

I do not find her discouraged over her own case, nor do I find her discouraged over the general outlook throughout the harvest field where her brethren are laboring. She seems to have strong faith in God's power to overrule, and to bring to pass His eternal purpose through the efforts of those whom He has called to act a part in His great work. She rises above petty criticism, above even the past failures of those who have been reproved, and expresses the conviction, born, apparently, of an innate faith in the church of the living God, that her brethren will remain faithful to the cause they have espoused, and that the Lord will continue with them to the end, and grant them complete victory over every device of the enemy. - *Review and Herald*, March 11, 1915, p. 17; *Life Sketches*, pp. 436, 437.

Elder Crisler continued, concerning Mrs. White's personal faith and confidence:

Faith in God's power to sustain her through the many weaknesses attendant on old age; faith in the precious promises of God's Word; faith in her brethren who bear the burden of the work; faith in the final triumph of the third angel's message, - this is the full faith your mother seems to enjoy every day and every hour. This is the faith that fills her heart with joy and peace, even when suffering great physical weakness, and unable to make progress in literary lines. A faith such as this would inspire anyone who could witness it. - *Ibid*.

Lesson 17 will make clear -

- How the nine volumes of the Testimonies came to be.
- The purpose of these remarkable books.
- How the church may experience a great revival and reformation.

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE IN THE ADVENT MOVEMENT

ELLEN G. WHITE AND THE CHURCH LEADERS

Test Questions - Lesson 16



Briefly answer these questions:

1. Why was God’s frown upon the church in 1855?
.....
.....
2. What circumstances led o the renewal of the “gifts” in the church?
.....
.....

1. Complete these statements by filling in the missing words:

1. “It wasthat first causedin heaven.”
2. “No one has ever heard methe position of ”

2. Answer these questions:

1. How many years did Mrs. White spend in overseas service?
.....

2. By whose request did she make these trips abroad?
.....

3. Complete these quotations or statements:

1. “The Lord reproves.....in His people, but is this an evidence that He hasthem ? – No.”

2. Be zealous, therefore, and ”

3. In her later years, Mrs. White demonstrated herin the churchby her choice of men to serve asof her writings, after her death.

4. The five men se named, and their official positions, were:
Arthur G. Daniells,
.....
Francis M. Wilcox,
.....
Charles H. Jones,
.....

4. Fill in the missing words in these key quotations:

Clarence C. Crisler,
.....
William C. White,
.....

1. “I have been instructed that it isspecialto lead men to feel thatis.....to have them choose course,of the of their brethren.”

2. “We want to hold the lines , that there shall be noof the system ofandthat has been built up by ,labor.”

3. “God has ordained that theof His church fromparts of the , when assembled in ashall have authority.”

5. Answer these questions in the light of Mrs. White’s declaration.

1. If mistakes are made at the head of the work, who will “work to right every wrong”?
.....
.....
2. When we feel the work is in danger, what should we do?
.....
.....

6. Identify the phases of “the full faith” that sustained Mrs. White in her declining years:

1. Faith in
2. Faith in
3. Faith in
4. Faith in

THINK ON THESE THINGS (No written answer)

Have I personally experienced the disciplines and testing of God?

Have trials I have experience brought me closer to God?

Have I noticed any similarities between my own experiences and those of Bible characters? Of persons to whom counsels were addressed by the Spirit of God as recorded in the Testimonies for the Church?

Ellen G. White and the Church Leaders

16

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: When he ascended up on high, he ... gave gifts unto men And 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: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. - Ephesians 4:8, 11-13.

As a Seventh-day Adventist, you belong to a church which has been blessed with the restoration of the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy. This places upon you a large responsibility. You and your church stand on a pathway flooded with light from heaven. As a church member, what position have you taken toward the Spirit of Prophecy? In this connection, what has been the experience of the church as a whole?

A related question and one of great importance to every believer is, What was Mrs. White's attitude toward the church to which she belonged? How did she relate herself to the people who were the objects of her messages of instruction, warning, and correction? What was her attitude toward church leadership and organization?

Spirit Revealed by God’s Messenger Toward Church Leadership

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you; and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves. - 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.

Though she was a special messenger of the Lord, Mrs. White did not have extravagant or strained ideas about her own role in the church. Her life record reveals that she worked closely with church leaders, giving counsel and advice and, by her attitude of respect for those in positions of leadership, building harmony and unity into the denominational structure. Like the Bible writers, Mrs. White ever admonished believers to esteem and respect the church leaders. Note the serious overtones of these appeals:

He who has placed upon men the heavy responsibility of leaders of His people, will hold the people accountable for the manner in which they treat His servants. We are to honor those whom God has honored. - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 386.

It is true that some have committed errors, and made mistakes, but it is equally true that these errors and mistakes are not nearly as grievous in the sight of God as is the harsh and unforgiving spirit of those who are criticizers and censors. - *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 186.

It was envy that first caused discord in heaven, and its indulgence has wrought untold evil among men. "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" [James 3:16]. . . .

The Bible specially teaches us to beware of lightly bringing accusation against those whom God has called to act as his ambassadors. - *Patriarchs and Prophets*. pp. 385, 386.

From the beginning of the Advent Movement, Elder and Mrs. White were prominent in the work. However, the fact that she was God's special messenger did not confuse Mrs. White's thinking or lead her to assume the role of head of the church. She wrote:

. . . . *No one has ever heard me claim the position of leader of the denomination. . . .*

In the early days of our denominational work the Lord did designate Elder James White as one who, in connection with his wife, and under the Lord's special guidance, was to take a leading part in the advancement of this work. ...

I thank the Lord that He gave us the privilege of acting a part in the work from the beginning." *But neither then nor since the work has grown to large proportions*, during which time responsibilities have been widely distributed, *has anyone heard me claiming the title of leadership of this people.*

From the year 1844 till the present time I have received messages from the Lord and have given them to His people. This is my work to give to the people the light that the Lord gives me. I am commissioned to receive and communicate His messages. *I am not to appear before the people as holding any other position than that of a messenger with a message. - Testimonies*, vol. 8, pp. 236, 237. Italics supplied.

On this point Elder F. M. Wilcox declared:

... The Lord did not ... make her a judge and lawgiver as He did Moses, nor a ruler of state as He did David. Rather, she filled the position of a great teacher in Israel, as did Samuel; of a great reformer, as did Elijah; of a special messenger of God, as did John the Baptist. – “The Testimony of Jesus," a devotional study at the 1946 General Conference Session, published in *Review and Herald*, June 6, 1946, p. 63.

Ellen White received the salary of an ordained minister after the death of her husband in 1881. However, she was not ordained to the ministry by the laying on of hands; but she held credentials to preach. God Himself set her apart to be His messenger. Often she sat in on conference and institutional committees, but she did not belong to these elected groups or hold elective office in the church. She ever counseled the believers to support the conferences and their leaders. Her personal title was always designated for the support of the ministry of the Advent cause. She remained a faithful Seventh-day Adventist until the time of her death, July 16, 1915.

Examples of Mrs. White's Recognition of and Respect for Church Leadership

In response to the call of the General Conference, Mrs. White went to Europe in 1885 and spent two years helping to establish the work there.

In 1891 she responded to the call of the General Conference to go to Australia, where for nine years she labored untiringly to build up the work.

In these two experiences Mrs. White received no special message from the Lord regarding the course she should pursue. *She went because she was sent by the General Conference as a trusted worker in the cause.* On each occasion it was a real trial to her; but she respected church organization and leadership, and acted accordingly. She sailed for Europe in August of 1885, on the S.S. *Cephalonia*, of the Cunard line. Concerning this experience she wrote:

July 13, [1885] in company with my son, W. C. White, and a party of ten, we left California on our long contemplated journey to Europe. For months I had looked forward to this journey with anything but pleasure. . . .By day and by night my prayers ascended to heaven that I might know the will of God, and have perfect submission to it. Still my way was not made clear; I had no special evidence that I was in the path of duty, or that my prayers had been heard. . . .

My son ... bade me look to the past, when under the most forbidding circumstances, I had moved out in faith according to the best light I had, and the Lord had strengthened and supported. *I did so, and decided to act on the judgment of the General Conference, and start on the journey, trusting in God.* . . . When I had taken my seat on the cars, the assurance came that I was moving in accordance with the will of God. - *Review and Herald*, Sept. 15, 1885, p. 577. Italics supplied.

Elder L. H. Christian, who was for years the leader of our work in Europe, commented thus upon the influence of her two years on the Continent:

The advent movement in Europe would never have been the same if it had not been for her visit. ... If it had not been for her clear-cut instructions, Adventists in Europe would not have observed the Sabbath in the right way, but would rather have kept it as others keep Sunday. . . . But Mrs. White explained the Sabbath commandment as spiritual law that must be kept from the heart, not only by a mere outward observance. . . .

Mrs. White possessed a rare gift in getting close to people, in winning their hearts, and thus cheering them on. Europeans are unusually responsive to kindness. It gave them confidence that she seemed to find special joy in helping the weary and downhearted. Her love for children and youth and her understanding way of winning them increased this confidence. The personal testimonies sent by Mrs. White to different individuals in Europe after her return' to America guided and encouraged in many difficult cases.-*Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 161, 166, 169.

At the time of her arrival in Australia, Mts. White was sixty-four years of age. She wrote on July 10, 1892:

. . . .At times before leaving America I thought that the Lord did not require me to go so far away, at my age and when I was prostrated by overwork. *But I followed the voice of the [General] Conference, as I have ever tried to do at times when I had no clear light myself.* - *Selected Messages*, Book II, p. 239. Italics supplied.

Mrs. White sailed for Australia on the *S.S. Alameda*, a ship of the Cunard lines, boarding it in San Francisco on November 12, 1891, and arriving in Australia late in December. Concerning the blessing that followed her labors, she wrote:

I made the long journey and attended the conference held in Melbourne. I bore a decided testimony. The Lord gave me tongue and utterance to reprove, to entreat, and to present principles of the greatest importance to the people and to the work. - MS "Experiences in Australia," November 12, 1891-December 29, 1892, p" 19. White Estate Document File No. 28b.

The establishment of a model school at Cooranbong, now known as Avondale College, and the growth of the work along other lines, testify to the wisdom and guidance of God in her life and work.

Experiences Illustrate Mrs. White's Confidence in Church Leadership

It was Mrs. White's practice to commit to church leaders for safe delivery, certain messages written for erring individuals:

Sometimes when I receive a testimony for someone who is in danger, who is being deceived by the enemy, I am instructed that I am not to place it in his hands, but to give it *to someone else to read to him*, because, being deceived by the insinuations of Satan, he would read the testimony in the light of his own desires, and to him its meaning would be perverted. -MS 71, 1903; quoted in *Messenger to the Remnant*, p. 13.

It was a relief to Mrs. White to know that she could depend on the ministers' cooperation in this respect. These ministers might themselves receive letters of reproof. Uriah Smith, for many years an outstanding leader in the church, received from Mrs. White more than one letter of reproof, which brought about needed changes in his life. Concerning Elder Smith's experience, Ellen White declared in 1890:

The Lord has seen fit to counsel Elder Smith, to give him words of reproof because he had erred; but is this an evidence that God had forsaken him? - No. "As many as I love. I rebuke and chasten. Be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19). The Lord reproves wrongs in His people, but is this evidence that He has rejected them? - No. - *Selected Messages*, Book II, p.81

Mrs. White's confidence in the leading men of the church is further shown in that, as she neared the end of her life's work, she made definite provision for the future handling of her writings. In 1912 she set up a trusteeship, by which custody of her writings was placed in the hands of certain leading workers of the denomination. These men were chosen by Mrs. White because she had confidence in them, because they were acquainted with her experience and work, and because their qualifications fitted them to carry this responsibility. These men were:

Arthur G. Daniells, president of the General Conference;
Francis M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald*;
Charles H. Jones manager of the Pacific Press;
Clarence C. Crisler, one of her secretaries, who was later secretary of the Far Eastern Division;
W. C. White, her son, who carried important responsibilities in church leadership.

All the trustees chosen by Mrs. White served on the General Conference Committee. She believed in the integrity of the church's ministry, and named these men to become the custodians, after her death, of her inspired messages. According to her will, this body of trustees was to be self-perpetuating. The members of the present Board of Trustees are equally responsible church leaders.

Conclusion: Mrs. White recognized that church leaders were called of God to serve the same church that she served that the offices of church leadership were held by men of integrity; and that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was God's church, to be held in love and esteem by all believers.

Mrs. White's Attitude Toward Church Organization and General Conference Authority

In the year 1909 Ellen White read a manuscript before the delegates meeting in General Conference Session in Takoma Park. Maryland. These words of wisdom were a part of that statement:

. . . .The world is filled with strife for the supremacy. The spirit of pulling away from fellow laborers, the spirit of disorganization, is in the very air we breathe. By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous - as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery. These deceived souls regard it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They declare that they will not take any man's say-so, that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan's special effort to lead men to feel that God is pleased to have them choose their own course independent of the counsel of their brethren. . . .

Oh, how Satan would rejoice if he could succeed in his efforts to get in among this people and disorganize the work at a time when thorough organization is essential and will be the greatest power to keep out spurious uprisings and to refute claims not endorsed by the word of God! *We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor.* License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time. - *Testimonies*, vol. 9, pp. 257, 258. Italics supplied.

Notice how strongly the servant of God cautioned against *independence* and encouraged *interdependence* in the work of the denomination:

Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religions organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord's work may advance healthfully

and solidly, His people must draw together. The spasmodic, fitful movements of some who claim to be Christians are well represented by the work of strong but untrained horses. When one pulls forward, another pulls back, and at the voice of their master one plunges ahead and the other stands immovable. If men will not move in concert in the great and grand work for this time, there will be confusion. It is not a good sign when men refuse to unite with their brethren and prefer to act alone. Let laborers take into their confidence the brethren who are free to point out every departure from right principles. *If men wear the yoke of Christ, they can not pull apart*; they will draw with Christ. - *Ibid.*, p. 2.58. Italics supplied.

Indicating God's plan for united, harmonious action, with the world-wide church speaking through its delegates assembled in General Conference Session, Mrs. White continued:

I have often been instructed by the Lord that no man's judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of *any other one man*. Never should the mind of one man or the minds of a few men be regarded as sufficient in wisdom and power to control the work and to say what plans shall be followed. *But when, in a General Conference, the judgment of the brethren assembled from all points of the field is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be stubbornly maintained, but surrendered.* Never should a laborer regard as a virtue the persistent maintenance of his position of independence, contrary to the decision of the general body. - *Ibid.*, p. 260. Italics supplied.

Mrs. White then referred back to a state of affairs that existed before the epochal General Conference Session on reorganization which had been held in Battle Creek, in 1901. Prior to 1901 a relatively small group of overworked men, sitting on a few denominational boards, directed most of the activities:

At times, when a small group of men entrusted with the general management of the work have, in the name of the General Conference, sought to carry out unwise plans and to restrict God's work, I have said that I could no longer regard the voice of the General Conference, represented by these fellow men, as the voice of God. But this is not saying that the decisions of a General Conference composed of an assembly of duly appointed, representative men from all parts of the field should not be respected. *God has ordained that the representatives of His church from all parts of the earth, when assembled in a General Conference, shall have authority.* - *Ibid.*, pp. 260, 261. Italics supplied.

This excellent statement, recorded in pages 257-261 of *Testimonies*, vol. 9, should be read in its entirety by every student of this course.

The student of denominational history will recognize in the present Seventh-day Adventist church organization, the excellent fruitage of the Spirit of Prophecy counsels. The wholesome changes brought about since 1901 were made, not by a few men but, over a period of years, by representatives of the world church assembled in General Conference Sessions.

Through Last Day Problems Into the Kingdom of Glory

Upon this rock I will build my church; and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* - Matthew 16: 18.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and *them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark , and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.* And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are they ways, thou King of saints - Revelation 15 :2,3.

Let every Seventh-day Adventist take heart from these words of assurance:

There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port. . . .

When you think that the work is in danger, pray, "Lord, stand at the wheel. Carry us through the perplexity. Bring us safely into port." Have we not reason to believe that the Lord will bring us through triumphantly? - *Selected Messages*, Book II, pp. 390, 391.

I know that the Lord loves His church. It is not to be disorganized or broken up into independent atoms. There is not the least consistency in this; there is not the least evidence that such a thing will be. . . .

Let the believers heed the voice of the angel who has said to the church, "Press together." In unity is your strength. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. God hath a church, and Christ hath declared, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." - *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 69.

Mrs. White's Attitude Toward Church in Last Days of Her Life

A few months before Mrs. White's death, C. C. Crisler, an associate worker at her Elmhaven home in California, wrote to her son, ,W. C. White, away from home on a journey, concerning her attitude toward the church: