventists in the survey. He replied:

“There are no fundamental grounds of disagreement between the organized church of Jesus Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist... On all the cardinal doctrines of the Bible—the miraculous conception, the virgin birth, the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, the deity of Christ, the atonement of Christ, the second coming, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the infallible Bible—the Seventh-day Adventist rings true as steel.”—*In the Cult Kingdom*, Dr. J. E. Brown, pp. 5, 6.

[9]

Our pioneers, from earliest times, built on the foundation of Christ and Holy Scripture a structure of truth that meets the universal spiritual needs of all mankind, and stands foursquare against all the winds of error that can ever blow.

And these gifts led our early builders to lay plans of organization for service that stand in principle to this day, needing only adaptation and expansion to meet a growth which the pioneers never conceived of in those first years. The Spirit, through whom came these gifts to the church, surely equipped those early workmen.

### Others Saw It

Observers looking on from without, even in the beginnings of our development, felt that there was something remarkable about the work and efficiency of this small people.

For instance, in the year 1884, one of our workers, traveling by train in a Western State, fell into conversation with a bishop of one of the great churches, and with the editor of a newspaper, with whom the bishop was traveling. The bishop, at the close of the interview, said to his editor friend:

“The Seventh-day Adventists are the greatest marvel of development of the last forty years. With all the opposition imaginable, with the most unpopular doctrines, in spite of all difficulties, this people have grown out of nothing and poverty to be one of the most successful in making themselves felt all over the earth; and their cause is onward in spite of everything.”—[The Review and Herald, December 9, 1884.](#)

[10] Yet in 1884 our work had only begun to look toward the wide world. Beyond North America and Europe we then had no work. But this discerning administrator of religious activities saw that the movement had within it the elements of vigorous, successful growth. Years later, I recall, two officials of another church called at our General Conference office in Washington to get information and material for the study of our plan of work and organization, which, they felt, had given this small people an efficiency in service beyond the ordinary.

We know well enough that the power and efficiency are not in any plan that can be set down on paper. The results come from preaching the message of “the everlasting gospel” which the prophet John, in the Revelation, saw carried to all nations as the hour of God’s judgment came. That gospel is still “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” But along with the laying hold of the great system of Bible truth, our people from earliest times recognized the importance of the ministry of the spiritual gifts which Christ left with His church. Among these was the gift of prophecy, “the Spirit of prophecy,” as the Revelation names it in connection with the foretelling of last-day developments in the gospel work.

### **A Notable Gift**

From the days of 1844, when this definite advent movement had its rise, this gift of the Spirit of prophecy appeared. Observers outside the movement have often borne tribute to the strong upbuilding

character of this special gift in the work of Seventh-day Adventists. But only those who have lived with the ministry of this gift, and observed its working from within, can ever know how strong and ever fresh and constant and sure that gift of the Spirit of prophecy has been in the advent movement, from the times of 1844 until today. And so it must ever be; for it is a spiritual gift, the ministry of which continues. In its messages of inspiration and instruction and counsel, covering in manifold detail every phase of this closing gospel movement, this gift is a factor that still works powerfully in building up the cause of God in all the four quarters of the earth.

## Chapter 2—The Rise of the Advent Movement

On the Isle of Patmos the prophet John was shown in vision the scenes of the latter days. What he saw, he wrote on the Scripture page. We read it today. And the pen of Inspiration has drawn the picture so clearly that we seem to see the events passing before our eyes, as long ago they passed before the prophet's vision.

### A View Of The Final Harvest

The series of scenes portrayed in [Revelation 14](#) extended to the very end. The prophet beheld the coming of Christ to reap the final harvest: "I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." [Revelation 14:14-16](#).

It is the end, for Christ said in the parable of the wheat and the tares, "The harvest is the end of the world."

### A Special Gospel Movement

But just before the second coming of the Lord and the final harvest, the prophet saw a special gospel movement rise, bearing a message to all the world. In these prophecies we are dealing with symbols; and here, under the figure of angels preaching, must be represented a movement carried on by men; for not unto angels, but unto men has God committed the ministry of reconciliation. The prophet says of this movement of all-the-world evangelism preceding the coming of Christ:

[12] "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." [Revelation 14:6](#).



As he listened in the vision, he heard the burden of the message that was preached by this world-wide missionary movement. He heard people everywhere making to men a proclamation, with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.” [Verse 7](#).

### **A Judgment Work Precedes Christ’s Coming**

We know that there must be a work of judgment in heaven above before Christ comes. When He comes, the “dead in Christ shall rise” from the graves at His call. Only the righteous dead have part in this resurrection, which takes place instantly, as the Lord appears, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” [1 Corinthians 15:52](#).

There is no time there for a judgment work to decide who are righteous. But this “first resurrection” unto eternal life comes only to those who have been adjudged worthy, as described by the Saviour: “They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead.” [Luke 20:35](#).

There is, then, an accounting, a work of judgment, in heaven before Christ comes, determining who are righteous and worthy of a part in “the first resurrection.” This judgment review must begin with the dead of all past ages. It is “the time of the dead, that they should be judged.” [Revelation 11:18](#). The prophet John saw the coming of this judgment hour in heaven above, as the most holy place of the temple in heaven was opened. [Revelation 11:19](#).

Necessarily, at its close, this judgment must come to the living, accounting those righteous whom the Lord shall change to immortality along with those who are raised from their graves. “The dead in Christ shall rise first,” says the scripture; “then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” [1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17](#).

The scripture order of final events, taking place in heaven before Christ appears, shows that there is to be a judgment review fixing eternally the fate of men for life or for death. When this judgment hour opens in heaven, according to the vision of John on Patmos,

there must come on earth a world-wide movement giving to all nations the message, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.”

### **A People Keeping The Commandments Of God**

In the vision of [Revelation 14](#), the prophet saw the people who were to preach this message, and the kind of people who would be brought forth in all nations as the fruitage of the closing gospel work. The angel thus described them: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” [Revelation 14:12](#).

The pictured scenes of the prophecy are as clear as the noonday sun. In the last days, just before the coming of Christ in glory, a judgment work in heaven above was to open. And when that hour should open in the heavenly courts, a people keeping the commandments of God were to rise on earth, and go to every nation and people with the message, “The hour of His judgment is come.”

With this awakening cry of a judgment hour already come, goes the declaration of a spiritual falling away, and the warning against following the way of ecclesiastical tradition that makes void the law of God, (See [Revelation 14:7-11](#).)

[14] It was essential that the proclamation of the judgment hour should be made by a people keeping the commandments of God. The law of God is the standard of the judgment. No one could call men to prepare for the judgment without at the same time lifting up the standard of God’s holy law. As the Bible says: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” [Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14](#).

### **A Call To Reformation**

So the message of the judgment hour, necessarily, must be given by a people who stress the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. The greater significance is given to this matter of loyalty to the law of God if we recall that the prophecy of Daniel forewarned of the falling away from the faith that was to come in the later times of

the Roman Empire. An ecclesiastical power was to arise, of whom the prophecy said that he would “think to change times and laws.” [Daniel 7:25](#). That power arose, growing into the historic Papacy. It was the great “falling away,” of which the apostle Paul warned the church. [2 Thessalonians 2:3](#). And all Christendom was led into setting aside the commandments of God in respect to holy time. The first day of the week, Sunday, was substituted for God’s holy Sabbath, the seventh day of the fourth commandment. The Catholic Church cites this change today as a sign of its authority. No wonder the last gospel message calls men to turn from the transgression of God’s law, as they must soon meet that holy law in the judgment. And the call now is for men to take their stand on the New Testament platform of “the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

The crisis of the ages is at hand. It is no ordinary time, it is no common message that God sends into all the world. The vision to John on Patmos showed the opening of the judgment work in heaven, and the coming of the people keeping God’s commandments on earth, hastening to all nations and tongues with the message that we do well to repeat again and again, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come!”

That cry is sounding over land and sea today! For—mark the fact—when the hour of the prophecy came in heaven above, the people of the prophecy appeared on earth below,—a people keeping the commandments of God. And they are spreading to all nations, preaching everywhere the message of a judgment hour come, and bringing forth a people in all lands who follow Christ’s footsteps in the way of obedience to all the commandments of the holy law of God.

[15]

### **Daniel’s Prophecy Of The Judgment**

The time of the opening of the judgment hour was fixed by the prophecies of Daniel. In the seventh chapter the prophet beheld in vision the opening of that solemn court. He saw the Father’s living throne move into the place of judgment.

It was the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary; for in the earthly, typical sanctuary, the most holy place, the second apartment of the temple, was the scene of the judgment work in the yearly

round of service for Israel. The closing phase of service for sin, on the last day of the yearly ritual, was the cleansing of the sanctuary, the Day of Atonement. It was the day of judgment in the camp. For whosoever was not found finally right with God on that last day, was “cut off” from having a part with God’s children. [Leviticus 23:29](#). The modern Hebrew still sees a judgment hour in the solemn day. One of their poets says of this Day of Atonement:

“The great white fast! the day that solemnly  
Its clarion call sent over land and sea, ...  
It is the judgment day of all the year!”

And the priestly service on earth, we are told, was a type, a shadow, of the ministry of our High Priest in the true sanctuary in heaven.

The closing ministry of Jesus for sin, therefore, must be the work of judgment in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, corresponding to the annual Day of Atonement, the cleansing of the sanctuary, at the close of the earthly ministry of the Levitical order. This is the scene that Daniel saw in vision. The Father took the throne of judgment. Thousands of thousands of angels ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. And the prophet Daniel wrote, “The judgment was set, and the books were opened.”

[16] Then, escorted by clouds of angels, the prophet saw “one like the Son of man” coming in before the judgment seat—Jesus, our great High Priest, standing for us in the judgment hour. Thank God, in that tribunal in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, there stands one able to answer for us. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” [1 John 2:1, 2](#).

We are to tell the whole world that this solemn hour of God’s judgment is come. But, thank God, we can tell every son and daughter of Adam’s race that Jesus died for “the whole world.” The ransom price has been paid for all. “Whosoever will” may come. And Jesus begs us to come. “Come unto Me,” He has cried through

all the ages. And still that is the invitation to every creature as the last service for sin continues in the sanctuary.

### **The Time Fixed**

When did that judgment hour open? The seventh chapter of Daniel shows it opening in heaven while still the powers and peoples of earth are doing the last things. [Daniel 7:9-13](#). But the next chapter of Daniel fixes the time. The cleansing of the sanctuary, this judgment work in the heavenly temple, was to come at the end of the long prophetic period of 2300 years, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days [prophetic days, literally years]; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” [Daniel 8:14](#). Or, as in the phrase of the seventh chapter, Then shall the judgment sit, and the books be opened.

The angel’s explanation of this vision of the time, shows that the period was to begin with the “going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.” [Daniel 9:25](#). That was in the year 457 B.C. ([Ezra 7:7, 8, 13-25](#).) The long period ran on from the midst of that year 457 B.C. through the centuries, the first portion touching the events of the first advent of Christ, and the full period running on to the fateful last year of the 2300, ending in our era, 1844.

In the year 1844, therefore, the last phase of Christ’s priestly ministry opened in the heavenly sanctuary, “The judgment was set, and the books were opened.” Daniel’s vision described the scene of heaven, and the vision of John on Patmos told what would take place on earth as the judgment work began in heaven. The people keeping the commandments of God would come, and they were seen going to all the world preaching, “The hour of His judgment is come.”

[17]

### **Like Clockwork**

And when the hour of the prophecy struck, in 1844, the people of the prophecy came. In 1844 a little group of believers in Christ’s soon coming—Adventists they were—saw the truth of the unchanged Sabbath of the Lord their God, the sacred seventh day of the fourth commandment. They began fully to “keep the commandments of God.” Soon others joined them. The truth about the

judgment hour in the heavenly sanctuary was ere long made plain as they studied with other believers. It was clear that a message of preparation for the judgment hour and the coming of Christ was to be preached to men,—the threefold message of [Revelation 14:6-12](#).

Thus was seen arising the definite advent movement of the prophecy as the hour of God's judgment came in 1844. It has developed the Seventh-day Adventist people, who are preaching the message of the judgment hour in all the world.

### To All Nations

“To every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,—these are the marching orders of the prophecy. Swiftly has the movement followed the course marked out. Let a special writer in the Washington *Post* visualize the wide-spreading work in a single paragraph:

[18] “Washington has two institutions that cover, with their enterprises, the entire world to its remotest sections. Everybody knows about the Department of State and its affairs with every nation. Comparatively few people, however, realize that Washington has another institution [the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventists] that is just as international. In fact, this institution does not confine its activities to the ‘beaten paths,’ but has representatives in the little specks of islands that dot the seven seas.”—*August 6, 1933*.

This writer in the Washington *Post* speaks of the languages used by Seventh-day Adventists in their work, and adds: “The Department of State has no use for such an array of languages.” It is of no use to state the number of tongues in a book. The facts belong in annual statistical reports. The number in recent years has been increasing by one new language every twelve days. The last list I saw counted 578 languages. To every “tongue” was the message to be carried. One need not count every dialect, as many peoples understand related tongues. It has been estimated, roughly, that the tongues already in use would reach about ninety per cent of the peoples of earth; and away beyond the written and spoken word, we know, the Spirit is preparing hearts to heed the full gospel message. (See [Joel 2:28-32](#).)

In 1844 the judgment hour began in heaven. In 1844 the advent movement of the prophecy began to rise on earth. A people keeping the commandments of God are hastening into all the world with the

last message of the everlasting gospel—in the terms of the vision of [Revelation 14](#). And that gospel is still “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” On every shore it brings forth a people of whom it may be said, in the words of the angel: “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

What the prophet John saw in vision, on the Isle of Patmos, we see fulfilling before our eyes today in all the world.



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## **Chapter 3—Two Distinguishing Features of the Advent Movement**

The great distinguishing feature of the church of the advent movement, according to the Scripture, was that of loyalty to the law of God. “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” [Revelation 14:12](#).

Twice over, this feature is inscribed on the record of the Revelation. At the end of the great controversy the Lord calls forth a people to lift up again the standard of His holy law, which the great falling away had “thought” to change. [Daniel 7:25](#).

### **Satan’s Warfare Against The Movement**

The vision on Patmos further pictures the wrath of Satan against this movement to call men and women back to loyalty to God’s commandments. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation, the church through all the ages is symbolized by the woman clothed with the sun, against whom Satan has fought, first through pagan Rome in the first centuries, then through papal Rome during all the long prophetic period of the 1260 years, reaching to “the time of the end.” And now, as the last, or “remnant,” church bears the special closing message of the gospel, the enemy of truth is moved to special opposition: “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](#).

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Here is another distinguishing feature. The remnant church, the people of the advent movement, were to keep the commandments, as did the New Testament church, and they were to have the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, one of those gifts bestowed upon the New Testament church. For the angel specifically defines this term, “the testimony of Jesus,” as used in the prophecy, “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” [Revelation 19:10](#).



## **The Spirit Of Prophecy**

The Spirit of prophecy is the gift by which the prophets spoke in old time. “The prophets,” says Peter, “inquired and searched diligently” to know “what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” [1 Peter 1:10, 11](#).

The Spirit of Christ “testified” through the prophets. It was the “testimony of Jesus” through the prophets to the church of old. It is the “Spirit of prophecy” which Christ gave as a gift to the New Testament church—“some, apostles; and some, prophets.” And here it is set forth in the vision of [Revelation 12](#) as a gift restored to the remnant church. The advent movement was to be brought out, organized, and led of God into a special world-wide work.

### **“As In The Ancient Days”**

When God led His church forth anciently in that special movement from Egypt to Canaan, He placed the gift of the Spirit of prophecy in the movement. It was one agency through which the movement was organized, instructed, and guided in the way. “By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.” [Hosea 12:13](#).

It has ever been God’s way. But here we may note that this very movement of old is set forth as a type of the final gospel movement: “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [“types,” margin]; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” [1 Corinthians 10:11](#).

In that first movement the Lord put the gift of the Spirit of prophecy in His “church in the wilderness.” In the fullness of prophetic time the advent movement came. The Lord has now “set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people ...from the four corners of the earth.” [Isaiah 11:11, 12](#). And as this final movement should rise, the Lord again was to give to His church the gift of the Spirit of prophecy.

### **The Meaning Of The Term Defined**

Opponents of any idea of the reappearance of that gift have urged that the word “prophecy” sometimes meant a mere bearing witness, as of testifying for Christ before men. But there is no place here for that interpretation. The prophecy is speaking here of two distinguishing marks of the last church. It “keeps” something, and it “has” or possesses something. It keeps “the commandments of God,” and it has “the testimony of Jesus.” The latter is not something the church does, in addition to keeping the commandments, it is something it “has” in its possession. It was to have in it the gift of the Spirit of prophecy. It is a possession to have and to hold. When John was about to fall at the feet of the angel, in his visions, to show reverence, the angel restrained him, saying, “See thou do it not. I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.” [Revelation 19:10](#), R.V.

Again, a second time, the angel defined the term, as though to meet the attacks which were to be made upon this gift in the remnant church of the prophecy. Note the repetition of the caution restraining John’s impulse to do the angel reverence: “See thou do it not; I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus.” [Revelation 19:10](#), R.V. “See thou do it not: I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets.” [Revelation 22:9](#), R.V. “The testimony of Jesus,” as the term is used specifically here, “is the Spirit of prophecy,” and this is the Spirit that moved in John’s brethren, “the prophets.”

The picture of the whole prophecy is clear. In the last days, as the closing judgment work began in heaven above, a special advent movement was to come on earth, through which the great threefold message of [Revelation 14](#) was to be borne to every nation, and tongue, and people.

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### **The Two Distinguishing Features Go Together**

Two special features, we have seen, were to distinguish this “remnant” church of the movement. Like the New Testament church, they were to “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of

Jesus,” and also, like the New Testament church, they were to have among them “the Spirit of prophecy.”

It is fitting that to the church to whom is committed anew the work of lifting up the downtrodden law of God, there should also come the restoration of the prophetic gift. The holy law and the gift of prophecy are associated in the Scriptures: “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” [Proverbs 29:18](#). “The law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord.” [Lamentations 2:9](#).

In the great “falling away” after the apostolic days, the law of God and the truth of God were trampled underfoot. With the restoration of the full message of the commandments of God the prophecy associates the restoration of the prophetic vision.

### **As The Pioneers Stated It**

The pioneers of the advent movement well set forth this restoration of the gift in the introduction to the second part of “Early Writings,” one of the earliest volumes of the advent movement:

“The gift of prophecy was manifested in the church during the Jewish dispensation. If it disappeared for a few centuries, on account of the corrupt state of the church toward the close of that dispensation, it reappeared at its close to usher in the Messiah. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, ‘was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied.’ Simeon, a just and devout man who was ‘waiting for the consolation of Israel,’ came by the Spirit into the temple, and prophesied of Jesus as ‘a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel;’ and Anna, a prophetess, ‘spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.’ And there was no greater prophet than John the Baptist. who was chosen of God to introduce to Israel ‘the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.’ [23]

“The Christian age commenced with the outpouring of the Spirit, and a great variety of spiritual gifts was manifested among the believers.... Since the great apostasy, these gifts have rarely been manifested; and this is probably the reason why professed Christians generally believe that they were limited to the period of the primitive church. But is it not on account of the errors and unbelief of the church that the gifts have ceased? ...And since a special work of

the Spirit was necessary to prepare a people for the first advent of Christ, how much more so for the second.... The apostles' commission belonged to the Christian age, and embraced the whole of it. Consequently the gifts were lost only through apostasy, and will be revived with the revival of primitive faith and practice."—[Early Writings, 133-135](#).

And with the reviving of the primitive faith—"the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"—the revival of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy appeared, as foretold in the visions of John on the Isle of Patmos.

### **The Pen Of Prophecy Taken Up Anew In 1844**

In olden time the prophet on Patmos wrote of the glory of the second coming of the Lord, as he had seen it in vision. He told about the New Jerusalem. "I John saw the holy city," he wrote. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." He saw the world-wide gospel movement rise, as the hour of God's judgment came. He saw the people come in 1844, keeping God's commandments. With the rise of the movement he saw the gift of the Spirit of prophecy restored in the remnant church. The aged apostle and prophet wrote it on the page, and laid down the pen of the Revelation.

[24] Nineteen centuries later, in 1844, a youthful agent in the advent movement took up the pen of prophecy, and began to write to tell of visions of the glories of Christ's coming and of the New Jerusalem and the heavenly land,—the same themes that the prophet on Patmos had written of, but now presented as glories soon to be revealed.

There had been no failure in the prophecies of the Revelation. The time had come, the people of the prophecy appeared, and they had the gift which had been foretold.

## Chapter 4—The Coming of the Gift of the Spirit of Prophecy [25]

It was following the great advent awakening movement of the early decades of the nineteenth century, reaching a climax in the years preceding 1844, that the specific advent movement arose. It has spread to all lands with the definite message of the judgment hour, calling men to the standard of the commandments of God.

### Forming The Movement

It is wonderful to trace the hand of God's providence in the bringing forth of the movement, its message, and its people. To give the threefold message, it was necessary that its heralds should primarily understand three great truths brought to view in [Revelation 14](#):

1. The commandments of God and the Sabbath truth.
2. The meaning of the judgment hour. And, as shown in [Revelation 12](#),
3. The remnant church of the prophecy was to have the gift of the Spirit of prophecy.

No one man, no one group, was left to frame a movement to fulfill these specifications. The providence of God put the movement together as the hour of God's judgment came in 1844. Here are three steps in the process:

1. In 1844, in New Hampshire, in old New England, a group of devoted advent believers saw the truth of the commandments of God. They understood that church tradition had lawlessly perverted the fourth commandment; and in March, 1844, the first members of this group began to keep the seventh-day Sabbath of the commandments.
2. In the same year, in October, 1844, the true light on the heavenly sanctuary and its relation to the judgment hour began to come to a little group of advent believers in the western part of the State of New York.

[26] Erelong representatives of those keeping the Sabbath came in contact with those having light as to the judgment work, the cleansing of the sanctuary. As the two groups exchanged light on Bible truths, here was the beginning of a movement standing for the commandments of God and holding the Bible truths required for proclaiming intelligently the message, “The hour of His judgment is come.”

3. Yet further, in the year 1844—that fateful year of prophecy—in eastern New England, in the State of Maine, there was a group of advent believers among whom was manifested the gift of the Spirit of prophecy. The agent of this gift was called to service in 1844. Later those associated with this gift came in contact with the Bible teaching already referred to,—the truths of the Sabbath and of the heavenly sanctuary and the judgment hour. Thus was formed the nucleus of the definite advent movement of the prophecy. We see the various special factors all having their roots in 1844. And from that day to this, the people of the prophecy have been hastening on toward all nations with the gospel message of preparation to meet the Lord.

### **How The Gift Of The Spirit Of Prophecy Came**

In 1844, it is evident, God’s providence was preparing to call the agent through whom He should speak messages to the people of the rising movement. Our early pioneers often told us how the Lord appeared to a man, a believer in the second advent, giving him a vision of the journey of the advent people to the city of God. It was in this year 1844, in the State of Maine. In the experience, this man was told to tell the vision to others. He refused. He felt it impossible to tell a vision, a dream. He fairly demanded of the Lord that he should be excused. At last, as our early pioneers who knew the facts related it, the Lord indicated to the man in a later vision that he was excused. The angel told him that the burden had been laid on “one of the weakest of the weak.”

[27] Later, listening from outside a meeting hall where another was relating a vision to the believers, this man who had been excused said the vision he had heard related was the same that was given him, and that he had refused to tell. And he told of the word spoken

to him, that one of the weakest would be chosen in his stead. (See “The Great Second Advent Movement,” by J. N. Loughborough, pp. 182, 183.)

The agent next called to this service was surely one of the weakest, measured by human standards. Again, in calling a special agent, God had, as in New Testament days, “chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” [1 Corinthians 1:27](#). And in the history of this gift in the advent movement we have indeed seen how mightily God does work through human weakness.

### **Ellen Harmon’s Call**

It was upon a youthful member of one of those advent groups in Maine that the burden was laid. She was a mere girl, Ellen G. Harmon, but one who had had a good Christian experience in the advent awakening preceding 1844. Near the close of 1844 the Lord appeared to her in vision, as she was kneeling at family worship. She was shown the journey of the advent people from the days following 1844 to the city of God. (See the book, “Early Writings,” by Mrs. E. G. White, pp. 14-20, under the title, “My First Vision.”) The young girl was told to tell to others what should be revealed to her.

Miss Harmon, also, felt that it was impossible for her to accept the call. In “Early Writings” we are told:

“After I came out of this vision I was exceedingly troubled. My health was very poor, and I was but seventeen years old. I knew that many had fallen through exaltation, and I knew that if I in any way became exalted, God would leave me, and I should surely be lost. I went to the Lord in prayer and begged Him to lay the burden on some one else. It seemed to me that I could not bear it. I lay upon my face a long time, and all the light I could get was, ‘Make known to others what I have revealed to you.’ ...Said the angel, ‘If you deliver the messages faithfully, and endure unto the end, you shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the water of the river of life.’ ”—*Pages 20, 21.*

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In that first vision she had been shown glimpses of that tree of life and the river of life. And that young girl rose from prayer to take up the burden. Faithful she was For seventy years her voice was heard bearing messages of counsel in the advent movement; and

the writings from her pen have been a blessed gift to the remnant church all along the way, and a blessing to millions of readers in many languages.

The published books are a monument to the gift against which all the critics have dealt their blows in vain. The prophecy foretold that the attacks would come. The enemy was to be wroth with the remnant church, the prophecy on Patmos forewarned, because of two things especially,—they were to keep the commandments of God, and were to have the Spirit of prophecy. If the attacks failed to come, we should know there was a mistake somewhere.

Personally, I have a fair memory of the character of most of the written attacks of the last sixty years. In earlier times the objectors' leaflets were flying about continually. But not a critic has there been who could produce anything like these writings that he criticizes. There is something here that baffles the critic and holds him smiting in vain against the monumental rock of truth.



## Chapter 5—The Place of the Gift in the Church

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Opposers have been quick to say, “Oh, you Seventh-day Adventists have another Bible—the writings of Mrs. White.”

### But One Foundation Of Doctrine

No, we reply, Seventh-day Adventists have but one Bible. That is the one foundation of faith and doctrine. The church is built upon Christ, and all its doctrine upon the living word. All spiritual gifts are gifts to the church that is built upon the word. These gifts are to minister the word of God to us, and to lead us into the Scriptures, which are our one rule of faith.

That has always been the teaching in this advent movement. In the first little booklet issued by James White, our early leader (who became the husband of Ellen G. Harmon), he wrote, in 1847: “The Bible is a perfect and complete revelation. It is our only rule of faith and practice.”—*“A Word to the Little Flock,”* p. 13.

Again, he wrote in the organ of the movement, in 1854: “Every Christian is therefore in duty bound to take the Bible as a perfect rule of faith and duty. He should pray fervently to be aided by the Holy Spirit, in searching the Scriptures for the whole truth, and for his whole duty. He is not at liberty to turn from them to learn his duty through any of the gifts.”—[The Review and Herald, October 3, 1854](#).

### Repeated By The Spirit Of Prophecy

This was the principle laid down from the beginning in the writings of the Spirit of prophecy itself. In “Early Writings,” the first book put out by Mrs. White, containing early views and experiences, it was written:

“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

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a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth.”—*Page 78*.

In the lands that she was called to visit in a lifelong ministry, Mrs. White bore the same testimony. Speaking in Christiania (now Oslo), Norway, in 1885, she said:

“The Bible and the Bible alone is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this holy word will be in harmony.... Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, ‘It is written.’ Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.”—[The Review and Herald, December 15, 1885](#).

### **Exalting The Book**

Well I remember the last words this faithful servant ever spoke in the general assembly of the movement. At a world’s General Conference in Washington, D.C., she came to the platform, on the last day of the session, to speak a farewell word to the delegates who had come in from the four quarters of the earth. She felt impressed that she would never attend another General Conference; and she never did. What would be the last message by personal presence, in such an assembly, by one who had been so many years the agent through whom the writings of the Spirit of prophecy had come? Mrs. White spoke a few words of good cheer and farewell, and then turned to the pulpit, where lay a Bible. She opened the book, and held it out with hands that trembled with age. And she said:

“Brethren and sisters, I commend unto you this Book.”

Without another word, she closed the book, and walked from the platform. It was her last spoken word in the world assembly of the remnant church. Well was it symbolic of the lifelong ministry through this gift, ever exalting high, supreme above all, the Holy Scriptures as the foundation of the faith of the people of the advent movement.

No; critics of this movement can never say justly that Seventh-day Adventists have “another Bible.” The one book is all that is needed to maintain the doctrines they preach as fundamental in the gospel of salvation,

## A Wonderful Ministry

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But all through the history of the movement the gift of the Spirit of prophecy has ministered these things of sound doctrine to us, and has been an inspiration to higher living and a counselor in the doing of the work. Warnings have come to us when we have taken the wrong turn, and the right way has been pointed out. The Lord, the living God, has been leading a movement, as He led the exodus movement long ago. We who have marched with the advent movement through the years, as it has risen from a small restricted field of work into a truly world movement, have all along seen this gift of the Spirit of prophecy doing things that we knew the human agent could never have devised by any natural gift or skill. There is here the touch of the supernatural.

### As Dependent As Others On Divine Grace

The agent, of herself, was but as other believers. She felt the need of seeking God for her own personal needs, as every believer feels it in his sense of weakness. At one General Conference Mrs. White spoke out:

“I never realized more than I do today the exalted character of the work.... I see the need in myself.... I must have a new fitting up, a holy unction, or I cannot go any further to instruct others. I must know that I am walking with God.... I must know that the grace of God is in my own heart, that my own life is in accordance with His will.”—*Testimonies for the Church 2:618*. Spoken before the General Conference of 1871.

The possession of the prophetic gift does not make the human agent a strange and different kind of person. In personal life, my childhood memory very clearly pictures a kindly, motherly neighbor, for whom I used to do errands. She was a good mother in Israel, and our old headquarters in Michigan had numbers of such good mothers in the church and community. Mrs. White loved the home duties, and might be heard singing to herself as she worked about the house. Naturally the constant demands upon her time in the work of the cause left her less time for the common duties that other homekeepers generally have.

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There was nothing of the pretentious about her bearing, no attitude of officiousness. There was no assumption of personal authority, or suggestion of personal wisdom about everything. But when the Spirit of the Lord impressed her to give counsel, there was an inflexible courage to speak the message needed, in the fear of God and in the spirit of Christ. Leading brethren might come for counsel regarding this problem or that. She might say that no light had been given her concerning it; the brethren would have to seek God, and do their best. Again, it might be, she had just the light needed. She had been shown the very situation presented, and had counsel from the Lord as to what should be done. Often this counsel would be found written out in those journals in which she would write, write, morning by morning and day by day, as the Spirit recalled to her mind things shown, perhaps in the night season.

### A Great Literary Output

Considering the fact that, as a girl, Mrs. White had been prevented from getting more than a common-school education, it is all the more unexplainable, from the natural standpoint, that she should have written what she did. With no preparation for literary work, she produced books that the best minds have admired, as we shall see.

It was done in weakness. We are told in “Life Sketches of Mrs. E. G. White,” that for a considerable time after her call to service she was unable to write. Of a time well on in the year 1845, she says:

“Up to this time I could not write; my trembling hand was unable to hold a pen steadily. While in vision, I was commanded by an angel to write the vision. I obeyed, and wrote rapidly. My nerves were strengthened, and from that day to this [written in 1880] my hand has been steady.”—*Page 90.*

[33] The writing was often done amid the rush of daily interviews and ministry, at home and abroad; and often through the years it was done amid physical weakness. In 1891 Mrs. White was asked by the General Conference Committee to visit Australia, where a vigorous work was growing up in a new field. A year and a half later she wrote to the headquarters office in America:

“With the writings that shall go in this mail, I have since leaving America written twenty hundred pages of letter paper. I could not have done all this writing if the Lord had not strengthened and blessed me in large measure. Never once has that right hand failed me. My arm and shoulder have been full of suffering, hard to bear, but the hand has been able to hold the pen and trace words that have come to me from the Spirit of the Lord.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White](#), 340.

While these writings are not placed on the same level as Holy Scripture, as we have shown, one who reads the volumes of the Spirit of prophecy will find that they bear the impress of the same Spirit that spoke in the ancient prophets. There is something unmistakably characteristic of these writings that is not found in other works that we publish. The divine credentials of these writings are discovered in the reading of them.

### A Monument Of Books

Speaking of this fact in a church in the city of Washington some years ago, with a little pile of books by Mrs. White on the stand beside the pulpit, I remarked that I would like to see some one build up in one column the different books given us by this gift, and photograph the monument of books. These writings are their own unanswerable monument. They bear their own credentials.

In response, the late Mr. E. R. Palmer, manager of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, came over to the General Conference office next day and said, “Let us do it.” One copy of each different book was searched out from the General Conference library and vault and from the publishing house treasures. They were built into a monument on the floor, and a photograph was taken, with E. R. Palmer standing beside the tall column. The photograph, shown herewith, reveals a monument of books higher than the manager’s [34] head. The manager wrote the description of the picture:

There are, he said, sixty-five volumes in the monument, containing 29,084 pages. This is a complete list of the books as photographed:

Volume of articles in the *Review*(ten years).

“The Desire of Ages,” 2-volume edition.  
     “Patriarchs and Prophets.”  
 “Prophets and Kings.”  
     “The Great Controversy.”  
 “Ministry of Healing.”  
     “Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene.”  
 “Christ Our Saviour.”  
     “Education.”  
 “Christ’s Object Lessons.”  
     “Acts of the Apostles.”  
 “Testimonies for the Church,” Volumes I-IX.  
     “Early Writings.”  
 “Christian Education.”

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“Fundamentals of Christian Education.”  
     “Counsels to Teachers.”  
 “Counsels on Health.”  
     “Testimonies to Ministers.”  
 “Gospel Workers,” old edition.  
     “Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing.”  
 “Steps to Christ.”  
     “Life Sketches.”  
 “Special Testimonies,” Series B.  
     “Healthful Living.”  
 “Gospel Workers,” new edition.  
     “Sketches From the Life of Paul.”  
 “The Spirit of Prophecy,” Volumes I-IV.  
     “Christian Service.”  
 “Redemption.”  
     “Sabbath Readings for the Home Circle” (collected by Mrs. White), four volumes.  
 “Experience and Miscellany.”  
     “Special Testimonies,” six volumes.  
 “Bible Sanctification.”  
     “Manual for Canvassers.”  
 “The Colporteur Evangelist.”  
     “S. D. Advent Library” (Miscellany), Volume 3.  
 “Child’s Poems,” selected by E. G. W.

- “Special Testimonies on Sabbath School Work.”  
“Spiritual Gifts,” Volumes I-IV.  
“Appeal to the Youth.”  
“Life of Christ” (French).  
“Index to the Writings of Mrs. E. G. White.”

### A Word About These Books

Explaining the selection of books, Mr. Palmer added:

“Not all the writings of Sister White are in this collection, for thousands of pages have been published in the *Review and Herald*, the *Signs of the Times*, and in other papers. Each of these sixty-five volumes is a distinct publication. There are some duplications of matter, for several of the books are compiled in part from the ‘Testimonies.’ Each book, however, represents much labor and earnest effort, quite equal to the writing of a new book, and any duplication will be more than made up by the subject matter in periodicals which could not be included in this collection shown in the picture.

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“These books, [some] in many languages, have gone to the ends of the earth, and wherever they are read, both within the church and without, they have left a deep impression upon the hearts of men. Thousands of people, to whom Sister White was personally unknown, have expressed their confidence, simply from the reading, that these books were produced under the special influence of the Spirit of God.”—[The Review and Herald, July 19, 1928](#).

### Unpublished Counsels

And beyond all this, in measuring the contributions of this gift to the advent movement, are the countless letters,—or testimonies, as they were called,—written to general and local leaders, to ministers, teachers, doctors, workers of all kinds, to conference committees, boards of institutions, which were never put in print. All the seventy years of that ministry these communications were a source of help and inspiration to burden bearers in the cause. The letters in that rolling handwriting that brought the messages impressed on the writer by the Spirit were as signals of deliverance to many a worker meeting perplexity. And in these communications the same strong

Bible expositions abounded, the same fine and uplifting paragraphs that readers are impressed with in the printed volumes.

This unprinted material must measure a good fraction of the mass of instruction put in books.

In view of the nature of these writings, and having regard to the lack of any special training for literary work, there is but one explanation of it all,—with the call to that young woman in 1844 to take up this burden, there came strength and gifts to do the work required.



## Chapter 6—The Writings Carry Their Own Credentials

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The books that have come into the advent movement through the Spirit of prophecy carry their own credentials. They touch human needs in a spiritual way that is unique in devotional literature. The only explanation is that given by the writer of the books, who said: “I have written many books, and they have been given a wide circulation. Of myself I could not have brought out the truth in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit.”—[The Review and Herald, July 26, 1906](#).

### The Impressions Of Many Readers

Many a reader, knowing nothing of the author’s experience, has felt that these books showed some special spiritual gift on the writer’s part. I give a few examples to illustrate, gathered from here and there, impressions of Catholic readers as well as Protestant.

At a conference in the city of Washington one of our laymen said: “I loaned the book, ‘Steps to Christ,’ to a young woman in business. She returned it, saying she had never read such a book before. ‘It seemed to me it was inspired,’ she said.”

In far Lithuania, one of the Baltic states of Europe, a colporteur called at a Catholic home: “The wife ran in,” he said, “and brought out a book. ‘This is our Bible,’ she said, holding it up triumphantly. I took it, and saw at once it was our book, ‘Steps to Christ.’”

One denunciation of that little book is equally a testimony to the exceptional power of its simple message. In one country of Eastern Europe, our workers told of a great poster put up by an archbishop. It read: “Adventist Literature Forbidden! Of the books sold by the Adventists, the book, ‘Steps to Christ,’ is the worst of all.”

On the other hand, in New England, a Catholic man lent a French “Steps to Christ” to a friend, who wrote to the office of our Book and Bible House: “I have a book, ‘Vers Christ,’ given me by a Roman

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Catholic friend, who said it was the best thing he ever read written by human hand.”

At a conference in Northern California an old schoolmate of long ago, Mr. Axtell, told me: “While living in Arizona, I loaned the book, ‘Christian Education,’ to a public-school man. He returned it, saying: ‘That book reads as if it were inspired.’”

A nurse in New England was invited by a wealthy and cultured lady, whom she had met in one of our medical institutions, to spend a holiday at the lady’s summer home at the seaside. Our nurse took along for reading the book “Education.” I was told the story:

“The lady of the house saw the book, and read it. ‘The author of this book must have been a woman of exceptional education,’ the lady said. ‘No,’ replied the nurse; ‘not at all. It was the very reverse. She was called into religious work as a young girl, with only common-school instruction.’ ‘Then she must have written by inspiration,’ was the comment of this highly educated lady, who was able to appreciate the exceptional character of the book.”

Only recently a clergyman, a Yale University man, with London University postgraduate study, happened into a ministerial class in one of our colleges. He said he was of the liberal school of thought. He picked up and examined a copy of “Testimonies to Ministers,” which the class was using. He later said to our teacher:

“I have looked through this book and I find it is the very best material you could place in the hands of young men studying for the ministry. These young people should count themselves fortunate in having such instruction. I have read some of Mrs. White’s works. With the limited education that she had, no one could write such books as she has written unless inspired of God.”

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### **Not Like Ordinary Writings**

How can one explain it? The only explanation is that the Lord, who called the instrument to the service, in a special way qualified His servant to deliver the messages of instruction. The critics may depreciate the human agent, but the more that is done, the more highly they exalt the fruitage of the gift. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” The fruit of the gift in that tall monument of printed books is one of the evidences of the genuineness of the gift that

leaves the opposer baffled; for no one can explain how a person with little educational training could, without special aid, write on these educational principles in such a way.

Some years ago, in Australia, a worker connected with our publishing house there told me how a leading minister of the country met him.

“Look here, Mr. Anderson,” the minister said, “I know that Mrs. White never wrote these books you are selling under her name.”

“But who do you think did write them?” our worker asked.

“Some of you men in the publishing house wrote them,” was the answer.

“Why, bless you,” our representative said, “we haven’t a man in the denomination who could write a book like one of these.”

That is true. We have had men who have written good books, useful books, from the days of the pioneers on. But no man among us ever wrote so much as a chapter approaching these writings. There is a different quality, a different touch here.

In England, President W. E. Read, of the Northern European Division, said: “We have heard again and again of ministers in the popular churches who have read from Mrs. White’s writings in the pulpit. One minister said he could always tell her writings in our papers, even without seeing the signature. There was a ‘different touch,’ he said.”

In one of the fields of the British West Indies, not long ago, a local worker told me an incident: “The dean of the cathedral,” he said, “warned that Mrs. White was a ‘false prophet.’ But later he preached at a special service in the cathedral, and read nearly all of one chapter from the book, ‘Acts of the Apostles.’” [40]

### **Two Bookstore Proprietors**

In one of the large cities of America a man was looking over books in a secondhand bookstore: “He asked for the religious books, and was directed to a miscellaneous assortment in the back of the store. He remarked to the proprietor that he saw none in which he was interested. Being asked what author he preferred, he said, “Mrs. E. G. White.’ ‘Oh,’ said the proprietor, ‘that’s different. Her writings are not classed with those back there at all. We have them

here in the front, with the Bibles. They are in a class by themselves. '—[Pacific Union Recorder, July 25, 1934.](#)

This reminds me of a conversation with Mr. A. W. Anderson, of Australia. He told me he was once talking with the leading bookseller of that country:

“What a remarkable lady that Mrs. White was! Her books are absolutely wonderful!” said the merchant.

“What do you know about them?” Mr. Anderson asked.

“Occasionally we get them in our secondhand department,” was the reply, “and I have looked over them. I think they are wonderful books.”

Mr. Anderson then explained that the author began her work with no literary training and with no education to form the basis for literary work.

“There is only one explanation for that sort of thing,” the merchant replied, “and that is inspiration.”

### **About “The Great Controversy”**

[41] There is the book, “The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan,” which has had a remarkable appeal to the unlearned and the learned. Years ago, in Finland, I met a peasant farmer who had come from near the Arctic Circle to attend a conference for the first time. It was “The Great Controversy” that had led to his conversion. “I felt that it was inspired,” he told me, “as I read its pages.”

To a Catholic businessman of Argentina, South America, a man of education and culture, a colporteur had sold a copy of this book. Later, meeting the colporteur, the purchaser said:

“You have brought me great happiness. I have read nearly the whole of the book ‘The Great Controversy.’ I believe it is the truth. I do not know the author, but she must have been divinely inspired. I would not sell that book for fifty dollars, no, not for one hundred dollars, if I could not get another.”

A leading lawyer in one country, referring to “The Great Controversy,” said: “That book was not written by education, but by inspiration.”

A young lady colporteur, of Virginia, told me a story of this book that illustrates the manner in which the author wrote it. The young woman said, in effect:

“I sold a copy of ‘The Great Controversy’ to the wealthiest person in a certain town, the most influential woman there. She wanted it for a sister who was a Catholic. But first the lady read it herself. When I met her later, she said: ‘That is a most wonderful book. I never read anything like it. It seemed to me as I read I could see the very picture of the scenes written about.’ And I said to her: ‘That is just how this writing is different. The author is describing scenes that she has seen pass before her under the influence of the Spirit of God.’”

Our colporteur sister gave a remarkably true answer on the spur of the moment. She was evidently familiar with Mrs. White’s statement in the introduction to this book: “Through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the scenes of the long-continued conflict between good and evil have been opened to the writer of these pages.”

The author was writing as an eyewitness. First, in 1848, the scenes of the great controversy had been caused to pass, in part at least, before the eyes of the young woman. Then, she tells us, they were repeated ten years later, while attending a meeting in Ohio. She wrote of this:

“In the vision at Lovett’s Grove [Ohio, in 1858], most of the matter which I had seen ten years before concerning the great controversy of the ages between Christ and Satan, was repeated, and I was instructed to write it out.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 162](#).

It was not by any ordinary method of authorship that these writings came forth through the years. Long did the pressure to write sometimes crowd upon this servant of God, awaiting the time, in a busy, active life, when that pen could trace on paper, in the rolling-letter style of her handwriting, the things that the Spirit of prophecy used her to relate.

### **These Truths Our Defense**

We do not have to defend this gift; it is our defense. An old West Indian man, aged seventy-eight, had the right idea of these

books. He was always seen carrying the book, “Christ Our Saviour,” wherever he went.

“I love this book,” he said. “When people ask me the reason for carrying it about with me, I reply: ‘Oh, this book is my bodyguard.’ From the time I started to read it, I have been a changed man. I do not know how the change came about. One thing I know, I changed since I started to read it.”

Here is an item from the non-Christian land of Japan. The book, “Patriarchs and Prophets,” was officially commended to the public. Manager H. P. Evens, of our Japanese Publishing House, wrote: “Of all our books in Japan, this is the only one to be recommended to the public by the Imperial Department of Education. This is indicated on the title page, at the top, in large black characters.”

Colporteur leader Kraft, who accompanied the Japanese colporteur to the department, told me: “The official himself volunteered to give the recommendation. It has put copies in schools and libraries, and many thousands of copies have been sold in Japan.”

[43] There is a voice in these writings that speaks with special force to even the non-Christian mind.

When “The Desire of Ages” was brought out in Great Britain, a society lady in Edinburgh read a copy. She was agitated. She said to our people: “You are a small people. You ought not to have the circulation of a book like this. It ought to be in the hands of the big London publishers. It seems inspired.”

She did not understand that our method of sale through colporteurs gave us a means of reaching more homes with a religious book than the big publishers would be likely to reach. (By the way, this method of book distribution was developed under instruction of the Spirit of prophecy, as we shall see later.)

### **A Graphically Written Life Of Christ**

Early in the American sale of the life of the Saviour, “The Desire of Ages,” a lady in Massachusetts purchased a copy. For ten years it lay unread on the shelf. Then, in a time of spiritual discouragement, she picked it up. She wrote to the author:

“As soon as I began to read it, I felt as never before how *realit* was. Where before it had seemed like ancient history, it now seemed

as if it were today that it all happened. Peace came to my troubled soul, and my eyes were opened to God's mercies as never before. I see in Him a living personal Saviour who is with me all the time. I have consecrated my life to His service."

As the scenes of that life on earth were made real to the author by the Spirit, the story was made very real for the reader. It is an illustration of the special helpfulness of this gift in the opening of Bible themes.

### The Spirit In Which The Work Was Done

It is a marvel how Mrs. White was able to bring out this great book, "The Desire of Ages," while in those busy years in Australia. Everything in the upbuilding of a new work in a great field drew upon her sympathies and her time. And in those years, at least from 1892 to 1895, there came to the General Conference headquarters in America the finest instruction for ministers and workers that we ever had given to us in a short series of years. Older workers will recall the envelope-size booklets in which the late beloved O. A. Olsen, then president of the General Conference, passed these counsels on to us. It was in itself a vast volume of instruction, much of which was probably included in larger books at a later time. And all the time workers at the headquarters in America knew that Mrs. White was struggling to find time to work on "The Desire of Ages." Of her feeling toward this task she wrote to O. A. Olsen in 1892:

[44]

"I walk with trembling before God. I know not how to speak or trace with pen the large subjects of the atoning sacrifice. I know not how to present subjects in the living power in which they stand before me. I tremble for fear lest I shall belittle the great plan of salvation by cheap words. I bow my soul in awe and reverence before God, and say, 'Who is sufficient for these things?'"—*Elmshaven Leaflets*, "The Writing of the Ellen G. White Books," p. 7.

It was in that spirit that Mrs. White walked all the way in making more real to us the gospel narrative. Let us quote two portions,—a view of the world when the Saviour came in the flesh, and a view of the triumphant return to heaven after the atoning sacrifice had been made. Those who have read the book the most, will read these scenes again with greatest pleasure.

**“In The Fullness Of Time”**

When the world’s need was greatest, the revelation of the Gift was made:

[45] “The deception of sin had reached its height. All the agencies for depraving the souls of men had been put in operation. The Son of God, looking upon the world, beheld suffering and misery. With pity He saw how men had become victims of satanic cruelty. He looked with compassion upon those who were being corrupted, murdered, and lost. They had chosen a ruler who chained them to his car as captives. Bewildered and deceived, they were moving on in gloomy procession toward eternal ruin,—to death in which is no hope of life, toward night to which comes no morning....

“Sin had become a science, and vice was consecrated as a part of religion. Rebellion had struck its roots deep into the heart, and the hostility of man was most violent against heaven. It was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted. A new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world....

“And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled.”—[The Desire of Ages, 36, 37.](#)

Then this story of that life leads us to the mountainsides with Jesus, and through the villages and cities of Judea and Galilee, the multitudes thronging. Other books there are, well written, that keep the way of the historical narrative, with much useful information. But in this book we are out with Jesus among the people. We listen to His gracious words, and we find the balm of Gilead for the healing of our souls.

**The Return Of Jesus After The Resurrection**

Then, as Jesus returned to His Father’s presence, we see new glories in the scenes in heaven as this pen opens the Scriptures to us:

“All heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed. The heavenly host,



with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train.

“As they draw near to the city of God, the challenge is given by the escorting angels,

‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:  
And the King of Glory shall come in!’

[46]

“Joyfully the waiting sentinels respond,

‘Who is this King of Glory?’

“This they say, not because they know not who He is, but because they would hear the answer of exalted praise,

‘The Lord strong and mighty,  
The Lord mighty in battle!  
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of Glory shall come in!’

“Again is heard the challenge, ‘Who is this King of Glory?’ for the angels never weary of hearing His name exalted. The escorting angels make reply,

‘The Lord of hosts;  
He is the King of Glory!’

[[Psalm 24:7-10.](#)]

“Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music.

“There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,—all are there

to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.

[47] “But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing.

“Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, ‘It is finished,’ He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares, ‘Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, “I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.”’

“The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ’s toiling, struggling ones on earth are ‘accepted in the Beloved.’ Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. ‘Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ The Father’s arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’

“With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings!’

“Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains pro-

claiming, ‘Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.’ ”—[The Desire of Ages, 833-835](#).

The writings by this gift are different. All gifts are needed. [48]  
Books by many hands must have their mission No one gift suffices.  
But the ministry of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy through the  
writings of a humble agent who had no preparation in the natural  
way for such service is ever a token of the leadership of the living  
God in the advent movement.

### **Commendation From A Literary Point Of View**

This review must end with but one more citation. It is from a teacher of literature who speaks from a literary viewpoint only. It is worth while hearing one word on that side. One of our members in Massachusetts reported having taken some university extension work there. Abbreviated, our student’s story is this:

“One day our teacher, who had just returned from an extended study of literature in Europe, asked each member of the class to come next day with three quotations from a favorite author. The name was not to be given, and the class was to be asked to name the author by the selection read.

“I was the first one called on, and although there were forty-eight in the class, no one else was called upon. The entire time was taken up in discussing the three quotations I presented—passages from ‘The Desire of Ages.’ No one could name the author. Then to my happy surprise, the teacher said:

“‘Well, class, that is from the pen of Mrs. E. G. White.’ She spoke at length, saying she knew nothing of the author’s religion, but she felt able to declare herself as to literature; and she said it was a pity Mrs. White’s writings were not better known in the literary world. She said she was going to make a strong statement, but she meant every word. Of all the writings she knew, outside of the Bible, there were none so full of beauty, so pure, and yet so simple, as the writings of Mrs. E. G. White.”

It is not as literature that we treasure these writings. Yet the spiritual truths, that are the vital thing, are expressed in language fitting to the high themes continually presented.

The writings of the Spirit of prophecy carry their own credentials.

## Chapter 7—By Method Out of the Ordinary

[49]

These writings of the Spirit of prophecy are literature. But they were not produced by ordinary literary method.

The writer was called from early youth to give to others what had been revealed to her; and along with the thoughts presented to her came a gift of expression befitting the themes. It was not that she was told word by word the language by which to express the thought. Views, scenes, were caused to pass before her, and a burden of conviction laid upon her as to Bible truths and counsels needed. In early years she explained it thus:

“Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own.”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#).

Thus she would tell and retell the message, seeking to make it clearer and more complete in detail when that might be helpful. A new edition of a book might be enlarged, portions omitted to give place to more complete presentation in other portions, or changes in expression made to render the thought clearer. The small book of an early edition sometimes grew into a large book in later times as circumstances might call, or as new and fuller views were imparted by the Spirit.

Really, the first little book, “Early Writings,” contains the outline of all the “Great Controversy” series.

From earliest years opposers were ready to charge “suppression” or change of view if a later edition varied from an earlier. But the work of passing on the volumes of counsel and Bible exposition went forward for seventy years, the agent in the exercise of the gift pursuing her way in the spirit of obedience to that first counsel of 1844: “Said the angel, ‘If you deliver the messages faithfully, and endure unto the end, you shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the water of the river of life.’”

[50]

### Some Sources Of Book Material

Much material that went into the published books was originally written in counsels to individuals, or to committees or boards. A message might be given by the Spirit of prophecy for some worker or leader. Page after page would Mrs. White's pen trace, of counsel and exhortation, of encouragement and warning to that person. In one letter lessons might be drawn from the life of Abraham, or from the experiences of David, or Daniel, or Paul. Thus here was matter exactly fitted to make part of a chapter in this book or that, as the time came for the compilation of a permanent volume.

That pen was busy through the years, sending messages uncounted to workers and people, and producing the finest expositions of Bible themes, needing, of course, the amplifying and working over and over and the additions of matter from the same pen, to make the connected and complete discourse or narrative of a choice volume.

These letters, or testimonies, as they are called, were written at home and abroad, in the midst of general meetings, or in hours caught in travels by rail or steamship, in homes where the writer might be a visitor—all through the seventy years it was going on.

Who, ordinarily, could make up chapters for such books from copies of one's letters? Every person in official work has written letters, year after year. In making an unflattering comparison, I should speak only of my own letters, if I may be excused for doing so. In two terms of service I worked as Mission Board secretary for almost twenty-five years. Naturally, I was called to write, write, by stenographic dictation, to workers at home and in every part of the earth. I did my best. But all the literary talent in our denomination could not make a worth-while chapter for a book out of all the copies of my letters that are stacked up somewhere at headquarters. We don't write that kind of letters. But when this agent was moved by the Spirit to write letters, there was something not discoverable in any natural way of letter writing. That is how we now and then find

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some of the choicest and finest paragraphs or pages in the printed volumes in some letter of older date that was manifestly hurriedly written and hastened on to this or that worker in need of counsel.

## A Message From The Waldensian Valleys

Sometimes the place from which a message comes adds significance to it. For instance, there is the closing section of Volume V, of the “Testimonies.” It is entitled, “God’s Care for His Work.” When that writing came out in 1889, it seemed to me the finest prose in our language on that theme. It is a wonderful piece of writing. And only recently I learned from what place some of these paragraphs first came to us. Going over the old file of the *Review and Herald* for 1887, looking for some other item, I saw that the basis of this section, “God’s Care for His Work,” was an article sent from the old Waldensian valleys of the Italian Alps. Mrs. White was down in Torre Pellice in 1886, amid scenes hallowed by memories of the 1260-year period of papal persecutions, when the Waldenses and others found refuge from the wrath of the dragon in the mountain fastnesses. From Torre Pellice it was that Mrs. White sent an article to the *Review* (January 11, 1887), reviving in our hearts a trust in God for such times of trial and persecution. In paragraphs that blaze like beacons from old Waldensian campfires in the Alpine mountains, we are exhorted:

“We are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. The Lord is at the door. There is soon to open before us a period of overwhelming interest to all living....

“But God’s servants are not to trust to themselves in this great emergency. In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John, we see how closely heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth, and how great is the care of God for those who are loyal to Him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge....

“Brethren, it is no time now for mourning and despair, no time to yield to doubt and unbelief. Christ is not now a Saviour in Joseph’s new tomb, closed with a great stone, and sealed with the Roman seal; we have a risen Saviour He is the King, the Lord of hosts; He sitteth between the cherubim; and amid the strife and tumult of nations, He guards His people still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial. He watches the furnace fire

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that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of God's wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands."—*The Review and Herald, January 11, 1887*; and "Testimonies," Vol. V, pp. 753, 754.

One would go far to find a finer piece of modern writing than these paragraphs of trust from out the Waldensian valleys. From lands far and near, from stopping places where the unsettled conditions and upset of travel would ordinarily forbid thoughtful writing, this pen continued the flow of inspiring comment and counsel for seventy years.

### A Gift Of Language

No; let no one get the idea that because Mrs. White was called as a young girl, with but limited school training, she had not a remarkable use of language in which to express the messages given. She was all her life in a school of rare experience. The eldest among us cannot remember a time so early that this woman's voice did not speak the messages in eloquent and choice language. Professor M. E. Cady, one of our veteran educational leaders, once commented on this as follows:

"In later years, while at a camp meeting near Boston, Dr. Emerson, president of the Emerson School of Oratory, heard Mrs. White speak. He remarked that her voice was remarkable for its resonant quality and its flexibility. He further said that from beginning to end of the sermon the speaker did not violate a single rule governing correct expression."—*The Review and Herald, September 12, 1929*.

[53] Early workers who were in Australia with Mrs. White tell of an illustrative incident there. Mrs. White spoke one day at a camp meeting, reading her message from a pen-written manuscript. After the meeting three ladies—not Adventists—asked Mrs. White if they might take the manuscript home for examination. The request was granted. When the spokesman brought it back, she said: "We had been told by unfriendly critics that you could not write proper English. But here we have seen this writing in your own hand, and find it in good English. We know your critics are unfair."



Many years ago an opposer suggested to me that the newly published book, “The Desire of Ages,” was probably written by one of Mrs. White’s helpers.

“No,” I replied at once. “You must remember that Mrs. White comes in before us in committees and councils, and speaks offhand and at length in the same language,—the same high thoughts, the same eloquent and graphic, moving sentences. You know that no helper she ever had could do that.”

It is absolutely true. Any one who really knew Mrs. White in service recognized these finest things in her books as indeed really identifying marks of her own personal touch.

This is not to suggest for a moment that possession of this gift ensured grammatical accuracy or expertness in punctuation or capitalization, or in all the technical niceties of the traditional literary method. The chosen agent was concerned with the vital thing of delivering the messages faithfully.

Of the help she had in a literary way from James White as they traveled among the churches in the early years, she wrote:

“We traveled extensively. Sometimes light would be given to me in the night season, sometimes in the daytime before large congregations. The instruction I received in vision was faithfully written out by me, as I had time and strength for the work. Afterward we examined the matter together, my husband correcting grammatical errors, and eliminating needless repetition. Then it was carefully copied for the persons addressed, or for the printer.”— *“The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies to the Church,”* p. 4 (from a letter written in 1906).

[54]

### The Work Of Helpers

Any one looking at the list of books shown in the picture on page 34, can see that no one person could ever have done all the gathering and arranging and copying and recopying of material necessary in preparing all those books for the press. It would be physically impossible—the more so for one like Mrs. White, with demands upon her time and service wherever she went. As Baruch was a valued scribe and copyist for Jeremiah the prophet, so helpers were essential for the large task involved in Mrs. White’s work. She

herself wrote of the valued service of these associates. Of one who was helping on bookwork at the time, she once wrote:

“She takes my articles which are published in the papers, and pastes them in blank books. She also has a copy of all the letters I write. In preparing a chapter for a book, M-----remembers that I have written something on that special point, which may make the matter more forcible. She begins to search for this, and if when she finds it she sees that it will make the chapter more clear, she adds it. The books are not M-----’s productions, but my own, gathered from all my writings. M-----has a large field from which to draw, and her ability to arrange the matter is of great value to me. It saves my poring over a mass of matter, which I have no time to do.”—*From a neostyle document, prepared by Trustees, “Elmshaven.”*

### A Seal Of Genuineness

How impossible for any author, in the ordinary way of literary work, to produce such devotional and expository volumes after this manner! It sets the seal of a special divinely imparted gift upon the work.

[55] Opposers, as I have said, have sometimes charged that these helpers did the writing. Think of it! The bitterness of opposition has led men who attacked this gift to make charges that would cover the record of these Christian helpers with infamy. If the helpers could have spent years writing matter to be passed off as written by some one else, they would have been deceivers unworthy of a place in a Christian work. Many have known these helpers. I have known most of them personally. True souls, their help was considered invaluable. But as one helper has come and another gone, through the long years, the work of that pen has gone on unvaryingly. Not one helper who came had ever written things like these before coming. Not one who has passed on to other work has ever written things like these afterward. There is a gift here, a gift to the remnant church, that builds up the church and the movement as only a divinely imparted gift could do.

## **Rounding Out The Book Series**

As time passed, Mrs. White felt more and more the pressure to round out the series of books containing light needed by the believers and the public. In 1903 she wrote to a friend:

“My health is good, and I am able to do much writing. I thank the Lord for this. I have decided not to attend so many camp meetings, but to give my time to my writing.... I greatly desire to write on the life of Solomon and on the history following his reign, and I desire, too, to write on the life of Paul and his work in connection with the other apostles. At times the thought of this neglected work keeps me awake at night.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 434](#).

The number of camp meetings attended may have been reduced, but we would call the years following rather busy times for her in general work. There were trips to the Eastern States,—to Councils and General Conference sessions,—to the Middle West, and to the South, as well as much time spent in Southern California, where the interests of the health institutions and the establishment of the medical college drew heavily upon her. But a calendar of books prepared in these years shows how Mrs. White struggled to give her time to the series of books that she felt she must see completed. Here is a partial schedule (culled from “Life Sketches”) of books prepared after the letter of 1903, quoted above:

1903—The book “Education,” which a school inspector in a British commonwealth pronounced “a masterpiece.” [56]

1904—“Testimonies for the Church,” Vol VIII.

1905—“Ministry of Healing,” of which a Lutheran bishop, of Europe, said, “There is a book instinct with the Spirit of God from the first page to the last.”

1909—“Testimonies for the Church,” Vol. IX, the last volume of this series.

1911—“Acts of the Apostles.”

1913—“Counsels to Teachers.”

1914—“Gospel Workers.”

1915—“Prophets and Kings.”

This last book completed the “Controversy” series begun many years before. This series, perhaps, should be listed for the benefit of those not so familiar with the volumes dealing with the whole

range of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, from the time of the origin of sin in heaven to the final destruction of evil. Here are the five volumes: “Patriarchs and Prophets,” “Prophets and Kings,” “The Desire of Ages,” “The Acts of the Apostles,” and “The Great Controversy” (this last being the story of redemption from Christ’s ascension through the ages to the second coming of Christ, and the end of sin and Satan, and the eternal triumph of the saved in the earth made new).

This was a remarkable outflow of volumes, continuing to 1915, the year when that pen was laid down. Looking at the range of it, in those busy closing years, and the depth of it and the breadth and richness of the instruction given, and its value to the movement and personally to us all, we recognize clearly the truth of Mrs. White’s repeated affirmation: “Of myself I could never have brought out the truths in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit.”

## Chapter 8—For the Spiritual Upbuilding of the Church

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“Unto the building up of the body of Christ” (the church). [Ephesians 4:12](#), R.V.

That is the purpose of all the gifts—of apostles, teachers, evangelists, pastors, and all the rest. All these gifts have wrought in the advent movement, ministering the word of God. That word it is that “builds up.” In the apostle Paul’s farewell to the elders of Ephesus, warning them of the apostasy that would sweep into the church after his death, he said: “Now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.” [Acts 20:32](#).

Always to the fore in ministering this word that builds up in the advent movement, has been the gift of the Spirit of prophecy. Observers without, have noted the spiritual influence of this gift in the church.

### For Spiritual Upbuilding

At a council in Oslo, Norway, President G. A. Lindsay, of the East Nordic Union Conference, told of a Lutheran clergyman who wrote a thesis on the second advent idea in history. It was for his doctor’s degree in one of the universities of Sweden. He wrote very fully of the work and second advent teaching of Seventh-day Adventists. Mr. Lindsay said:

“He had somehow procured a copy of ‘Early Writings,’ an early edition, and had been greatly impressed by the writings and work of Mrs. White in connection with this cause. He declared: ‘The secret of the piety and spirituality and consecration of the Adventists will be found in these writings and messages of Mrs. White.’”

It is the truth, though believers in all lands would confess how poorly we have lived up to the high calling. More than any other one gift, this gift has continually drawn us to that “word of His grace” to

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which the apostle Paul commended the early church. It has been like a living hand laying hold upon the church, drawing it with forceful entreaty to the fountain of living waters in Holy Scripture. It never lets go. Deeper yet, higher yet, has been the insistent appeal from the days of 1844.

### **From Early Years To Our Day**

In the first vision to that young girl in 1844, there was a picture of the highway of holiness on which the people of the movement must walk to the Holy City: “I turned to look for the advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, ‘Look again, and look a little higher.’ At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the advent people were traveling to the city.”—[Early Writings, 14](#).

The chief burden of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, it would seem, has been to urge believers into this path, “high above the world.” The voice that rang out clear and thrilling over many a campground in the years of Mrs. White’s physical strength, “Clear the King’s highway, and let the Saviour in,” sounds in all the writings. People of remotest lands recognize it. In languages of the African interior, in the islands of the South Seas, among peoples who have but comparatively few translated portions, it is recognized that here is a special call to piety and spirituality.

I was visiting a mission conference in ancient Taiyuanfu, chief city of Shansi, in North China. The whole atmosphere of the meeting was Chinese. The superintendent was an able Chinese evangelist. The only foreign touch was in the presence of several foreign missionary visitors. One day between sessions I saw a group of village women in specially animated conversation. I said to a missionary who knew the language, “Now, what do these village women talk about among themselves, so earnestly and eagerly?” My friend, A. A. Esteb, listened a moment, then exclaimed: “I declare! Do you hear what that young village woman has just said to the others? ‘What a wonderful treasure of spiritual food is given to us in the writings of the Spirit of prophecy!’”

## No Wonder Satan Attacks

A gift that stands so directly for the essential things of the Christian life, merits the opposition of the enemy of souls. And it has met this from earliest days. In the sixties, Uriah Smith, lifelong editor of the church organ, wrote of these writings:

“They tend to the purest morality. They discountenance every vice, and exhort to the practice of every virtue.... They have aroused and rearoused us to greater consecration to God, more zealous efforts for holiness of heart, and greater diligence in the cause and service of our Master.... Yet with all this array of good fruit which they are able to present, with all this innocency of any charge of evil that can be brought against them, they everywhere encounter the bitterest opposition.... Why is all this? Whence all this war against that of which no evil can be said?”—[The Review and Herald, June 12, 1866](#).

The answer is that the prophecy foretold the special wrath of the enemy against the remnant church that keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. [Revelation 12:17](#). That explains the otherwise inexplicable. The first Seventh-day Adventist minister ever to set foot in Ireland, the late R. F. Andrews, visited the North of Ireland counties in 1885. Not a note had ever been struck there by us. But he found that an American minister, of a group of no-law opponents of our work in • the United States, had gone to and fro over there, warning the people against the writings and work of Mrs. E. G. White. Strange how loyalty to the law of God, and possession of this gift of the Spirit of prophecy, brings forth the bitter attacks, as foretold.

In 1886 a minister, formerly prominent among us, left the movement. Others, he said, had turned and fought their former brethren, but this he would never do. But almost at the first dash he was called by some church circles to fight the Adventists. He it was of whom J. H. Waggoner, one of our editorial pioneers, wrote in 1887:

“A certain man advertised to give a lecture in a village in California, in which he promised to ‘expose the visions of Mrs. E. G. White.’ At the close of his lecture a gentleman not connected with the Adventists asked the lecturer, ‘What is the nature and the tendency of these visions? What is their moral tone, and what would

be the effect of a person's living in strict harmony with their teachings?' The lecturer admitted that the morality taught therein is pure, and that any one would be saved who lived up to what they teach. One who was present said to the writer of this article, 'I wondered what a man could think of himself, advertising to oppose and expose writings which are morally pure and which would lead to salvation any one who would heed them.' ”—[The Review and Herald, May 3, 1887](#).

Those who called for such help to oppose the Adventists in California, quickly found that they were only helping the cause they desired to check. People of other churches did not appreciate the attack upon a Christian lady. They said, "We know Mrs. White. She is a good woman, and her life and influence among us have been such that attacks of this character are an offense to us."

While no doubt printed misrepresentations of this gift and its agent have turned some from investigation of the truth, on the other hand, many in various lands tell how the bitter spirit of the attacks has turned their hearts to this way. One such, Mr. J. L. Branford, of Australia, years ago told of an experience:

[61] "When I accepted the Sabbath truth, two books were placed in my hands almost immediately. One was 'Early Writings,' the other was a book written by Mr. Canright. I read Canright's book first. I had not gone very far before I was convinced that the spirit that actuated that man was from beneath. I could not contradict the statements he made against Mrs. White nor against the denomination, but I knew the man had not the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not until I read Mrs. White's writings myself, and saw that they convinced me of sin, and pointed out my faults, that I realized that to follow their teachings would lead me to the kingdom of God. It was that that convinced me that the Spirit of prophecy was from God."—*Australasian Record*.

This is typical of the experience of many. On that same occasion when the above statement was made, Pastor Robert Hare, one of the first of our ministers to be ordained for Australasia, said: "When I read the 'Testimonies,' the Spirit of Christ talks to me. When I read the things men have written against Mrs. White, I see there a spirit of bitterness and hatred. But a tenderness flows into my soul when I read the 'Testimonies,' and I know it comes from heaven."



## **Instruction For Real People And Real Needs**

Early in the experience of the exercise of this gift, an angel messenger explained to the human agent in vision:

“Your success is in your simplicity. As soon as you depart from this and fashion your testimony to meet the minds of any, your power is gone. Almost everything in this age is glossed and unreal. The world abounds in testimonies given to please and charm for the moment, and to exalt self. Your testimony is of a different character. It is to come down to the minutiae of life, keeping the feeble faith from dying, and pressing home upon believers the necessity of shining as lights in the world.”—[Testimonies for the Church 5:667](#).

The uniqueness of this instruction is that it does come down to real life, to the minute details of home and church and human relationships. The nine volumes of the “Testimonies for the Church” are largely composed of personal messages sent to this one and that one in need of help, or to workers in service, and to boards and committees dealing with administrative problems. The counsels are therefore not so generally an exposition of abstract principles, but came as messages to actual men and women, needing help in personal problems and experiences. Thus they speak in a very personal way to all; for people and families and groups are much alike.

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In this same way Mrs. White had a way of dealing in person with problems, wherever she was called to go in those seventy years and more of service on three continents.

### **Mrs. White In Personal Action**

For instance, just as the movement was taking shape in Europe, Mrs. White was called to spend two years or more there. Writing of a council at Basel, Switzerland, in 1885, one of the first held in Europe, one of our pioneers in the French work, D. T. Bourdeau, wrote:

“Never was the gift of prophecy more needed and its service more timely, than on this occasion. Errors and difficulties that had baffled human wisdom and effort were pointed out, corrected, and removed, with that tenderness, plainness, faithfulness, and impar-

tiality which have characterized this gift during the entire period of its manifestation among us.”

As he observed the manner in which this gift laid hold of the actual problems in that new field, he wrote of the methods:

“It not only probes the wound, but it also pours in the oil, binds the wound, and hastens the process of restoration.... It identifies itself with those for whom it labors, bearing their burdens in earnest, persevering prayer, forgetful of self and ease, and keeping the glory of God and the salvation of souls in view, aiming to secure these at any sacrifice. It brings with it the supernatural discernment that Peter evinced in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. It brings with it the miraculous, without which religion were a formal, heartless, lifeless, human affair.”—[The Review and Herald, November 10, 1885](#).

### **Results That Could Be Seen And Measured**

[63] This sort of observation might have been repeated of hundreds of occasions. Multiply such service a thousand-fold, and one approaches the record of seventy years of the ministry of this gift. In the face of practical, visible, living help rendered on an occasion like that, the murmurings and representations of all the critics that ever lived become as the foam of raging waves of the sea dashing against the rock. It is service rendered that counts. It is help given in demonstration of the Spirit and power of God that attests a divinely directed gift. When believers have seen and experienced such workings of a gift, day in and day out, year in and year out, sure of touch, unwavering, unailing, they know the living God has placed a gift in the church for service.

### **Goodness Not A Full Qualification**

We have had good mothers in Israel, multitudes of them, who lived the true life, and carried the true burden of helpfulness. God has made them a blessing. Some of them had natural gifts by education and training above any natural advantages that the servant of the Lord had had to whom this gift of the Spirit of prophecy was committed. But none of them—not one—could do, and not one of them ever did

do, the kind of work that the agent of this gift was doing all the time for seventy years.

There was something more than goodness here. She was a good mother in our Israel, as were many others. But it had to be something in addition. It was the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, as of old, manifested through human weakness, and the high purpose in it all was to build up the church of the movement in piety and devotion and spiritual life and service.

### **Ever A Burden For The Salvation Of Souls**

And what a burden of soul for the salvation of believers was that human agent strengthened to carry! The record of the life seems to leave not a moment when this or that need of the church was not immediately pressing; or when some worker's need of encouragement or warning was not laid upon the heart. Let me illustrate by one example:

In 1932 I was at a large camp meeting in Sydney, Australia. I had spoken of how the agent in this gift, while living in Australia, was given messages for Europe, for Africa, for America, for work and workers in all the ends of the earth. As an illustration having a local appeal, I read a three-line note written by Mrs. White from the Australian village of Cooranbong, where she was living in 1900, alongside the Avondale school. Across the sea to another continent she sent the message to a brother; whom I called John Blank: "My instructor said, 'John Blank, you are departing from the faith once delivered to the people of God.'" [64]

From out that little cottage, set on the edge of the Australian bush, the appeal went across the world to a beloved worker in danger. It shows how the lines of counsel and entreaty were always running out from the place of that gift, touching the work and workers in all the world. After the meeting, an elderly lady in black came to me to speak of Mrs. White. "I know who Mr. Blank was," she said. "I worked for Mrs. White in 1900, as housekeeper. Night after night, in the early morning hours, I was awakened by Mrs. White's voice in prayer. I heard her praying for Mr. Blank, entreating God not to let him go, to hold him, and keep him, and save him."

It is one glimpse of the spirit in which this gift of the Spirit of prophecy was ever exercised. With all its stern warnings against sin and the wrong course, it spoke ever in the spirit of Christ. It is “the testimony of Jesus Christ,” the voice of the Good Shepherd who came to seek and save the lost.

Men of the world have recognized a spirit beyond the ordinary in these instructions to the church. J. A. Rippey told of leaving a volume of “Testimonies for the Church” on a train seat. When he returned, a gentleman, who apologized for having picked it up, said: “I hold a chair on the faculty of a university in New York. I am continually reading books, but this is the finest literature I have ever read. Where can I get some of these books?”

## Chapter 9—In Building Up an Organized Movement

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The apostolic gift is evidently the gift set for the leadership and administration of the work of the church.

“First apostles,” is the Scriptural order. The Spirit of prophecy has ever taught the proper recognition of the responsibilities and duties of administrative leadership. Never, on the basis of the rare gift committed to her, did Mrs. White assume the place of administrative leader.

### Respect For Administrative Responsibility

Not as a leader, but as a “messenger,” she viewed her responsibility, bearing messages from God for the guidance of leaders and people. She felt herself, under God, subject to counsel and action of the administrative body, the General Conference, in cooperating with undertakings of the movement.

This attitude is illustrated by one experience. Mrs. White found herself in a land over the sea, to which she had gone by General Conference invitation. But she was sick, and apparently helpless to undertake active work in a new field. “I deeply regretted having crossed the broad waters,” she related. “Why, at such an expense, was I in this country?” And in her physical misery and helplessness she wept. “But,” she wrote, “I did not long indulge in the luxury of tears.” She was there in obedience to the request of the General Conference, acting in the fear of God. She says:

“I said to myself, ‘Ellen G. White, what do you mean? Have you not come to Australia because you felt that it was your duty to go where the Conference judged it best for you to go? Has not this been your practice?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ ‘Then why do you feel almost forsaken and discouraged? Is not this the enemy’s work?’ I said, ‘I believe it is.’ I dried my tears as quickly as possible and said, ‘It is enough. I will not look on the dark side any more. Live or die, I

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commit the keeping of my soul to Him who died for me.’

“I then believed that the Lord would do all things well, and during this eight months of helplessness I have not had any despondency or doubt. I now look at this matter as a part of the Lord’s great plan, for the good of His people here in this country, and for those also in America, and for my good.”—“Elmshaven” “Brown Leaflet,” No. 4 (written in Australia, 1893).

It was on recognition of the responsibility of the apostolic or administrative gift in the church that the personal surrender and trust were based. And those years, 1892 to 1900, in Australia were wonderfully fruitful for good. There was worked out, under the guidance of the Spirit of prophecy, the union conference plan of organization, which obtains with blessed efficiency in our work in all the world. And in Australia and New Zealand a base was built up that carries the great and blessed burden of the island fields of the South Pacific.

All gifts had a hand in it, but some people of the world, looking on, somehow saw what a strong part Mrs. White acted in the upbuilding process.

### **How It Looked To Men Of The World**

Men who knew nothing of our view of the Spirit of prophecy saw a building-up influence in the work of the agent of the gift that left its visible mark on this cause. Many years later, in 1932, I was riding with one of our business brethren in Victoria. He said to me:

“Some time ago I met one of Australia’s leading businessmen, now largely retired from affairs. Knowing that I had become a Seventh-day Adventist, he said to me: ‘Do you know, Mr. Sandeman, I hold it as one of the cherished memories of my life that it was my privilege, in representing the business community, to welcome Mrs. E. G. White to Australia when she arrived from America many years ago. She impressed me as a remarkable woman; and we recognize the fact that her stay in this country contributed much to the development of the work your people have built up. I shall always count it a privilege that I had a part in welcoming that gifted lady to this country.’”

We think of the quiet, retiring woman, not given to appearing before the general public—save, perhaps, at times speaking by invitation in a town hall on Christian temperance or the Christian life and Christian home. And yet we know how, by the gift given her, she encouraged the administrative leaders and guided helpfully in the upbuilding of the work. Men of affairs, looking on, saw in it the work of a woman to whom they attributed unusual natural gifts.

In 1915 the leading religious magazine of America, then the *New York Independent*, had occasion to refer to the widespread work of Seventh-day Adventists and to the solid achievements of the denomination in the way of educational, publishing, and medical institutions in many lands. The editor said: “And in all this Ellen G. White has been the inspiration and guide. Here is a noble record, and she deserves great honor.”

The Lord honors faithfulness in service. “Them that honor Me,” He says, “I will honor.” While religious prejudice has attacked, seeking to belittle the work done through a humble agent, unprejudiced observers of the world have often given expression to admiration for the results they saw accomplished. We, too, honor the memory of a godly woman and mother in Israel, who was faithful to the divine call to service. Her life was lived before all, and never was there an incident, in all the long years, out of character with the high dignity and Christian humility of a true prophet of God.

### **Messages Of Power In Girlhood**

The special gift to help build up the cause was not in herself. This was seen from that first call in girlhood. It was not of herself, timid and shrinking, that there came a force that worked mightily in cooperating with the early leaders in building up a movement fulfilling the prophecy. One sees it in the first work the youthful instrument was called to perform. She says of those first steps:

“In my second vision, about a week after the first, the Lord gave me a view of the trials through which I must pass, and told me that I must go and relate to others what He had revealed to me.... After I came out of this vision I was exceedingly troubled, for it pointed out my duty to go out among the people and present the truth. My

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health was so poor that I was in constant bodily suffering, and to all appearance had but a short time to live....

“For several days, and far into the night, I prayed that this burden might be removed from me, and laid upon some one more capable of bearing it. But the light of duty did not change, and the words of the angel sounded continually in my ears, ‘Make known to others what I have revealed to you.’ ...How could I, a child in years, go forth from place to place, unfolding to the people the holy truths of God? ...My father ...repeatedly assured me that if God had called me to labor in other places, He would not fail to open the way for me.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 69, 70.](#)

So a young girl was soon out among groups of scattered believers in the second advent, joining older laborers in encouraging the people to hold fast to the “blessed hope.” It was a time of trial to many who had expected Christ to come at the end of the 2300-year prophetic period, in 1844. Multitudes had given up all faith in the soon coming of the Saviour. Winds of doctrine were blowing and eccentric and wild movements abounded.

### Facing The Situation

At seventeen this young woman was facing mesmerists, rebuking fanaticism, warning against the setting of a new time (for some, even of her own associates, had adjusted the historic basis of the prophetic period of the 2300 years to make it end in the autumn of 1845).

At eighteen and nineteen she was laboring in Vermont and Massachusetts. She bore important testimonies regarding the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and regarding the Sabbath truth, which had just come to her attention. The full advent movement was taking shape.

[69] At twenty-two her messages were pressing the leaders to launch definitely a publishing work.

At twenty-five most important instruction came regarding organization and church order. At that time much sentiment among the believers did not favor organization, and there was no way to keep disorderly elements from pressing in. Mrs. White wrote: “I saw that this door at which the enemy comes in to perplex and trouble the flock can be shut. I inquired of the angel how it could be closed. He



said, ‘The church must flee to God’s word, and become established upon gospel order, which has been overlooked and neglected.’”[Early Writings, 100.](#)

### **No Committee Order Could Have Qualified The Worker**

All this was not a work naturally belonging to a young woman. No committee would ask a girl to undertake the task. And no call of a committee could qualify a youth for such service. But God had called, and the effectiveness of the work was in the messages borne. Evil and disorderly elements were trying to put the leaven of error into the work. Our pioneers saw to the full the truth of the warning of the prophecy that “the dragon” was wroth with the remnant, and had come forth to make war with the movement that stood for God’s commandments. And no wonder the enemy warred against the Spirit of prophecy in the movement, for by that gift the evils threatening were so continually exposed. One of the pioneers, recounting the effective working of the messages by this gift in early times, wrote in 1866:

“They reveal the devices of Satan. They warn us against his snares. They have nipped in the bud scheme after scheme of fanaticism which the enemy has tried to foist into our midst. They have exposed hidden iniquity, brought to light concealed wrongs, and laid bare the evil motives of the falsehearted. They have warded off dangers from the cause of truth upon every hand.”—*U. Smith, in The Review and Herald, June 12, 1866.*

The pioneer workers, responsible to keep the movement on right lines and clear of evil, saw things done by that gift that they well knew no young woman could do unaided by divine direction. They thanked God for it. [70]

### **Among Strangers**

Again and again in those early days the youthful messenger was called upon to point out, among strangers she had never seen before, some whose lives were secretly evil, while pretensions to piety were being used to secure a place in the little flock. Sometimes

those pointed out acknowledged the fault and sought God for pardon, while in other cases a person might rise up and flee the place.

It was not alone in the first years and in those Eastern States that these experiences came. In 1935, at a meeting in Oregon, I met an elderly believer who told me of an experience that had meant much to him, many years before in Minnesota:

“At first,” he said, “I was skeptical, though a member of the church. I doubted about Mrs. White’s work. But I was at a meeting in Minnesota where she was present. She spoke, exhorting and admonishing. In the course of the talk she pointed out one man, an elder of the church. In a kind, appealing manner, but earnestly and sternly, she said that in a quiet way he was teaching ideas contrary to the faith of the body. And, further, that he was doing wrong in his conduct—leading a double life unknown to his brethren. It fairly took my breath away. But the man stood up and said that all Mrs. White had said was true. All my skepticism and doubting vanished. I had seen with my own eyes and heard with my ears a thing that I knew could have been done only through the Spirit of God.”

### **Sureness And Precision In Counsel**

[71] In giving counsel in places where conditions and personalities were unknown to her by any acquaintance, Mrs. White often spoke with sureness and precision, as the Spirit had presented situations to her mind. One such occasion was the first council she attended in Europe. It was held at Basel, Switzerland, in 1885. One of the veteran workers there, who acted as her interpreter in French, wrote:

“How interesting and wonderful it was to hear Sister White correctly delineate the peculiarities of different fields she had seen only as the Lord had shown them to her, and show how they should be met; to hear her describe case after case of persons she had never seen with her natural vision, and either point out their errors or show important relations they sustained to the cause, and how they should connect with it to better serve its interests!

“As I had a fair chance to test the matter, having been on the ground, and knowing that no one had informed Sister White of these things, while serving as interpreter, I could not help exclaiming, ‘It

is enough. I want no further evidence of its genuineness.”—*D. T. Bourdeau, in The Review and Herald, November 10, 1885.*

It was no exhibition to prove anything to anybody. It was just the regular work of giving counsel for the upbuilding of the cause of God by the spiritual gift imparted. When a people see this year after year for many years, and reap the fruitage of the wonderfully helpful counsel through a spiritual gift, no technicalities of criticism can cast so much as a shadow on a life record. It is as clear as a sunbeam.

The same influence is seen in the working of this gift in fostering all departments of the cause. Let us note especially three branches of institutional and field service,—publishing, educational, and the medical missionary, or health and temperance work.

## [72] **Chapter 10—Development of the Publishing Work**

The large use of the printing press by the people of the advent movement has been noted by observers for many years. The *International Review of Missions* (Edinburgh, Scotland), speaking particularly of Far Eastern mission fields, said: “Of the denominations, the Seventh-day Adventists are making the largest use of the press as a means of propagating their own views of truth.”

An influential writer in an organ of the mission societies of China wrote: “The Seventh-day Adventists have been more efficient, so far as I know, than any others in getting their literature out. They have put more brains into it than any other group.”

### **The Real Explanation**

Not for a moment would the leaders in the publishing department of the advent movement accept the suggestion that this efficiency observed is a matter of more brains. Yet we thank God for the gifts of efficiency in business on the part of our publishers, in the factory and in the field. These are spiritual gifts also. But these men would say, “If the movement has excelled in the use of the press as an evangelizing agency, it is first of all due to the appealing power of the definite message of the coming of the Lord which the printed pages set forth; and secondly, to the faithful work of believers in that message in circulating the literature far and near.”

And then, too, there was a gift placed in the movement from the very beginning, which has had a powerful influence for the building up of this branch of the work.

[73] In the early years, following 1844, the pioneers in the advent movement began to talk of plans for a permanent publishing work. They were in council over the matter in 1848. But the believers were few; they had not the necessary means. After hours of discussion, they broke up one night, having decided that they were not able to launch the publishing enterprise. That night, however, came one

of those interventions of God's hand through the gift of the Spirit of prophecy. As Mrs. White tells the story, remember she was then a young woman of twenty-two. But the courage of a divine commission nerved her soul. She wrote:

“At the meeting held in Dorchester, Massachusetts, November, 1848, I had been given a view of the proclamation of the sealing message, and of the duty of the brethren to publish the light that was shining upon our pathway.

“After coming out of vision, I said to my husband: ‘I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper, and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.’”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 125](#).

The counsel was followed. The first copy of a little paper called *The Present Truth* was issued in July, 1849. And the results foretold were seen:

1. The readers sent “means with which to print.”
2. The paper was “a success from the first.”
3. The publishing work did grow until it has been “like streams of light” going round the whole world.

Observers in far lands remark about the special efficiency of Seventh-day Adventists in the publishing of their message. They admire the work; but very likely they would deprecate the idea of the Spirit of prophecy in the church. Yet we know that this gift had its decisive part in the first launching of our publishing work on a permanent basis. And the gift has exerted a powerful influence ever since in the upbuilding of this department.

### How The Colporteur Agency Came

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It has been through the agency of the colporteur service that the great circulation has been given to the message-filled books. One missionary organ has said: “The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only one that has in the past made adequate provision for the handling of its literature.”

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Considering that they are one of the smallest of churches, it is remarkable that they should be ranked as high in the output of publications on Bible doctrines. “How do they do it?” said a Protestant congress in South America. “How do they do it?” has been the question in Asia, Africa, Europe, and other lands.

The real secret is in the message that is in the books. That awakens an interest on the part of people to read, and the urgency of the message and the love of souls nerves the colporteur army to hold to the field. Of them it may be said, as the ancient historian, Herodotus, wrote of the messengers of the great Persian king: “Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

“On goes the colporteur, nor slacks his zeal,  
Through hard times or prosperity, through woe or weal.  
Placing in countless homes books full of grace  
That point earth’s weary to a resting place.”

But how is it that this great evangelistic agency has been so developed by this advent movement? It was not because some of our men, as the Oriental mission organ suggested, “put more brains” than others had done into a publishing work.

Here again it was this oft-despised gift of the Spirit of prophecy that pointed the way. In 1879 the movement had not a colporteur in the field. No one had thought doctrinal books could be sold in that way. Then, as M. E. Olsen has written in “The Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists:” “The most important step in the history of the denominational publishing work was the adoption of the plan of selling books by subscription. This plan was first proposed by Mrs. E. G. White, in a testimony dated 1879.”—*Page 426.*

[76] “Some things of grave importance,” she wrote, had not received attention. “Men in responsible positions should have worked up plans whereby our books could be circulated.” Books should have been produced in an attractive way. “Hundreds of men,” the testimony said, “should be engaged in carrying the light all through our cities, villages, and towns.”—“*Testimonies,*” Vol. IV, pp. 388, 389.

That started things; and exactly the work described is seen going forward in all the continents and in many languages. Observers

outside praise the efficiency shown. They attribute it to the keen perception of men. But we who know the facts, know it was the leading of God, through this gift of the Spirit of prophecy, that placed this great evangelizing agency in the advent movement.

### **Europe's Big Publishers Said, "Impossible!"**

No one thought, at first, of carrying this plan of work into other countries than North America. But when Mrs. White visited Europe in 1885-87, she was shown that the same work could be successfully done there. The men in charge of the work consulted publishers in Basel, Leipzig, and other great centers of the book trade. "Selling books in Europe by subscription would prove a failure," was the universal answer by the men who knew the book business and knew Europe.

But a Christian sister, Mrs. White, who had been used in the movement in a wonderful way, said that she had been shown by the Lord that the plan would work. Acting on this counsel, the leaders launched the effort. Almost at once B. L. Whitney, in charge at the Basel headquarters, began to report encouraging success with the first book, a French "Life of Christ," by Mrs. White:

"We feel," he wrote, "that we cannot praise God enough for this prospect of a means whereby our publishing work can be made self-sustaining, and remunerative employment be furnished to many who desire to labor in the cause."—[The Review and Herald, November 29, 1887](#).

Sixteen years later a delegate from Europe to the General Conference told of the experience through the years as the workers had gone forward in the counsels of the Spirit of prophecy. He said:

"I well remember, sixteen years ago, when Sister White was in Europe and spoke of the great work that might be done in that country by the circulation of our literature. Surely the Lord spoke at that time, when He said that more could be done in Europe by the circulation of our literature than here [in America or elsewhere]; but it was a matter of faith for us to see it, because wherever we turned there were so many seeming obstacles in the way that it seemed that it was not possible in that country to do what had been done here.

[77]

But even if every man be a liar, the word of God is true, and it has proved true.

“We have since that time seen the canvassing work begin to increase and grow in all parts of our field. I well remember that when we first began, the publishers said, ‘Why, it is impossible in this country; you can’t do as in America; you can’t sell books by agents, and they can’t make their living in that way. You will have to work on a different basis.’”

As they went forward in faith, said the delegate, they saw this “impossible” thing being done. “Now we knew,” he said, “that the Lord had spoken the truth.”—*L. R. Conradi, The General Conference Bulletin, April 8, 1901.*

In the published writings of the Spirit of prophecy, many pages are devoted to the fostering of the publishing work. The instruction and encouragement through this gift have been a strength to the bookwork in all lands. In the land of Chosen, years ago, workers of another church watched our Korean colporteurs with deep interest to learn the secret of their devotion and success. These observers at last came to our mission headquarters, saying: “We have been studying the work of your colporteurs. We find that one secret of their success is in a little book that the leaders carry and study. Could we get copies of that book?”

The little book is the smallest volume, I think, at the top of that monument of books pictured on an early page of this survey. It is entitled, “The Colporteur Evangelist,” a real strength to the great army of colporteurs.



## Chapter 11—Building Up a System of Christian Education

[78]

With the rise and progress of the advent movement, there grew up in connection with it a system of Christian education, exactly adapted to the needs of a world missionary movement, and aiming, above all, to train the children and youth of the church for the kingdom of heaven. Any survey of the whole system—from church schools to academies and junior and senior colleges, with one medical college beyond the senior college circle—reveals the Spirit of prophecy as a major influence in its development. The educational leaders who have wrought out the system through the years are the first to testify to their indebtedness to that gift. Their gift as teachers has done major work also. The teaching gift is one of the spiritual gifts committed to the church. “First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.” [1 Corinthians 12:28](#). The gift of prophecy in no wise supplanted the others. It was used to point the way, to lay down principles, to inspire action—and the teaching gift, it is, that works out the whole.

### Books On Christian Education

To speak of a systematic school program indebted heavily to the writings of Mrs. White is to invite the thought at once that this writer was called in girlhood with only the most meager education in the common branches. How, then, could she contribute greatly to a complete system of education?

Yet in the list of books we have given in connection with the photograph reproduced on page 34, there are four sizable volumes dealing with Christian education: “Education,” “Christian Education,” “Fundamentals of Christian Education,” “Counsels to Teachers.”

In one of the large cities of a British oversea commonwealth is a teachers’ college, a normal school for the training of teachers. The president of that college said to one of our workers some years ago:

[79]

“To every teacher who graduates from this school I present a copy of the best book on education in the English language. It is a book entitled, ‘Education,’ by Mrs. E. G. White.”

How could this writer, who had not the privilege of a college education, produce a book of which the head of a teachers’ training institution could so speak? The writer herself repeatedly explained it: “Of myself I could not have brought out the truths in these books; but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit.”

Because instruction on educational principles, especially adapted to the needs of this advent movement, were required for the good of the youth, the Spirit of prophecy brought forth the counsels.

[80]

### **School Inspectors Speak**

In visiting an academy in a rural location in one of the Australian states, I was told this incident by a former head of the school:

“The public inspector of schools came to visit and survey our school in the regular way of his official duties. He was impressed with the industrial departments, and especially with the uniform spirit of cooperation in the student body. ‘How do you get such results?’ he asked me. I answered, ‘We have four books on educational methods that are a help to us.’ ‘I would like to look through them,’ he said. I gave him the four books by Mrs. White. He took them home with him. When next he came to inspect, he returned the books, saying: ‘I see it now. No wonder you get the results. That book “Education” is a masterpiece. With us, if a young man keeps getting out of line, we say, “Straighten up, or out you go!” But you follow the counsels of these books that tell your teachers how to get close and pray and work to win.’”

[81]

Educational work of a distinctive character was developed under these counsels. Men of the world who have come in contact with it have recognized something different. The manager of an Adventist senior college in America related the impression expressed by a member of a commission from the State university, surveying the college. After a view of the student industries, he said to his associate inspectors: “Well, here is one college that is doing the thing that all of us say should be done, but which we do not do.”

It is in the writings of the gift given to the advent movement that one finds the urge and inspiration that have helped the school men to struggle toward the ideals of Christian education.

### **In Far Lands**

Before Mr. Gandhi, the leader of millions in India, took up the work that has made his name famous, he spent some years in South Africa. There he came in contact with Seventh-day Adventists, and learned something of their educational and health principles. Years later the leaders of our church in India were building up a schoolwork in North India on the lines laid down in the instruction of the Spirit of prophecy. Two or three of our men wished to interview Mr. Gandhi regarding the principles and aims of the school enterprise, and regarding health work. Our representatives were granted an interview. But it was a day on which Mr. Gandhi had taken a vow of silence—this strange man who studied the New Testament and paid reverence to the Hindu gods. Our spokesman, G. F. Enoch, talked, while Mr. Gandhi now and then wrote an answer on a tablet. Nothing had been said of religion or church. But as the visitors explained the plan of education to be followed in the school,—the threefold training of the mind, the heart, the hand,—and as the matter of a line of health educational literature was introduced, Mr. Gandhi wrote on the tablet: “Are you Seventh-day Adventists?” He had recognized the distinctive pattern. And it is to the special gift of the Spirit of prophecy in this church that our educators owe the blueprint which they endeavor to follow.

Years ago, in one of the new countries of Europe created by the World War settlement, a university staff brought out a book on religious and moral education. It was a Catholic professor who prepared the volume by request. Perhaps he made no claim to authorship, but only worked as compiler. I do not know. But the book was put out by the university as the “best book” on religious education in that language. When our men in that country got hold of the book, they recognized a familiar note in many passages. They looked the matter up, and found that the new book was very largely a translation from Mrs. White’s book, “Education.” Recently, in Vienna, I met a young student-teacher who was from the country

referred to. “I would say,” he told me, “that the book on education put out by the university was fully eighty per cent a translation from Mrs. White.”

[83]

### **Only One Explanation**

Any one must rejoice, of course, to see the principles of Christian education proclaimed, in whatever form and by any means. But how is one to explain how this pen wrote these counsels, so important to the cause of the advent movement, and to some extent, at least, so appreciated by observers without? The answer—the only answer under the circumstances—is in the fact that the gift of the Spirit of prophecy was given to the remnant church for the building up of every department of service.

## Chapter 12—Health and Temperance and Medical [84] Missionary Activity

From early days the advent movement has stood for health and temperance as a very part of religious reform and gospel evangelization.

The Encyclopedia Britannica many years ago referred to “the Seventh-day Adventists, who are connected with many sanatoria and the manufacture of food specialties.”

It is true that the promotion of this department of work has led to the projection of sanitariums and hospitals, clinics and treatment rooms, in all the continents. Seeing this, businessmen of the world have again and again offered inducements for the denomination to undertake such enterprises here and there. “You Seventh-day Adventist people know how to run sanitariums,” has often been said.

### A Work Of Sacrifice

Those who say such things, because of seeing institutions planted in various parts, little realize, generally, the toil and sacrifice and labor and travail a truly health-missionary plant entails. It has meant money sacrifice by believers to build it or purchase it, it has meant missionary sacrifice on the part of physicians, nurses, and workers to conduct it. No one knowing the history would ever conceive of such an enterprise as a commercial venture. It has all developed as a part of gospel work, to help the suffering, to teach the better way of physical life, and to prepare men for the life to come.

How has it come about? Many gifts have been devoted to this work. And in it all, largely out of sight of the general public, appears the working of the gift of the Spirit of prophecy, a major factor in building up this as well as other departments of the movement.

Years ago, on a journey from Manila, in the Philippines, to Shanghai, China, a lady sitting at my table in the ship dining room [85] was talking of the health work of Seventh-day Adventists, which

she had found represented in many places over the Orient. She was a keen businesswoman, who had before spent many years in missionary service with one of the great societies. “How is it,” she asked, “that Seventh-day Adventists, of all the denominations, have made so prominent this kind of work? How does it come about that they are in this thing?”

At the crowded table the only reply practicable in a few moments was to explain that the Lord’s providence had led this church to engage in this kind of work from their earliest history; that they considered that even as Jesus ministered to the sick while teaching the gospel, even so the church is called to do, following in His steps; and that this people consider it a part of the gospel commission to teach men how to glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits which are God’s.

### **Launched By The Spirit Of Prophecy**

The answer given the lady is sufficient as a general outline. But any one going into the history of this development would find the definite beginnings of it in the year 1863. The inspiration to enter this health field as a definite program of work came at that time—and by the gift of the Spirit of prophecy. A few years later, in 1867, Mrs. White wrote: “It was at the house of A. Hilliard, at Otsego, Michigan, June 6, 1863, that the great subject of health reform was opened before me in vision.”—[The Review and Herald, October 8, 1867](#).

Visiting a small village church, and stopping in the home of a farmer brother, “the great subject of health” was brought before her mind by the Spirit. At once she began to write message after message, telling the things her heart was burdened to give to the people. By 1866 pioneer leaders were prepared to launch the first institutional effort, the Health Reform Institute, at Battle Creek, Michigan. From that beginning, sanitariums, clinics, treatment rooms, have spread over the earth with the progress of the movement. And, [86] greater still, a whole people have been made “health-conscious,” and encouraged to engage in ministry to the sick and suffering in neighborhood service.

## Not By One Gift Alone

Many gifts have entered into the building up of such a work. We honor the men and women who as physicians have given their lives to this department, and also their associate workers. Those who have been foremost at the task have been first to acknowledge the debt this department owes to the instruction and encouragement that came through the Spirit of prophecy. Here any previous training of the human agent of this gift could count even less than in the educational development.

But there is a never-failing fount of inspiration to right physical living and medical missionary activity in the volumes of these writings. It was fitting that on the central administration building of the White Memorial Hospital, at Los Angeles, a unit of the Medical College founded in Loma Linda and Los Angeles to send out medical missionaries, this memorial tablet was affixed by our medical leaders:

[87]

This Hospital  
is dedicated to the memory of  
Ellen Gould White  
whose long life was unselfishly  
devoted to the  
Alleviation of the woes and sorrows of the sick,  
the suffering, and the needy; and to inspiring  
young men and women to consecrate  
their lives  
to the work of Him who said,  
“Heal the sick.”

## Writings On Health

In the list of books by this gift on health and medical topics are: “Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene,” “Counsels on Health,” “Ministry of Healing,” “Counsels to Physicians,” “Medical Ministry.”

Many a story might be told of these books. “Ministry of Healing” is the book that one of the queens of Europe admired so much. The queen herself was a writer, doing some fine literary work under the pen name of Carmen Sylva. A godly Christian woman she was, too,

a queen who fell fainting to the floor, it was said, when she was told it was inevitable that her country would be drawn into the World War. Before those hard times she had urged upon our leaders in that country that “Ministry of Healing” should be translated into the language of her country. She volunteered to write an introduction for the book. But it was never done, I think, in the troublous times that arose.

### One Remarkable Feature

This was the book a professor in a well-known medical school had read once, but which he wished to keep longer in order to go over it again. “I find things presented here,” he said, “which medical science has only recently established; and I note by the date of the book that it was written some years before these findings were brought out.”

[88] There is this element in these writings,—the author spoke sometimes of things she herself could not have fully understood. We are told in Scripture that sometimes “prophets have inquired and searched diligently” to understand what the Spirit of Christ in them signified as they were moved to write. (See [1 Peter 1:10, 11.](#)) Prophets wrote things beyond their own understanding.

An illustration of this occurs in some writings on health in the early volumes of “Testimonies for the Church.” In 1934 there was quite a wave of discussion in medical circles concerning discoveries relating to the electrical action of the brain and body cells. A London newspaper announced: “Two men at Cambridge University have succeeded in photographing thought by recording and amplifying the electric impulses sent out by the brain.”—*Daily Mail, Dec. 3, 1934.*

Dr. Adrian, special investigator of the nervous system, was reported to have found that “with a man seated in an armchair, with eyes closed, thinking of nothing in particular, there was a regular discharge of electrical impulses from the brain at the rate of about ten a second. If the subject opens his eyes and concentrates his attention, the impulses jump to about 2,000 a second.”

Speaking of experiments in America during the preceding two years, the *New Outlook*, of New York (June, 1934), said: “For one



thing it was learned that the atom was electrical.” And about the same time Dr. Charles H. Mayo said: “Minute electrical charges are vital to the functioning of the brain.”

But our point in mentioning these reports here is to show that similar things were written in the “Testimonies” on health topics fifty years before. Mrs. White wrote: “Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system, lessens the strength of the vital powers.”—[Testimonies for the Church 2:347](#).

Of one woman in need of counsel it was written: “She wants [lacks] the will to electrify the nerve power so that she may resist indolence.”—[Testimonies for the Church 2:428](#).

In the book “Education,” published in 1903, it was said: “The electric power of the brain, promoted by mental activity, vitalizes the whole system, and is thus an invaluable aid in resisting disease.”—*Page 197*.

“Electric power of the brain,” said this book in 1903. “Electric impulses from the brain,” said the Cambridge University scientist in 1934.

[89]

Readers of the writings of the Spirit of prophecy used to count the language thus used as a figure of speech, a metaphor, that illustrated the facts. But the *New York Forum* (April, 1934) said of certain new findings in this field of electricity: “It is much more than a metaphor that experiment reveals; it is a fact that our sense of hearing works by changing sound waves beating onto our eardrum into electrical oscillations, and that it is not *like* a microphone, it *is* a microphone.... This set of experiments goes to prove that whatever goes on in the brain itself, as distinct from what goes on in the sensory nerves, is of the same electrical nature.”

While this is just a diversion, in passing, to suggest how impossible it was that the human agent, unaided, could have written these things, the root of the whole matter is that the vast mass of material coming from the pen of this servant of God, to build up the great health and medical missionary department of our work, could never have been the work of the writer’s unaided wisdom or judgment. There is a spiritual gift manifested here that makes itself felt in this movement today in all the lands.

## An Unparalleled Work Of Health Reform

This gift has strengthened the ministry of the denomination in preaching a gospel message that has banished from among the membership alcoholic drink, tobacco, the unclean swine's flesh and the flesh of all animals pronounced unclean by the Lord. (See [Leviticus 11](#).) It is a clean sweep in all lands. Nothing parallel to it, in the way of a health movement, has ever been known in modern times. It is wrought by the preaching of the word, which works in those that believe.

[90] Early in the mission work in the South Seas, certain island peoples gave the church of this movement the name, "The clean church." "Why," they said, "all the members of this church drink no beer, they use no tobacco or betelnut, they don't eat swine's flesh; this is a 'clean church.'"

The gift of the Spirit of prophecy has strengthened the hands of medical workers and their associates in building up institutions and training centers all through the years.

And these writings have been powerful in holding the operation of the health institution to a true spiritual standard. In "Counsels on Health" it is stated: "The religious influence that pervades these institutions inspires the guests with confidence. The assurance that the Lord presides there, and the many prayers offered for the sick, make an impression upon their hearts."—*Page 208*.

A medical man, Dr. T. S. Harding, a stranger to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, save as he and his wife saw it in action in sanitarium work, wrote in a medical journal about this spirit of confidence that guests find taking possession of their hearts in these institutions of ours. He said: "Precisely how this is accomplished I do not know, but I do know that every member of the staff, to the lowest nurse or assistant, was imbued with a spirit of helpfulness and friendliness. The atmosphere was cheerful at all times; the patient felt reassured and relaxed."—*Medical Economics, November, 1931*.

One of the largest sanitariums in the movement is in Denmark. The veteran pioneer in the enterprise, Dr. J. C. Ottosen, once told me how, when failure in the first days seemed before them, the hearts of the workers were encouraged to hold on by messages from the Spirit of prophecy, sent from far over the sea. Mrs. White wrote

them that she had been shown in vision angels visiting the rooms at Skodsborg, to help the patients and to encourage the workers. "I tell you," said the doctor, "those messages helped us to hold on until the work began to grow."

### Angel Ministry

The assurance of angel helpers cooperating in ministry to the sick is no farfetched idea. Workers at one institution, the Shanghai (China) Sanitarium, told of a Chinese woman patient who had been studying the Christian faith with believing heart. She underwent a serious operation, from which it seemed impossible for her to rally. Her life was fluttering out. In the extremity, the staff knelt by her bed in earnest prayer. At once the turn came, the patient revived, and recovery proceeded well.

[91]

At the moment of prayer the non-Christian servant of this Chinese lady fled from the room as if in fear. She would not tell what had affrighted her. But later, as this servant was looking at a Christian book, she saw a picture of an angel, with wings outspread.

"There it is," the servant cried. "That is what I saw when they prayed for my mistress. A being just like this came into the room and touched her as she lay on the bed. That is what frightened me."

"There is a balm in Gilead,  
To make the wounded whole;  
There is a balm in Gilead,  
To heal the sin-sick soul."

In this gospel ministry for sin-sick souls and suffering bodies, angels from heaven join in the work. The advent movement came in response to the foretellings of prophecy, and the living God is leading the work.

## Chapter 13—A World Program

A World-Wide missionary program is one of the distinctive features of the advent movement. “Unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” is the commission in the prophecy of [Revelation 14](#).

### Observers See It

Observers have noted this aim. In the year of the great Pan-American Missions Conference at Panama, the leading Methodist organ, the New York *Christian Advocate*, said of the foreign mission aim of Seventh-day Adventists: “Small though the denomination ...is, it has its missionaries scattered through every region of the globe, working ...with a consummate skill that is systematically taught as a part of their regular training.”—*Quoted in The Review and Herald, October 11, 1906*.

Referring to statistics of new missionaries sent out, a Baptist organ spoke editorially: “The three largest non-Catholic denominational bodies in the United States, with seventy-two times as many members as the Adventists of the United States and Canada, are doing less altogether in foreign mission work (in some respects at least) than the Adventists are doing.”—*Advance, June 30, 1927*.

It sounds like appeal by exaggeration. But let it suffice. This is simply to allow others to say that this advent movement is a serious effort to carry the last gospel message to every nation, as the prophecy foretold.

### A Gift Inspiring To World Action

In all this development of our world missions, the gift of the Spirit of prophecy has led and inspired.

It is remarkable, and instructive, to note how the spirit of opposition to this gift in the remnant church leads men to miss the plainest of facts. Here is a word from one who turned from the

movement and began to attack the writings and work of the Spirit of prophecy, as manifested through Mrs. E. G. White. The opposer's representation, printed in another language than English, may be translated thus: "Unlike Paul, who looked out into the heathen world and saw an open door, Frau White looked out into the world and saw a shut door."

[93]

But think of it! In the first vision of this gift, in 1844, the calling out of the 144,000 of the prophecy of the seventh chapter of Revelation was described. And in a vision but a few days or weeks later, we have absolutely the finest paragraph on world-wide missions that I have ever found. Mrs. White published it as follows:

### **"A View Of The World Work**

"Would that every one of you could have a view that was presented to me years ago. In my very girlhood the Lord saw fit to open before me the glories of heaven. I was in vision taken to heaven, and the angel said to me, 'Look!' I looked to the world as it was in dense darkness. The agony that came over me was indescribable as I saw this darkness.

"Again the word came, 'Look ye.' And again I looked intently over the world, and I began to see jets of light like stars dotted all through this darkness; and then I saw another and another added light, and so all through this moral darkness the starlike lights were increasing. And the angel said, 'These are they that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and are obeying the words of Christ. These are the light of the world; and if it were not for these lights, the judgments of God would immediately fall upon the transgressors of God's law.'

"I saw then these little jets of light growing brighter, shining forth from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and lighting the whole world. Occasionally one of these lights would begin to grow dim, and others would go out, and every time this occurred there was sadness and weeping in heaven. And some of the lights would grow brighter and brighter, and their brightness was far-reaching, and many more lights were added to it. Then there was rejoicing in heaven. I saw that the rays of light came directly from Jesus, to form these precious jets of light in the world."—[Gospel Workers, old edition, 378.](#)

[94]

That was the repetition for the advent movement of the call of the angel of [Revelation 14](#) to go to every nation and tongue and people. The constant representation by the Spirit of prophecy looking toward a truly world-wide work was hard for the pioneers to understand at first. James White, the first leader in the movement, used to tell how it troubled them, when they could not see how it could be, with time so short and numbers so few. It was felt that a few would be gathered out in all continents, representing all nations, but to send missionaries into all the remote lands, and do a settled work in all the ends of the earth, seemed beyond their resources.

About so was the idea, I think, down to 1893, though the view of results to be expected was ever enlarging. I speak of it freely, as that was about my idea, as nearly as I can recall, when I was called to return from Europe to America, to act as secretary of the Foreign Mission Board in 1891.

### **The Call That Woke Us Up**

But in 1893 a message came by the Spirit of prophecy that stirred this church into action. Mrs. White was then in Australia. From across the sea came the call to a world work with no qualifications or interpretations:

“The *same work* must be accomplished in Australia, New Zealand, in Africa, India, China, and the islands of the sea, as has been accomplished in the home field. Under an appropriate symbol of an angel flying through the midst of heaven is represented the work of the people of God.”—[The Bible Echo, September 1, 1892](#). (Melbourne)

[95] The appeals accompanying the instruction were a clarion call to the advent people to take up the task in earnest. It brought an awakening. After the light that came flooding in with the messages of the gift, we forgot all about what restricted ideas we had held. The believers saw that symbol of [Revelation 14](#), the angel flying in the midst of heaven to every nation and tongue. The picture of the prophecy had been there all the time; but now it was seen that it meant the *samework* in all lands—publishing houses, schools, sanitariums, as well as evangelists, with the training of the young people of remote lands to carry the message to their own people.

The believers caught the vision. The message rose and spread its wings yet wider, for stronger, farther, faster flight.

Observers witness this world-wide expansion of a small people, and remark upon the distinctive character of it. Some of these have scant patience with the doctrine of a Spirit of prophecy in the church. Some attack the movement on account of this gift, as the prophecy foretold ([Revelation 12:17](#)). But the fact remains that the Spirit of prophecy is one great factor in arousing the spirit of missions in the hearts of the advent believers. By its fruits men may know it.

### **Ingathering Of Souls In Catholic Lands**

At a time when the coming in of a Roman Catholic was a wonder to be dwelt upon, the Spirit of prophecy urged work directly for Catholic peoples. At the council in Switzerland, in 1887, Mrs. White said:

“We should not upon entering a place build up unnecessary barriers between us and other denominations, especially the Catholics, so that they shall think we are their enemies.... There are many among the Catholics who live up to the light they have far better than many who claim to believe present truth.... From that which God has shown me, a great number will be saved from among the Catholics. There has been but little done for them except to make them appear in the worst light.”—*General Conference File, bk. for 1899*.

We think of these words now, when for years Catholics, Roman and Greek, have been laying hold of the gospel of the advent message by thousands every year.

## Chapter 14—Removals of Our Headquarters

From East: to West (1855)

From West to East (1903)

In 1855 the general and publishing headquarters of the advent cause was set up in Battle Creek, Michigan, in the vigorously developing Middle West.

Our church paper, and the infant publishing work, constituted a part of the headquarters of the cause from the beginning. James White, our early leader, and his associates, were responsible for directing the movements of the small group of evangelists and for bringing out the paper and the tracts and pamphlets. The general administration and the publishing development went on together.

It will be recalled how insistent was the counsel by the Spirit of prophecy, in 1848, that there should not be delay in starting a paper to carry the message to the people. When older heads had decided they were as yet unable to bring out a paper, the word had come from the youthful agent of the gift: “You must begin to print.”

They began, in faith. In 1851, two years after the first paper, *The Present Truth*, had been brought out, Captain Joseph Bates joyfully reported the increase of believers in northern New England. The starting of the printing work, strengthening the hands of the traveling preachers, was bringing glad fruitage. The hardy, energetic seaman-evangelist wrote:

“Within two years the true Sabbathkeepers have increased four-fold in Vermont and New Hampshire. Within one year we believe they have more than doubled their number, and they are daily increasing as the paper and the messengers go forth. In these two States alone, conferences have been held within a few months, where one year ago not one believer in the message could be found. We speak of this to the praise of God and His rising cause, and to strengthen His dear children to press together; and also to encourage all honest



advent believers to examine the third angel's message for themselves. [97]  
God forbid that we should boast of our position, only to the honor and praise of His name; but we ask all sincere seekers after truth to show, if they can, another company on this earth that are coming up in accordance with the declaration of God's inspired prophets, as this company now is."—[The Review and Herald, August 5, 1851](#).

The pilgrim life of the early headquarters is registered in the list of places from which the paper was issued. First, in Middletown, Connecticut (1849-50); then from Paris, Maine (1850-51), with the name *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*: after this, from Saratoga Springs, New York (in early 1852).

In this year, 1852, came the first real headquarters establishment, in Rochester, New York (April 1852). From that place, James White rallied the believers to the purchase of the hand press and tiny outfit that enabled the pioneers to say the cause had a publishing house of its own. Joseph Bates, ever the joyful cheerleader in every step forward that he heard of, wrote to Elder White:

"We hope you will be successful in your efforts to establish this part of the work to your mind, so that there shall be one printing establishment in all the land of which it may be said, They rest the Sabbath day according to the commandment."—[The Review and Herald, May 6, 1852](#).

In the same paper, James White sounded the note of courage over the establishment, at last, of a publishing center. He wrote as editor:

"In the summer of 1849 we issued the first number of the little sheet entitled, *The Present Truth*. We commenced the work under circumstances the most unfavorable, being destitute of means, and the very few friends of the Sabbath being generally very poor. But soon after sending out the first number, sufficient means came in.... Since that time the cause has advanced far beyond the expectations of its warmest friends."—*Ibid*.

"After sending out the first number," he wrote, "sufficient means came in." Recall that message of the Spirit of prophecy, in 1848, that told James White: "You must begin to print.... As the people [98]  
read, they will send you means." Already the fulfillment of that early message was being seen. The pioneers rejoiced over the progress made, as they set up that first hand press in Rochester.

Yet their view of the work to be done fell far short of the view that the Spirit of prophecy had all along been describing. In the first vision of the publishing work, that called to the printing of the first little paper, the youthful Mrs. White had said: “From this small beginning [of the printing work] it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 125](#).

[99] The little hand press of 1852 could not by any means fit that picture of a world-wide publishing work. But as today our printing presses are running in all the continents and in the islands of the sea, we rejoice in the faith of the pioneers who looked for a great work to be done with the small outfit they were then able to secure. They dedicated that first press to God, for the printing of the great message of [Revelation 14](#). When the removal came to the West, the first press went along, soon to be used only as a proof press, while the first steam press took its place. Rejoicing over the steam press, James White wrote in 1858:

“The steam press works finely, and very fast. We can print more in one day than with the hand press in two weeks. Then the work was very heavy, now it is light. We must keep the press running, and let the silent messengers go everywhere.” “The time has come to scatter our publications and extend our labors.”—[The Review and Herald, August 12, 1858](#).

Faithful pioneers! How their faith leaped forward at every step, limited as was their view of the great world field! Thirty years later, when Washington Morse, one of the pioneer believers of Vermont, came to Battle Creek, Michigan, and saw those lined-up printing presses in the Review office throwing down the pages as fast as falling leaves in the autumn wind, he wrote of the first old hand press that he found, still doing its humble duty there as a proof press:

“As I stood looking upon that noble old press, many long-forgotten memories of the past were revived. I remember the words of Elder White when it was decided to purchase it. Said he, ‘I think this press will last us through, until our work is done.’ ...We believed that that printing outfit [of Rochester] would be sufficient to carry on the printing business to the end of time.”—[The Review and Herald, October 23, 1888](#).

Those builders of the early days, men of invincible faith in the advent message, could not see the greatness of the world work beyond. But from those first days the Spirit of prophecy was telling it, even as Scripture prophecy was telling it,—the message going “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” And in time, as the movement grew, the people of the movement caught a new view of the truly world-wide work to which they were called.

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### Removal To The West

The removal of the headquarters to the Central West was in God’s providence to hasten the development of strength, in numbers and resources, that would later enable the believers to undertake a work for all the world.

It was evidently in the early fifties that the Spirit of prophecy began to call for stronger efforts to the westward. For it was in 1856 that a little volume, “Testimony for the Church, No. 3,” was published, bearing this counsel:

“I saw that special efforts should be made in the West with tents; for the angels of God are preparing minds there to receive the truth. This is why God has moved on some in the East to move to the West. Their gifts can accomplish more in the West than in the East. The burden of the work is in the West, and it is of the greatest importance that the servants of God should move in His opening providence.

“I saw that when the message shall increase greatly in power, then the providence of God will open and prepare the way in the East for much more to be accomplished than can be at the present time.”—[Testimonies for the Church 1:148, 149](#)

The Middle West was a new land of prosperity, many from the Atlantic States were moving in; and here, in new communities, a strong work could more rapidly be built up. In 1855 the office of publication was established in Battle Creek, Michigan, the General Conference was later organized, and its headquarters was there also. In 1866 our first health institution, or sanitarium, was established in the same center, and later our first college.

The work was attended by the blessing of God, and from this old headquarters the work was extended into all the continents and among the island fields of the Atlantic and Pacific. The present

publishing house helped in establishing the Pacific Press publishing plant in California. The first college sent workers into home and foreign lands. The first sanitarium inspired health centers in other parts.

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### **Counsels Against Building Up Great Centers**

From early times, in the West, the Spirit of prophecy bore messages of warning against the tendency of believers to gather in large numbers in a few centers. Of the Battle Creek headquarters, it was written in 1868: “Families have been coming from all directions to reside there.”—[Testimonies for the Church 2:114](#).

Instead of congregating together, thus making large centers, the believers were urged to live and work in regions where their light was needed to spread the truth abroad. So came the counsels through the decades. But by 1893, which was marked in our memory by a special message on this topic from the Spirit of prophecy, several thousand believers, counting children, were living at headquarters.

It was in 1893 that a special message by the Spirit of prophecy came from Australia to our old center. Mrs. White had gone to Australia at the end of 1891. Many may still remember the solemn counsel that came to us at Battle Creek in 1893. I must tell the story as it is stamped on my memory.

I was secretary of the Mission Board at the time, having been called back from Europe. I sat in the old Tabernacle that Sabbath morning as the message, just in that week by the Australian mail, was read to the great congregation. It was a solemn time to us who listened.

For years before this time, let me repeat, messages had now and then been borne, urging our people not to congregate in great centers. It was pointed out that instead of gathering together, diffusion should be the plan. The Lord desired the light to be scattered among the people who needed help. But year after year the tendency was for the number of believers to increase at the great center.

Now came this message from over the sea, declaring in solemn tones that the Lord was in earnest with His people. The message read from the pulpit that Sabbath morning sounded like a message of warning from one of the prophets of old Bible times. It declared that

the continual congregating of believers around the institutions at the old headquarters was endangering the institutions. It was made plain that the Lord wanted no more Jerusalems on earth. The principles of His kingdom called for the spreading forth of His representatives in communities where their light was needed. It went on to say that if the unwise gathering of the believers around the old central institutions continued, the Lord would allow the institutions to go down in ruins.

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The message made a solemn impression. Some moved out; but as time passed, yet larger numbers moved in. Some people of the world learned of the message, and openly scoffed at it. Some backslidden Seventh-day Adventists jested about it. One such, I remember, was building a dwelling on the edge of town, using cement blocks. That style of building was rather new in those times, and I recall going across to have a look at the house. The brother laughingly commented upon his plan, saying he was building of cement blocks so that when the place was swept with fire, his house would stand. So as time passed, some scoffed and many forgot.

Years passed on. I had returned shortly to Europe, and later went on to India. Eight or nine years later I found myself at the old headquarters, held by the call to be again secretary of our Mission Board.

One morning, having risen early to take a train, I came out from my home to pass our oldest health institution. Looking up, I saw smoke coming from upper windows at the rear. It seemed impossible. But looking again, I saw it was no dream, but all too true. Institutional workers were running about giving first alarms. Hastily I ran back to throw my bag into the yard of my home, and hurried to join the workers and others in the group that helped get the people out of the building. At first infirm patients were helped and carried into an adjoining building, the hospital, across the street; but later, as the flames ate their way through the main building, they leaped the narrow street and lapped up the adjoining hospital annex. So the flaming destruction went on, despite every effort, until the main buildings of our greatest institution were laid in ruins.

However, not only the lessons of the book of Job and other portions of Scripture, but all human experience as well, show that troubles and calamities come in every good cause in this world of

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change and trouble. There is no assurance of escape from trial and temporal loss, even though God's overruling hand may cause all these things to work together for good to those that love Him. No one at headquarters, in that time of trial, seems to have made any connection between the message borne by the Spirit of prophecy years before and the laying in ruins of one of the institutions at the general headquarters.

Time passed, and about a year later, one evening near the end of 1902, I was sitting in the old Grand Trunk Railway station at Battle Creek, waiting for a train to take me to a seaport to catch a boat for a visit to the West Indies and South America. A man came into the waiting room.

"Is your name Spicer?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"Well," he said, "the Review and Herald is going up."

"What do you mean?"

"The Review and Herald printing house is burning," he answered.

I hurried out and down the long platform, where I could look across the valley and the river toward our central printing plant. There I saw it. It was indeed going up in flames. Just then I heard the whistle of the oncoming train. It was the last train I could take to catch the boat. There was nothing useful I could do by remaining, so I climbed aboard the eastbound train. From the rear platform as we traveled, I watched for miles the red glow in the sky that told me that nothing could be left of the main building of our great central printing house. I knew it was being laid in ruins. And as I watched, I thought of that solemn message which had come nine years before. The very phrases of it were vivid in my memory.

[104] I had heard the message read in 1893,—a message declaring that if the gathering of great throngs about the institutions continued, the Lord would allow these institutions to be laid in ruins. I had heard the warning with my own ears. I had heard men scoff about it and make light of it, but I knew that I had witnessed the fulfillment to the very letter. The conviction was strong upon my heart that there was a living God in heaven, able to instruct and guide His people, whether with promises of blessing or with warnings of discipline.

The story of the blessing which came out of God's overruling mercies in all these things is a story known to thousands. Out of

these experiences came the conviction that the time had come to move the general headquarters from West to East. Many years before, the Spirit of prophecy had urged the removal of main efforts westward, where the infant cause of the advent movement would have a better chance to grow into strength. But it was indicated in that early time by the Spirit of prophecy that later it might be that the general headquarters would move back eastward, nearer to the great populations of the Atlantic side. So now the Lord led us to that removal eastward.

The hearts of the Seventh-day Adventist people were really wonderfully blessed by the moving of the headquarters. It seemed that the believers at the old headquarters and in the whole country moved onward in their own experience with the transfer. Out of the whole experience came blessing and revival to our people generally, and to the Battle Creek church. The General Conference office and the Review and Herald printing house were transferred eastward to Washington, D.C., the capital of the nation, and a school, Washington Missionary College, and a health institution, Washington Sanitarium, were built up to give at this central point in the East a full representation of the varied character of our work. Large numbers of believers at the old headquarters found places of service elsewhere, those remaining being blessed in holding forth the light where still our largest church, and one of the most active, bears witness to the truth.

The disciplinings and chastisements of the Lord's hand yield also the fruits of righteousness and bring growth and strength. From those times dates really an expansion in every department of our work. Instead of a few publishing centers, many now exist. Instead of two or three strong health centers, the expansion has continued until many such centers are ministering to the sick and teaching the ways of physical and spiritual life.

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No one can look back without seeing that what seemed heavy loss was to be turned into gain to the advent cause. The faith of many was increased in the power of God to deal with His own work on earth. It reminds one of the experience of the ancient Jerusalem center. In the Jewish traditional story is the following account:

“Two rabbis approaching Jerusalem observed a fox running up on the hill Zion, and Rabbi Joshua wept, but Rabbi Eliezer laughed.

‘Wherefore dost thou laugh?’ said he who wept. ‘Nay, wherefore dost thou weep?’ demanded Eliezer.

“‘I weep,’ replied Rabbi Joshua, ‘because I see what is written in the Lamentations fulfilled; because of the Mount Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it.’ ‘And therefore,’ said Rabbi Eliezer, ‘do I laugh: for when I see with mine own eyes that God hath fulfilled His threatenings to the very letter, I have hereby a pledge that not one of His promises shall fail, for He is ever more ready to show mercy than judgment.’”

Even so, out of our experiences of loss in more than one instance and more than one place, the lesson of God’s loving care for His work has been illustrated. It is not that the Lord Himself may directly afflict in case of calamity and trouble. It is His protection that keeps away the destroyer. Once His special protection is withdrawn, the forces of destruction may be allowed to work their will. But however it may be in these things beyond our knowledge, we know that God is able to cause all things to work together for good to those that love Him. And all through the record of progress of the advent movement we see the evidences that a living God has been guiding the movement by His providences and by the gifts set in the church, and leading the marching hosts of believers on toward the kingdom.

“Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry;  
We’re marching through Immanuel’s land  
To fairer worlds on high.”

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### **The Removal To Washington**

A few details in the story of the removal of the general headquarters to the East will serve to illustrate the helpful guidance of the Lord by the gift of the Spirit of prophecy. As so many times through the years, the voice of the Lord was heard in this gift, saying again, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

The 1903 session of the General Conference met in California, a few months following the burning of the Review and Herald office. The question of rebuilding came before the delegation. The *Bulletin* of that Conference reported Mrs. White as giving counsel:



“In reply to the question that has been asked in regard to settling somewhere else, I answer, Yes. Let the General Conference offices [which were in one of the outer Review and Herald buildings that was not burned] and the publishing work be moved from Battle Creek. I know not where the place will be, whether on the Atlantic Coast or elsewhere; but this I will say: Never lay a stone or a brick in Battle Creek to rebuild the Review office there. God has a better place for it.”—*Page 85.*

Action was taken by the Conference looking toward finding a site for the headquarters in the Atlantic States, close to the country’s more populous areas. Later counsels from the Spirit of prophecy mentioned New York and Washington as centers where much more should be done to represent the advent message. A committee of search was appointed. While they were going over the environs of New York, a message came from Mrs. White, saying that any place “within thirty miles” of the great city would be too near. The same message added: “Study the surroundings of other places. I am sure that the advantages of Washington, D.C., should be closely investigated.”—[The Review and Herald, August 11, 1903.](#)

It was with misgivings, I remember, that some of us thought of Washington, the government headquarters. It hardly seemed our simple kind of gospel work would fit into the great capital of the nation. But the search for the site turned toward Washington. Then quickly came the definite counsel from Mrs. White’s home in California:

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“We have been praying for light regarding the location of our work in the East, and light has come to us in a very decided way. Positive light has been given me that there will be offered to us for sale places upon which money has been expended by men who had money to use freely.... Their attention is called to some other object, and their property is offered for sale at a very low price.

“In regard to Washington, I will say that twenty years ago memorials for God should have been established in that city, or rather, in its suburbs....

“From the light given me, I know that, for the present, the headquarters of the Review and Herald should be near Washington. If there is on our books and papers the imprint of Washington, D.C., it will be seen that we are not afraid to let our light shine. Let the

publishing house be established near Washington.”—[The Review and Herald, August 20, 1903](#).

So the new headquarters was established in Washington, D.C., in the suburb of Takoma Park.

[108] Just over the border, in the State of Maryland, improved land was secured for the school and sanitarium work which the instruction said should be established near the nation’s capital. And exactly as the message quoted above had said, the property was secured at “a very low price,” after others had spent thousands of dollars upon it.

Newspapers and public men of affairs congratulated the leaders of the church on their wisdom and good judgment in choosing the national capital as the general denominational headquarters.

The leaders knew very well that any credit the world was ready to give belonged to that gift of the Spirit of prophecy which had guided the searchers to this place, rather against their own first judgment and inclination. It was after the gift had definitely spoken that the searchers began to see how truly providence had prepared the place.

And out over the world, in many a far land where men were inclined to give scant liberty to a religious movement that appeared inconvenient to them, the fact that the world headquarters was in Washington has given our work the very prestige mentioned by the counsel we have quoted.

## **Chapter 15—Forewarnings of a Great Crisis**

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“Something great and decisive is about to take place!” That was the awakening message that came before the outbreak of the World War.

Just as one illustration of ways in which it was sought by the Spirit of prophecy to forewarn of crises to be met, we may well speak of counsels that preceded the great War of 1914-18.

### **Warnings Neglected**

Without a doubt we of the advent movement should have been moved by these counsels to give study to the question of handling our world-wide mission operations as they might be affected by international strife.

As it was, we did not understand the urgency of the counsels that came. They seemed like words for a time afar off. When the war did break, there was no time for conferences, no time for any special preparation for the handling of work in great mission fields that depended upon the European conference organizations. Everything had to be done on the spur of the moment. And it was a great advantage to the missions in some parts that the United States was neutral for a time, after those missions had been cut off from their base of supplies in Europe.

### **“Something Great And Decisive”**

As Mrs. White met with the representatives of other lands in the 1909 General Conference, she felt that she had a serious message for those brethren regarding conflicts to come:

“Mrs. White solemnly charged the brethren who had come to the meeting as representatives of the cause of present truth from every part of Europe, from Asia, Africa, South America, Australasia, and the islands of the sea, to prepare their hearts for terrible scenes of strife and oppression beyond anything they had conceived of, soon

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to be witnessed among the nations of earth.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White](#), 421.

She said that these conditions were to arise “very soon.” These things, she told the delegates, “will break forth with an intensity that you do not now anticipate.” We were all exhorted to special prayer and acquaintance with God, in view of the times that were coming.

Again, in the [The Review and Herald, November 17, 1910](#), the church was urged to hasten on with its work with special earnestness, in view of the scenes of strife and commotion which soon would break out among the nations. Mrs. White wrote:

“Soon strife among the nations will break out with an intensity that we do not now anticipate. The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they realize that something great and decisive is about to take place, that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis....

“The Lord calls upon you, O church that has been blessed with the truth, to give a knowledge of this truth to those who know it not. From one end of the world to the other must the message of Christ’s soon coming be proclaimed. The third angel’s message—the last message of mercy to a perishing world—is so precious, so glorious. Let the truth go forth as a lamp that burneth.”

### **Scenes Of Destruction Pictured**

Years before this, also, the burden of the Spirit of prophecy had evidently forewarned of just such times as came upon the nations with the great world conflict. Of a view of coming conflict which was caused to pass before her, Mrs. White wrote:

[111] “The tempest is coming, and we must get ready for its fury by having repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord will arise to shake terribly the earth. We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the

depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions.”—[The Signs of the Times, April 21, 1890](#).

While this earlier view, untimed as it was by any expressions in the context, may refer to the closing conflicts also, it certainly described exactly what passed before the world in those days of 1914-18. “Thousands of ships” were “hurled into the depths of the sea.” The Encyclopedia Britannica, in its postwar volumes, wrote: “The dreary, dreadful tale of ships sunk and attacked is too long to give.” But under the heading, “Submarine Campaigns,” this authority carefully set down the loss of ships on the Allied side as 5,511. Another authority gave the number of ships of the Central Powers that went down as 482. Very nearly six thousand ships make up the casualty list of those four years of international storm and tempest.

The forewarning described the situation accurately when it said, [112] “The tempest is coming.” Thousands of ships were hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies went down. Human lives were “sacrificed by millions.” Some put the direct and indirect loss of life by the World War at twenty million.

As we looked at these forewarnings casually in the years before the great conflict, this talk about thousands of ships going down and millions of lives being sacrificed, seemed evidently, to most readers, a description of the very closing scenes of earth’s history. Little did we appreciate, as we read these things, that so soon we were to pass through just such scenes of destruction. That is evidently why, in the messages just previous to the outbreak, it was emphasized that “soon” and “very soon” these experiences were to come upon us. Well would it have been for us had we realized how very soon indeed the storm was to break, for in some ways preparation might have been made that possibly would have helped greatly in the work. The words of warning were surely plain enough.

### “Great Changes”

In the last volume of the “Testimonies for the Church,” issued before the World War, it was stated: “Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.”—*Vol. IX, p. 11.*

Out of the world conflict, great and sudden changes surely came. In the 1926 postwar volumes of the “Encyclopedia Britannica” the editor reviewed the great changes of the fifteen-year period beginning in 1910 when the former edition of the Encyclopedia had closed. The editor reviewed the rapid changes up to 1926. He called attention to the fact that during that period there had been “a universal revolution in human affairs.” Great changes had indeed come, and the movements had been “rapid ones.” The Britannica’s summing up of these rapid changes is worth setting down, even now, though swifter yet the changes come in this present time. The Encyclopedia said:

[113] “There have been no more momentous and transforming years in the experience of mankind. Formerly that space of a decade and a half would have been called at best a period. We may justly term it an epoch. It crowds into itself more historic drama and social significance, more economic energy and moral ferment, more destructive force, yet more constructive effort and idealism in every sphere, than have been known in most centuries. In wide regions the former political structure and lines of the map have been altered in a manner that would have surpassed all powers of belief if prophesied beforehand. Old empires and dynasties have vanished; new nations and systems have appeared. With this, science and invention have gone forward with accelerating speed to wonderful results. All industrial life is searched by questioning and full of new developments....

“Wide and signal as have been the changes in the world’s external circumstances, still more general and profound have been the changes in the world’s internal thought and feeling. In fifteen years, as a result partly of physical conflict unparalleled for scale, violence, and intensity; partly of the subsequent mental reactions, ...there has occurred a universal revolution in human affairs and the human mind.”—*Volume XXIX*.

Well have those phrases of the Spirit of prophecy recurred again and again to our minds during yet more recent years. We are living in a “split-second world,” as one inventor has stated, telling how the antipodes are but a few seconds distant by radio communication. “The tempest is coming.” We may well repeat it. All creation is hastening on at a pace unparalleled. The Spirit of prophecy spoke

truly as it forewarned, “Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones.”

## Chapter 16—Illustrative Incidents

Even though it means continuing this merest outline beyond the length anticipated, it may be that a few illustrative experiences should be mentioned, showing how this gift of the Spirit of prophecy worked in ways that the observers knew to be quite beyond the agent's own knowledge.

### A Pioneer Speaks

One of the pioneer workers in the advent movement was J. H. Waggoner. His keen analytical style of writing and preaching suggested that he must have been a lawyer before coming into the ministry. But the fact was, he had been editor of a newspaper. He wrote this paragraph in 1887:

“These ‘Testimonies’ are not the productions of the mind of the one who writes them. This affirmation is stronger than any question of mere reasoning or external proof; there are scores and hundreds who know it is true. Indeed, there is no one who has had anything like a close connection with, or knowledge of, this work for a period of ten or twenty years, who does not know that this is true.

“When the king of Syria accused his servants of treachery [revealing his plans to the king of Israel], one of them said: ‘Elisha the prophet that is in Israel telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.’ [2 Kings 6:12](#). No one could possibly claim that such communications to the king of Israel were the productions of Elisha's own mind. No one can, by the mere moving of his mind, tell the words of another that are spoken in secret; much less can he tell the unexpressed thoughts of his heart. But this has been done by the writer of the ‘Testimonies for the Church.’ Many can rise up and testify to the truthfulness of what is here said, and many knew the same fact who are fallen asleep.”—[The Review and Herald, May 3, 1887](#).



Those who have been connected with general executive affairs have seen this fact illustrated again and again. It was a matter of common knowledge and experience.

### **A European Leader's Experience**

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Even at this late day there are living those who saw such things. Only recently, while attending meetings in Europe, one of our early leaders there, H. F. Schuberth, related to me an experience that was never on our record. "It has always been a great help to me," he said, "when the work of the Spirit of prophecy has been attacked." He was in charge of a local institutional work in the early years in Germany. He said:

"It was about 1894. There was a little difficulty among the workers in the institution. It involved a plan of missionary work in the city, after work hours. I was leading out in a plan and urging it. One brother particularly fell out with the proposals, and others joined in. It was not of wrong intent, but it brought in a situation that greatly troubled me. It was bringing a spirit of separation into our meetings.

"On a Sunday I asked different members of the office family to come to a meeting in the chapel on Monday evening for a special council. I felt we must somehow get the difficulties adjusted. Monday morning I went to my desk, and there was a letter bearing Australian postage stamps, with the name 'E. G. White' printed in the corner where the name and address card is placed. [Mrs. White was then in Australia.] I opened the envelope. In it was a message from Mrs. White, dealing with the very matters that had made the trouble in our institution. That night, at the meeting, I asked the workers, 'When did I call this meeting?' 'Yesterday,' they said. 'Well,' I said, 'this morning I received in the mail a message from Mrs. White, from Australia. It deals with the very matter that I wanted to speak to you about.'

"I read the testimony through, then spoke of my own relation to the counsel given in it. I said I was impressed by it that there were a number of things in which I ought to make acknowledgments that I had not handled matters just right in all things. At once the brother I had felt had made difficulty stood to his feet and took a fine

[116] Christian stand. One after another followed, and the Lord helped us fully out of all our difficulties.”

“But had you written to Australia about your trouble?” I asked.

“No, not a word,” he answered. “There was no time to write for any counsel. The whole difficulty had arisen since the letter was mailed in Australia. And this experience,” he added, “has always made me know that the Lord worked through that gift in a way beyond any knowledge that the human agent could possibly have had.”

Others could still speak of similar experiences. But perhaps in the earlier years, when the cause was growing up and many new and untried ways had to be entered, these experiences were most numerous.

### **A Lodge Devotee Surprised**

I may add one more incident, never before put in our printed records, I think. In Australia I was told by a veteran worker of a man who had stood high in one of the secret societies. In fact, he had reached the high degrees in the order. He felt, as he joined this advent movement, that there was nothing inconsistent in holding his place in the lodge. Some had talked with him, but he was strong in his position.

“When you meet Mrs. White,” he was told, “you will find she will have something to say about it.”

He replied: “It will have to be something pretty strong, I can tell you.”

Some time later Mrs. White invited him to an interview. There were a few moments of greeting, and at once Mrs. White began reading a message that she had been given for him. But in agitation the man interrupted the reading. “Do you know what you have been doing, Mrs. White?” “I am giving you a message that God has given me for you,” she replied. “Yes,” he said; “but you have been giving me the signs and all the passwords of my lodge.” Later he said to his brethren: “I told you it would have to be something strong; and I

[117] got it strong, all right. That woman never could have Known what she did in meeting me, and talking with me.”

When this was told me by one of the workers in Australia, this brother had long since been dead. I met his widow, who added this further information concerning the interview with Mrs. White that fully convinced him he should sever his lodge connections. She said:

“I had pleaded with my husband to give it up; but he was fascinated with it. He had been raised to be Master of his lodge. Some months after his promotion he was called to go to our school at St. Kilda. There Mrs. White met him. He was so late leaving the interview that he missed the last train to Preston, where we lived, and had to walk several miles. When he arrived home, he seemed very happy. He said he was not tired by the walk, as he seemed to be treading on air all the way, because of the talk he had had with Mrs. White. He said he knew the Lord had condescended to speak to him through her.

“She told him that she had been holding this message for him for twelve months, because she knew he was not ready before to receive anything she might say. He told her it was true that he would not have been ready to hear, but now he would listen. He told me that Mrs. White went through motions and signs, unconsciously, in meeting him, signs of his order, which he knew she could not have understood; and in talking with him she used certain passwords of the order. It helped him to understand that the message she had for him was of the Lord, and he accepted it.”

Enough of such instances of ministry for workers needing help in ways quite beyond her own ken. These incidents are helpful to us. But the great thing of all the seventy years of personal service was the constant spiritual ministry, and the constant intervention of this gift in the regular conduct of the work—counsels often coming in such a timely way on occasions of need that again and again workers receiving the messages have had to exclaim, “Mrs. White never could have written that thing of herself!”

The living God has been speaking to the advent movement, and leading it.

### **A Timely Message That Arrived From Across The Sea**

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At a general gathering in Australia, some years ago, Pastor W. H. Pascoe, of New Zealand, told the story of a message from the

Spirit of prophecy that arrived just at the right time. It is only another illustration of the way in which messages by that gift were now and then guided over land and sea as by a timed schedule, to bring the counsel that helped.

It was when the first camp meeting in the town of Dunedin was being held, said our brother. One minister of the town was particularly hostile. He attacked our teaching also in the press. The account in the *Australasian Union Record* continued:

“Finding that the Adventists could not be drawn into a controversy in that manner, our opponent then attended one of our evening services, bringing with him a large number of his congregation. In the midst of the service this man arose and challenged the Adventists to debate with him, calling them cowards, etc. With the help of his satellites he succeeded in closing the service. After the meeting all the workers were called together for counsel on how best to meet the boastful opponent. After considering the acceptance of the challenge favorably, the workers were advised to pray much over the matter during the night, then meet together next morning for a final decision before the devotional meeting began.

“Next morning at an early hour they met, according to plan. Pastor E. W. Farnsworth entered the tent, holding in his hand a large envelope. With his happy smile he said, ‘Well, brethren, the Lord knew our needs long before we did. This letter was in my tent last night, but in preparing for the service I left it unopened. Now just listen.’ He read that letter which had been written in America by the servant of the Lord three months before, and which had arrived the night before. That letter seemed to have been written by one who had actually seen the events taking place. It referred us to [Nehemiah 6:3](#), ‘Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?’ and told us that our work was to keep right on preaching the truth. ‘If you do this, your opponents will soon begin to fight among themselves, and you will be left to carry on your work in peace.’ Needless to say, we believed the message, and the camp work proceeded as usual.

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“Now for the sequel. According to the prediction, so was it fulfilled. That opposing minister appealed to the council of churches in Dunedin to sweep the Adventists out of that city. All agreed. Next came the question of how this was to be done. Unanimously

it was voted that a tract against Seventh-day Adventists should be written, that this tract be circulated widely throughout Dunedin, and that from all pulpits in Dunedin on a certain Sunday the ministers speak against the errors of Adventism, as well as give every person attending a tract. This was carried unanimously.

“Then their ship came with a terrific crash on a rock, when on that calm sea the question was raised, ‘What shall we place in the tract?’ No two were of the same opinion as to why they kept Sunday, and the meeting broke up in the wildest disorder. The Seventh-day Adventists were permitted to continue their work in peace, just as was seen and written three months before in the United States of America, and the letter, guided by a divine hand, arrived on the very day it was needed. ‘Yes,’ the speaker added, ‘I know by experience that God speaks to His people in the Spirit of prophecy.’”

Again it was according to the promise, “Before they call, I will answer.” And just as this worker of New Zealand could say, “Yes, I know by experience that God speaks to His people in the Spirit of prophecy,” so thousands of believers could say, in observing the working of that gift through the seventy years. So to this day do thousands say again as they find this gift still speaking light and guidance through the printed volumes.

### **One Woman’s Experience In Accepting The Message**

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One of the oft-used paragraphs of the Spirit of prophecy is this one, originally quoted from the *General Conference Bulletin* of 1893. Mrs. White was then in Australia. She wrote:

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“In secret places they are weeping and praying that they may see light in the Scriptures, and the Lord of heaven has commissioned His angels to cooperate with human agencies in carrying forward His vast design, that all who desire life may behold the glory of God.

“We are to follow where God’s providence opens the way; and as we advance, we shall find that heaven has moved before us, enlarging the field for labor far beyond the proportion of our means and ability to supply.... The field is the world, and the light of truth is to go to all the dark places of the earth in a much shorter time than many think possible.”—*Page 294.*

It is a picture that has cheered us on in searching out souls these forty years and more.

At a large camp meeting in Australia, in 1931, I read this extract from the Spirit of prophecy. After the meeting a lady came to me, saying:

“That is what brought me into this truth—that message from Sister White about the praying ones. I was at the West Maitland meeting in 1893, and heard her tell it. And it convicted me of this truth then and there.”

Then she told me her experience. She had belonged to one of the great churches. But her soul was unfed. She longed to understand the Bible.

“I betook myself to prayer, there in Maitland,” she told me. “I prayed God to help me to find the truth. In my desire of soul I, many times, wept as I prayed. I wanted help. I tried going to various meetings, but did not find what I sought.”

[122] She learned just at this time that a Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting was being held in West Maitland. She decided to go. “I will take my Bible and a notebook,” she thought, “and if they do not speak by the Book, I will not go again.”

But the preaching was “by the Book.” Mrs. White spoke that Sabbath morning. “I felt the truth speaking to my heart,” said our sister. “In the noon interval I looked up the texts in my Bible. At the testimony meeting in the afternoon I testified to the goodness of God in leading me, and said I wanted to know more.

“Then Mrs. White called a meeting of new believers and those seeking help. I went. Then she told us the very thing you have read here from that writing of 1893. She said that recently she had come down by train from Queensland. As the train was passing through Maitland, she told us, she was awakened from sleep by a voice that said, ‘Look out the window!’ Three times the call was repeated. She looked out and saw angels hovering over Maitland, and was shown that there were people there weeping and praying that they might see light in the Scriptures.”

Our sister told me that all the time, as Mrs. White was speaking these things, the conviction of this truth was laying hold of her heart. For she well knew that at the very time when Mrs. White had passed

through Maitland, she herself was one of those praying and weeping ones.

“Then Mrs. White told us,” she said, “that she had seen some of our faces in the view given her of the praying ones in Maitland. But there were more still who were seeking light, and these were to be sought out.”

The lady told me again how the conviction of the surety of this truth seized upon her heart as she listened.

“That was exactly my experience right here in Maitland,” she said to herself. “At the very time Mrs. White looked out of the train window and was shown people praying with tears for help, I was there praying. I know this is the truth of God.”

And all these years our sister had been held true, the preciousness of the blessed hope dearer now than ever to her heart. It was an interesting recital to me, as showing the background of that testimony by the Spirit of prophecy that has cheered us on in service ever since the days of 1893, when the description appeared in the *General Conference Bulletin*.

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## Chapter 17—Still Building Up

As the years passed, and still the field of work opened wider, the burdens of age began to press upon Mrs. White. She sometimes wrote of the day when her pilgrimage would end.

### After The Agent In This Gift Should Die?

In the General Conference files is a letter from Mrs. White, dated January 30, 1905, to a former president of the General Conference, O. A. Olsen. She said:

“The question is sometimes raised, ‘What if Mrs. White should die?’ I answer: ‘The books that she has written will not die. They are a living witness to what saith the Scripture.... Of myself I could not have brought out the truths in these books, but the Lord has given me the help of His Holy Spirit.’”

Again, two years later, and more at length, she spoke of this. In a tract, “The Writing and Sending Out of the Testimonies for the Church,” she wrote:

“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.”

### The Gift Continues Speaking

We see it continually. In ancient times it was so. A word written down by a prophet in one age had a special application for those who should read it centuries later. “Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you.” [1 Peter 1:12](#). Inspiration is a wonderful thing. It speaks a living word.

So, again and again, as conditions have changed and new situations have arisen in the progress of the advent movement, workers have found instruction in the printed volumes that came like a new



message, as though spoken for that very hour. They had never seen the application before. The counsels of the Spirit of prophecy continue to speak and guide the church. More people study these writings now, it would seem, than ever in the lifetime of the writer of them.

### **The Books Were To Speak**

This future work of her books was much upon her heart in later years; and in the closing days, after a fall that confined her to her room and made her feel that her end was near, she spoke particularly of one burden—the translation of these messages into foreign languages. Speaking from her sickroom, not only of her own books, but of all, she sent word to a convention of bookmen in session:

“If our bookmen will do their part faithfully, I know, from the light God has given me, that the knowledge of present truth will be doubled and trebled. This is why I have been in so much of a hurry to get my books out, so that they could be placed in the hands of the people and read. And in the foreign languages the Lord designs that the circulation of our books shall be greatly increased.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White, 446, 447.](#)

This foreign-language work was close to her heart—the multitudes of other speech who were to hear. From the sale of some of the books in English, and perhaps in two or three other languages, there would be income to devote toward issuing portions of the writings in the many languages wherein the expenditure would be more than any income to be expected from their sale. It was the provision of her last will and testament that the trustees were to continue this publishing of the writings of the Spirit of prophecy in other languages as rapidly as funds permitted. It has meant setting many a tongue to speaking portions of these messages that have so enriched the movement.

One thing has always been emphasized—the necessity of not neglecting the smaller languages or the remoter people of the earth.

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**A Word From A World Observer**

Mrs. White did not use her position as the agent of this gift to build up gain for herself. The gift was used to build up the cause of the movement. Even observers in the world noted this fact with satisfaction. If she had left a fortune behind her, they would have been disappointed. When Mrs. White died, in 1915, the editor of the *New York Independent* (which had become the leading religious magazine of America) commented on her life and work, and her contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist cause. First, the editorial spoke of the teachings and growth of the denomination:

“Of course, these teachings [of the founders of the denomination] were based on the strictest doctrine of inspiration of the Scriptures. Seventh-day Adventism could be got in no other way. And the gift of prophecy was to be expected, as promised to the ‘remnant church,’ who had held fast to the truth. This faith gave great purity of life and incessant zeal. No body of Christians excels them in moral character and religious earnestness. [The editor told of the growth of the work in many lands, and of the many publishing houses, colleges and academies, and sanitariums over the earth—the figures being now altogether out of date.]

“And in all this,” the *Independent* continued, “Ellen G. White has been the inspiration and guide. Here is a noble record, and she deserves great honor.

“Did she really receive divine visions, and was she really chosen by the Holy Spirit to be endued with the charism of prophecy? or was she the victim of an excited imagination? Why should we answer? One’s doctrine of the Bible may affect the conclusion. At any rate, she was absolutely honest in her belief in her revelations. Her life was worthy of them. She showed no spiritual pride and she sought no ‘filthy lucre.’ She lived the life and did the work of a worthy prophetess.”—*August 23, 1915.*

It was a fitting tribute by an observer from without, surveying a lifework. The conclusion stated is true.

**“A Noble Christian Woman”**

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It was a Christian life that Mrs. White lived before the people, from the days of 1844, when she was called as a youth of seventeen, to the day of her death in ripe old age.

Even the bitterest critic—one who had left the movement and turned to write many attacks upon the work of his former associates, and especially upon the Spirit of prophecy in the church—paid tribute to a noble Christian life. He came to Mrs. White’s funeral. His brother, an Adventist, told us of D. M. Canright’s emotion as they walked together past the casket, with others of the congregation, at the close of the funeral service. They came back to their pew, and stood while the great congregation was still filing past. “Then,” said our member, “my brother suggested that we go down again, to take one more look. We joined the passing throng and again stood by the bier. My brother rested his hand upon the side of the casket, and with tears rolling down his cheeks, he said brokenly, ‘There is a noble Christian woman gone.’”

This also is a fitting tribute from without.

Nothing could be further from the spirit of that lifework than for us to exalt the human agent. She was but a human agent. But it is right to say—what many thousands knew—that she was faithful to the call. Never a thing in her life brought shame to any believer. And the work done—and that is her monument—speaks confusion to all attacks.

When she was called in girlhood, she was shown that the call would make her the target of attack. And so it did from the first. She later realized how true were the foretellings of the prophecy of [Revelation 12:17](#),—the dragon making war upon the remnant church because of “the commandments of God,” which they kept, and “the testimony of Jesus,” which they held. But never did this agent swerve from the charge to “deliver the messages faithfully.” On her dying bed she said:

“I am very weak. I am sure that this is my last sickness. I am not worried at the thought of dying. I feel comforted all the time, that the Lord is near me.... I do not worry about the work I have done. I have done the best I could.”—[Life Sketches of Ellen G. White](#), 444, 445.

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And that is all that any one can do. There was no thought of any merit to be awarded on the grounds of special work done. All her trust was in the unmerited grace of Christ, the one hope of every believer. "I am guarding every moment," she said in last hours with the family, "so that nothing may come between me and the Lord... There will be a glorious meeting soon." Then came the last words, "I know in whom I have believed."