

Test Questions – Lesson 14

- Fill in the words missing from this E. G. White statement:

“Let the testimonies be judged by their What is theof their teaching? What has been theof their influence?”
- Name six “special assignments” in health and social reform which God gave Mrs. White and included in her work as His messenger:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
- Is the following a correct statement?

Mrs. White’s work as messenger of the Lord led he to counsel in many fields of Christian life and experience.
- Complete the following statements:

1. “As many as I love I and Be zealous, therefore and”
- “From the beginning of my work, . . . I have been called to bear a plain, pointed, to reprove, and to not.”
- “God rebukes,, andthem, that they may be finally exalted to His own throne.”
- What vitally important function of the Spirit of Prophecy experienced all through the years was again set forth clearly in 1910, near the close of Mrs. White’s ministry?

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- Answer these questions:

1. What was the primary purpose of Mrs. White’s life and labors?
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- In what four ways do Ellen G. White’s writings help to build sanctified Christian lives?

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THINK ON THESE THINGS (No written answer)

Are the good fruits of God’s grace manifest in my life?

Am I feeding upon His Word and the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy?

If not, what am I going to do about it?

Fruitage of the Prophetic Gift

14



PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. - Matthew 7: 18-20.

Ellen White's Contribution to the Advent Movement

Jesus set forth the easily-applied rule which must be used in testing the claims of any who claim to speak for God: "Ye shall know them by their fruits." Matthew 7:16. Mrs. White's contribution to the Advent Movement should be measured by its fruits.

We may look for these fruits in the life of the one who bears the messages, and in the messages themselves. We may look for fruits also in the lives and experiences of those who are influenced by the messages. Furthermore, fruits will be seen in activities and projects called into being and guided by the counsels.

Let the Testimonies be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influences. All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions" - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 671.

Fruitage of the gift of prophecy as manifested in the remnant church constitutes a great weight of evidence. First in the high standard of practical Christian life held forth in the writings of Mrs. White. By her Christ-centered messages thousands of people have been converted to Christ; and as the result of reading her books many have been influenced to live sanctified lives. Consider how these volumes have influenced your own life and the lives of many whom you know in the church. To the thoughtful student, this is convincing evidence of "good fruit."

As we entered upon our study of Lesson 13, we enumerated eight phases of Mrs. White's role in the Advent Movement, and dealt with four of them. In this lesson we shall consider the last four points in relation to the burden placed upon her for the welfare of the church members:

- 1.) Advocating social and health reforms.
- 2.) Counseling in many areas of Christian life and experience.
- 3.) Reproving, correcting, and admonishing.
- 4.) Specify what is true.

Mrs. White's Leading in Social and Health Reform

In an article in the *Review and Herald* of July 26, 1906, Mrs. White discussed phases of her role as God's special messenger. She was led to delineate certain special lines of work to which she had been called. The full statement has been reproduced in *Selected Messages*, Book I, pp. 31-35. We present here a few key sentences:

God has made plain to me the various ways in which He would use me to carry forward a special work. Visions have been given me, with the promise, "If you deliver the messages faithfully and endure to the end, you shall eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the water of the river of life." -*Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 33.

Briefly and in rapid succession she then listed these special assignments:

To lead out in practical health work.

The Lord gave me great light on health reform. In connection with my husband, I was to be a medical missionary worker. I was to set an example to the church by taking the sick to my home and caring for them. This I have done, giving the women and children vigorous treatment. - *Ibid*.

By precept and example she was to lead out in reforms in living and in treating the sick. The great basic health reform vision had been given in 1863. Shortly thereafter, chapters on the subject of health appeared in her books, and she led out in the production of various pamphlets and books designed to guide men and women into a fuller understanding of the laws of nature as related to the body, and to see the close connection between physical experience and spiritual welfare.

One of her last sermons at the 1909 General Conference Session (the last one she attended) was on health reform. Read this in *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 153-166. The most-widely-circulated of Ellen White's books on the subject of health is *Ministry of Healing*, published in 1905. It contains, as she declared, "the wisdom of the Great Physician." - *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 71. Other volumes, such as

Counsels on Health, *Counsels on Diet and Foods, Medical Ministry, and Temperance*, supplement *Ministry of Healing* with more detailed counsel on specific points, the accuracy of which is attested by well-known authorities on health and nutrition. Before we had medical institutions of our own, Mrs. White and her husband were giving practical assistance to the ill in the form of simple but effective treatments. Some years later she did a strong work in this line in Australia, where even today she is remembered for her deeds of practical helpfulness.

Keep in mind that the health reform was to be part and parcel of the message which Seventh-day Adventists were to hold and to teach. This vital phase of God's work was so important that Mrs. White was led to write more on health than on any other one line of instruction. The E. G. White books on health should be in every home library.

To write and lecture on Christian temperance.

I was also to speak on the subject of Christian temperance, as the Lord's appointed messenger. I engaged heartily in this work, and spoke to large assemblies on temperance in its broadest and truest sense. - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 33.

For three typical Ellen White temperance talks, read pages. 267-293 of the book, *Temperance*.

Let us go back in thought to June 28, 1877. Barnum's circus had just come to Battle Creek, Michigan. On such an occasion many who were visiting the city would turn to the cheap eating houses and sa-loons for their meals. The temperance forces, leading citizens, and church groups laid plans to provide food elsewhere. Under the auspices of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a large tent provided by the Michigan Conference was pitched and equipped to serve as a temperance restaurant. The patronage surpassed all expectations. Then a temperance mass meeting was called for Sunday evening, July 1, as the climax of this concerted effort to make the occasion count for reform. Here is Mrs. White's own account of her part in this work:

By invitation of the committee of arrangements, Mayor Austin, W. H., Skinner, cashier of the First National Bank, and C. C. Peavey, I spoke in the mammoth tent, Sunday evening. July 1, upon the subject of Christian Temperance. God helped me that evening; and although I spoke ninety minutes, the crowd of fully five thousand persons listened in almost breathless silence. -*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 275.

This topic, presented from a Christ-centered viewpoint, was one on which she often spoke before large audiences in Europe and Australia. Temperance is the title of the book into which have been assembled her many counsels concerning this vital topic, in its broad aspects as it touches every Seventh-day Adventist family.

To champion those who were wronged.

Mrs. White was charged "not to neglect or pass by" the helpless or dependent or "those who were being wronged." She was to "reprove the oppressor and plead for justice." - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 3.3. Her appeals were directed to Seventh-day Adventist churches and institutions, where she ever took the side of equity and fair dealing. She was instructed to defend the weak and to take the side of the helpless and dependent ones.

For a representative account of her counsels to the church on behalf of aged or sick ministers, read *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 290-292. As a result of this and other messages from the Lord, given, at a time when little or nothing was being done for the old er workers, the denomination established in 1913 the system of sustentation for retired workers. You may read Mrs. White's full appeal for this in two chapters of *Testimonies*, vol. 7 (pp. 286-298), - "Our Aged Pioneer Workers," and "Care for Workers."

To show particular interest in orphans.

After my marriage I was instructed that I must show a special interest in motherless and fatherless children, taking some under my own change for a time, and then finding homes for them. Thus I would be giving others an example of what they could do.

Although called to travel often, and having much writing to do, I have taken children of three and five years of age, and have cared for them, educated them, and trained them for responsible positions. I have taken into my home from time to time boys from ten to sixteen years of age, giving them motherly care, and a training for service. I have felt it my duty to bring before our people that work for which those in every church should feel a responsibility. - Selected Messages, Book I, p. 34. See also Welfare Ministry, pp. 321, 322.

The counsels relating to this important topic have been drawn together in Welfare Ministry, literally a handbook in the field of personal and church welfare activity.

To lecture and write on the home .

Two of Mrs. White's favorite sermon topics were temperance and the Christian home. She urged the church to educate parents in child training, and to help them to make their Christian homes fortresses held by God impervious to Satan's attacks. This was an essential preparation. Parents *needed* training in child education.

In Mrs. White's first published "Testimony for the Church," issued in 1855, not six pages are covered until we come to a message on "Parental Responsibility." And this was followed in later years by literally hundreds of pages of instruction for parents, homemakers, and children. A full section in *Ministry of Healing* is devoted to the home-pages 359-406. She wrote scores of articles on home and child guidance for the journals of the church, and wrote many letters of counsel to parents. This combined counsel is currently available to all in *The Adventist Home* and *Child Guidance*.

To advocate reforms in social relations.

Long before the "social gospel" was preached by its modem advocates. Mrs. White called for essential reforms in social life, which was to become an important phase of the work of the Advent Movement.

The unemployed, the homeless, the poor were to be reached with the gospel. Nor should the rich be passed by. All classes were to hear the story of salvation, that their lives might be changed thereby. Each distinct group in society needs Christ and the higher life. Read *Ministry of Healing*, pages 161-216.

A broad view of reforms committed to this people for the good of their fellow men, and for the good of the church itself, is suggested in these words penned in 1900:

Every duty that calls for reform involves, repentance, faith and obedience. It means the uplifting of the soul to a new and nobler life. Thus every true reform has its place in the work of the third angel's message. - Testimonies, vol. 6. p. 110.

Varied Areas of Christian Life and Experience

The word of God abounds in general principles for the formation of correct habits of living, and the testimonies, general and personal, have been calculated to call their attention more especially to these principles. – *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 32.3.

I was instructed that I must ever urge upon those who profess to believe the truth, the necessity of practicing the truth. This means sanctification, and sanctification means the culture and training of every capability for the Lord's service. - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 3.3.

It was in this area of *teaching truth* and urging church members to *practice the truth*, that Mrs. White made one of her major contributions to the Advent Movement. Her writings are full of invitations to accept Christ, not only as the *Forgiver of sins*, but also as the *Saviour from sin*. Health reform, Sabbath reform, temperance reform, dress reform, social reform, - all were areas in which Christ could and would save. Sensing that the church was to make ready for translation, and that a great change must take place in the lives of believers before they could pass through the time of trouble and look into Jesus face, Mrs. White made most urgent and helpful appeals to the people. We should study these appeals, thank God for the light, and let Him bring our lives into harmony with His counsels.

Means of Perfecting Christlike Character

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. - Hebrews 12:6, 11.

One fuction of the Spirit of Prophecy is to instruct the people concerning God's will “and the course that He would have them pursue" (*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 661); and "to correct those who err from Bible truth" (*Early Writings*, p. 78). The messages were also given to reprove and admonish (*Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 13, col. 2). Of this Ellen White wrote:

From the beginning of my work, . . . I have been called to bear a plain, pointed testimony, to reprove wrongs, and to spare not. - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 678.

It was not a pleasant experience to be corrected, or to be the one called of God to bear the messages of reproof. But, says the Saviour, in the very heart of the message to the Laodicean Church, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: [followed by the admonition] be zealous therefore and repent." - Revelation 3: 19. And of this work we are told:

We cannot see our hearts as the Lord sees them. Then, to save us, the Lord must often send us plain messages of reproof. Observe the fruit borne by such messages, as recorded by one close observer who personally benefited by plain words of correction and reproof delivered at a general meeting:

The labors of Sister White. . . .were highly appreciated at this general gathering. 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. . . .

Not only does this gift reprove sin without dissimulation and partiality, as did Nathan when he said to David, "Thou art the man"; but it deals in words of encouragement to help those re-proved to overcome, and to inspire hope, faith, and courage to the desponding. It not only probes the wound, but it also pours in the oil, binds the wound, and hastens the process of restoration. - D. T. Bourdeau, in *Review and Herald*, November 10, 1885, p. 700.

Then this pioneer worker exclaimed, concerning this gift in the church: "It is enough, I want [need] no further evidence of its genuineness." - *Ibid*.

In Midst of Conflict God Specified What Is Truth

Another important function performed by the Spirit of Prophecy writings is that of specifying what is truth. In clear language Ellen White made this known in 1910:

... There is instruction that the Lord h as given me for His people. It is light that they should have, line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little *It has been given to correct specious errors and to specify what is truth.* The Lord has revealed many things pointing out the truth, thus saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it.* - Ellen White *Letter 117, 1910*. Quoted in *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 82. Italics supplied.

It is not in blazing new trails that the Spirit of Prophecy has contributed most to the church, but in plainly specifying what is truth in a world of conflicting voices, and clearly directing into right paths those who are traveling to the heavenly Canaan.

With so much confusion and uncertainty in the world, having the living voice of prophetic guidance in their midst meant much to the early Seventh-day Adventists. With that voice still speaking to us through the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy, specifying what is truth, Seventh-day Adventists today are in a unique position.

Consuming Passion and Purpose of Mrs. White's life and Labors

From the day in December of 1844 when she received the first vision, until her death in 1915 - for more than seventy years, by voice and pen - Ellen White *ever kept before the church the primary need of preparing to meet the Lord at His second coming*.

Today our entire membership stands in need of being mightily influenced by the special messages which the Spirit of God has given us for this time. These messages (1) magnify God's word and exalt Jesus as the Saviour, (2) they stress the power of prayer and the responsibility for soul saving service; (3) they give foreknowledge of the future crisis, and of the enemy's wiles and delusions, and (4) they help us to understand the simple gospel of righteousness by faith, how to lay hold upon the mighty power of God, and the assurance of victory. No other means except the Bible has brought such grace to hearts.

Mrs. White looked to the future, yet she stressed the ever-present need for each individual to seek an increasingly closer relationship with God. There is work that we must do while we wait for His coming. The three-fold message must he heralded to the world. While Mrs. White built faith in the future life, she also gave people practical counsel on how to live in this world and how to *prepare* for immortality through faith in the Redeemer.

A high tribute to Mrs. White's work and to her church appeared in *The Independent*, a New York weekly magazine, soon after her death. The editor touched on some doctrinal points and some fruits of their teaching, as seen in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and specifically on the gift of prophecy as promised to the remnant church. "This faith," he wrote, "gave great purity of life and incessant zeal. No body of Christians excels them in moral character and religious earnestness." From the doctrines of the church this editor turned to the work of the denomination and, after giving their statistics then current, he concluded:

... In all this Ellen White has been the inspiration and guide. Here is a noble record, and she deserves great honor. - *The Independent*, August 23, 1915. Quoted in *Messenger*, p. 126.

Thus we have noted some of the fruits that have grown on the tree of inspiration. We have seen that they are wholesome and good, and can fill our souls with the love and power of God. Will you not begin now to enter more fully into the spiritual blessing that comes to all who feed upon the Bible and the counsels of the Spirit of Prophecy?

Lesson 15 will give you a number of personal glimpses of Mrs. E. G. White. What kind of person was she? Warm, friendly, and “human”? or cold and severe? Was her life consistent with her teachings?