

Sincere efforts were made to include in these three volumes those articles which would be most helpful to Seventh-day Adventists around the world. Because it is not possible to publish in the many languages of the world all 5000 pages of the nine volumes, the *Testimony Treasures* have been designated as the standard world edition of *The Testimonies*. While the Treasures will never take the place of the nine volumes in comprehensive reference work, they are unexcelled for convenience in handling and in consecutive reading. Both the nine-volume Testimonies for the Church and the three-volume *Testimony Treasures* are recognized in the new enlarged *Index to the Writings of Mrs. E. G. White*. One set or the other should be in every Seventh-day Adventist home.

Shall we not, then, like the publishing house worker, read these inspired *Testimony* volumes, and find there in the precious counsels so vital to our souls' welfare? Remember that if you read about 15 pages a day, you will finish the full set of *Testimonies* in one year's time. Or five pages a day in the *Testimony Treasures* will complete that set in a 12-month period. A faithful Seventh-day Adventist minister wrote not long ago:

You may be pleased to know that I have just finished reading all nine volumes of the *Testimonies*, the Conflict series, and eight or nine other books *this year*. This is about twenty-five years that I have made this my program. What an example and challenge for all of us!

Lesson 18 will discuss the proper use of the Spirit of Prophecy writings.

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE IN THE ADVENT MOVEMENT

GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE TESTIMONIES

Test Questions – Lesson 17

1. Name three or more characteristics of the Testimonies that impressed the publishing house worker.
 1.
 2.
 3.
 2. Answer these questions:
 1. Because Bible study has been neglected, how does God call attention to our great need?
.....
 2. How often should one study the Bible?
.....
 3. Fill in the words missing from these statements:
 1. The testimonies may be compared to aenlarging our vision as wethe Word of God.
 2. The angel told Mrs. White: "Your testimony is . . . to come down to theof life, keeping thefrom dying, and pressing home upon
 4. Answer these questions:
 1. In what year was the first "Testimony" published?
.....
 2. In what form did the first printed testimonies appear?
.....
 3. How many volumes of Testimonies are there today?
.....
 4. Over how long a period did the Testimonies appear?
.....
 5. When were the first four bound volumes of the Testimonies for the Church published?
.....

Complete this statement of action taken by the 1883 General Conference Session:



"We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the of the mind, thus imparting the, and not (except in) the in which the ideas should be expressed."

5. Fill in the missing words:
 1. If one is reprov'd of a special wrong, brethren and sisters should carefully examineto see. . . whereinhave been guilty of the same sin.
 2. "In rebuking theof one, He [God] designs to"
 3. "The working of will be totheof the churches in [the testimonies]."
6. Check these statements if true:
 1. Not all the testimonies are messages of reproof.
 2. All phases of home life, church relationships, and service are dealt with in the Testimonies.

7. Underline the correct completion, in parentheses:
- For translation into many languages the (9-volume set of Testimonies for the Church) (3-volume Testimony Treasures) is the standard world edition.

THINK ON THESE THINGS (No written answer)

When I read the testimonies, especially the personal ones, do I think of them as relating only to the experience of the individuals addressed? Or to present needs of our world today?

Do I apply them to myself? To others? At all? Shall I plan to read the Testimonies through during the next twelve months? Or even the next 24-months?

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.-Jeremiah 23:28.

Why and for Whom Testimonies Were Given

Some time ago a personal letter was received from a responsible worker in a Seventh-day Adventist publishing house. She told of one of their editor's urging the worker group to read the *Testimonies for the Church*, and commented:

His statement that the nine volumes could be read through in a year by reading fifteen pages a day caught my fancy, and I decided to do it. ...

The blessing I got out of that reading leads me to think of my life as "before I read the *Testimonies* through," and "since I did." The over-all picture I got has meant much to me. I was impressed with the perfect timeliness of the writings. I was greatly impressed with the good sense, business judgment and acumen, balance, reasonableness, wholesomeness, and encouragement in them. I found no fanaticism, no extremes, no morbidity. I found psychological, and even scientific and medical, information that anticipated the best in modern thought, and faithfully warned against the evils peculiar to the radio-TV -cocktail age.

I am repeating that reading, and shall no doubt do so again. If every professed Seventh-day Adventist did such reading, in simple faith, I do not see how there could be any apostasies, offshoots, or fanatical parties within us, or "new light" unsettling confidence. Neither would there be the aping of the world and the frantic running after the world's wisdom which we see to day.

What is there about these nine volumes of the *Testimonies* (some 5000 pages written over a period of 55 years, 1855-1909) that captured the attention of this alert worker and led her to apply herself so faithfully to a year-long, systematic study of these books? Why did she then begin to reread the *Testimonies*? This publishing house worker represents an increasingly large group of people who are finding precious counsel in the Testimonies.

In this lesson we shall try to find some of the reasons.

NOTE: When, in Bible times, a prophet of God bore the message given him for the people, either orally or in writing he testified of what had been revealed to him. His message, regardless of its form, was then rightfully termed a testimony. It is significant that nine of the Ellen White books bear the title of *Testimonies for the Church*; but both there and else where the term "testimony" is often used to indicate the messages from her pen in whatever form they may appear. In these lessons and in Seventh-day Adventist literature generally, the term italicized or used in quotation marks indicates the books entitled *Testimonies for the Church*. When appearing without such designation, it refers to the E. G. White writings in general.

Means Provided to Guide the Church Back to the Bible

... The word of God is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teaching. *Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies, bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow.* 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. 5, pp. 663, 664.

The Bible is neglected today, even by many Seventh-day Adventists. What can be done to guide believers back to The Book of salvation? In His love God has supplied the church with the *Testimonies*.

The testimonies of the Spirit of God are given to direct men to His Word, which has been neglected. Now if their messages are not heeded, the Holy Spirit is shut away from the soul. What further means has God in reserve to reach the erring ones, and show them their true condition?
- *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 46.

This truth, clearly stated, is one of the most solemn that can confront any human being:



It is the first and highest duty of every rational being to learn from the Scriptures what is truth, and then to walk in the light, and encourage others to follow his example. We should day by day study the Bible diligently, weighing every thought, and comparing scripture with scripture. With divine help, we are to form our opinions for ourselves, as we are to answer for ourselves before God. - *Great Controversy*, p. 598. Italics supplied.

How the Testimonies Direct to the Holy Scriptures

... *Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the great truths already given* and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse. - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 665. Italics supplied.

The testimonies do not present something new and different in spiritual thinking or Christian standards. *They are Bible truth simplified and brought to bear on practical problems of today's living.* Dr. David Paulson, an Adventist medical pioneer and founder of the Hinsdale Sanitarium near Chicago, Illinois, was a diligent student of the testimonies. He compiled the Ellen White counsels entitled *Healthful Living*, published in 1896, nine years before the appearance of *Ministry of Healing*. To him the testimonies were a telescope resolving great Bible principles.

In such a principle of truth as is stated in the words, "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit," the casual reader perceives little; but when God shifts His great telescope, the Testimonies, to this verse, and adjusts the focus, we see how this text applies to habits of daily life, even to such simple things as clothing, diet, and exercise. - "Use and Abuse of the Testimonies."

Again the testimonies were a microscope, magnifying God's Word:

In a drop of water that may hang on the point of a cambric needle, the ordinary eye discovers nothing, yet let the scientist put it under his microscope, and if it has been properly inoculated, it will reveal myriads of animal forms that are perfectly developed.

I have frequently heard of many of our brethren spending a great deal of time arguing that certain things they see in the Testimonies could not possibly be in the Bible, for identically the same reason that others could not, with their naked eye, see the animal forms in the drop of water. Again, "The Testimonies are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all." *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 606. *-Ibid.*

Two outstanding points need to be emphasized:

1. The testimonies come down to the minutiae of life.

.... One stood by my side and said: "God has raised you up and has given you words to speak to the people and to reach hearts as He has given to no other one, He has shaped your testimonies to meet cases that are in need of help. You must be unmoved by scorn, derision, reproach, and censure. In order to be God's special instrument, you should lean to no one, but hang upon Him alone, and, like the clinging vine, let your tendrils entwine about Him. He will make you a means through which to communicate His light to the people. You must daily gather strength from God in order to be fortified, that your surroundings may not dim or eclipse the light that He has permitted to shine upon His people through you. It is Satan's special object to prevent this light from coming to the people of God, who so greatly need it amid the perils of these last days.

"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*, vol. 2, pp. 607, 608. Italics supplied.

2. The testimonies wall us in to keep us from neglecting or rejecting God's counsel.

.... As the word of God is walled in with these books and pamphlets, so has God walled you in with reproofs, counsel, warnings, and encouragements. - *Ibid.* vol. 5, p.66.

It is not necessary to tear down the wall in order to destroy its effectiveness. We need only to refuse to accept its protection. And in these days we need all the advantage that God can give us in our battle with the enemy.

How the Printed Testimonies Came to the Church

The *Review* office and the printing press were moved from Rochester, New York, to Battle Creek, Michigan, in the fall of 1855. This marked the beginning of an important era in the work of Sabbath keeping Adventists. In November, a number of the leading brethren gathered in the new little church building at Battle Creek to pray, to consider the spiritual state of the church, and to plan for the advancement of the work. At the last meeting a vision was given to Ellen White, regarding which she wrote:

November 20, 1855, while in prayer, the Spirit of the Lord came suddenly and powerfully upon me, and I was taken off in vision. I saw that the Spirit of the Lord has been dying away from the church. - *Testimonies*, vol. I, p. 113.

The vision was written out, and the following Sabbath evening was read to the members of the Battle Creek church. How could it be brought to the believers whose spiritual declension was so plainly marked out? It was unanimously voted by those present that it should be published and made available to the entire body of believers.

The matter was set in type and, together with some other testimony materials, was printed on the hand press. Thus the first "Testimony" appeared, in the form of a 16-page pamphlet. Only a few hundred copies were printed, and these were distributed without charge.

Little did anyone realize at that time that this small Testimony pamphlet was the first of a series of testimonies which would in the course of 55 years, grow to nearly 5000 pages, making up the nine volumes of *Testimonies for the Church*.

Again, in connection. with the Annual Conference held in Battle Creek the following spring, matters of most solemn importance to the church were revealed to Ellen White. In due time another 16-page pamphlet, containing the record of this important vision, was published and sent out under the title, "Testimony to the Church, No. 2." This interesting explanatory note appeared on the last page, signed by Cyrenius Smith and J. P. Kellogg, two of the leading men in the Battle Creek church:

The foregoing testimony was given in the presence of about one hundred brethren and sisters assembled in the house of prayer, on whose minds it apparently made a deep impression. It has since been read before the church at Battle Creek, who gave their unanimous vote in favor of its publication for the benefit of the saints scattered abroad. - "*Testimony to the Church*" [No.2, 1856 ed.]; quoted in *Messenger*, p. 63.

Through the next 25 years the testimony pamphlets appeared at varying intervals, but on the average of about one a year. At first they were sent out free, but as the size increased, they were sold at ten or fifteen cents a copy. In the 1870's, to furnish the counsels in more permanent form to the increasing church membership, the earlier testimonies were reprinted to fill out the series and, with the more recent pamphlets still in stock, were bound together in book form.

At the 1883 General Conference Session, consideration was given to the most convenient form in which these counsels might appear, and this action was taken:

Whereas, Some of the bound volumes of the *Testimonies to the Church* are out of print, so that full sets cannot be obtained at the office; and

Whereas, There is a constant and urgent call for the reprinting of these volumes: therefore,

Resolved, That we recommend their republication in such a form as to make four volumes of seven or eight hundred pages each. - *Review and Herald*, Nov. 27, 1883.

These four volumes issued in 1885 are the first four books of the nine-volume set of the *Testimonies* so well known today. Volumes 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 were added in succession, the last in 1909. The Testimonies, containing nearly 5000 pages of instruction and counsel, are now available in the nine separate volumes or conveniently bound together in the family set of four books. When, in 1948, it became necessary to reset the type for the *Testimonies*, the editors included a helpful introductory historical re view of the times in which each volume appeared. For example, "The Times of Volume Seven." See pp. 3-8. A careful reading of these introductory pages is definitely worthwhile.

Why Personal Messages are Interspersed With Articles of General Counsel

As you go through the nine volumes of *Testimonies for the Church*, you will find articles dealing with Faith in God, Parental Responsibility, The Laodicean Church, Errors in Diet, Fanaticism and Ignorance, Unfaithfulness in Stewardship, Proper Observance of the Sabbath, The Last Crisis, Our Publications, and many other phases of Christian life and activity. Interspersed with these articles on various subjects are messages addressed personally to individuals or families - Brother A, B, or C, The initials used bear no relationship to the name of the person addressed, but in each number of the *Testimonies* the first name becomes "A," the second "B," etc. Under the title of "Duties of Husband and Wife" is a communication addressed to Brother R. There is a "Letter to an Orphan Boy," which opens with "Dear Friend," Another, "An Impressive Dream," begins "Dear Brother M." In the first five volumes the articles appeared in their chronological sequence, with no attempt to arrange the material in accordance with subjects treated.

No explanation is needed for the publication of general articles in *Testimonies for the Church*. But why are the personal testimonies published in books for all to read? Do they, perhaps, apply to others than the ones to whom they were addressed?

Many of the early believers had heard Mrs. White present her oral testimonies. A good illustration of how the oral testimonies were given, and the response of the people thus addressed, is given in *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 10-23. Some had received personal testimonies in the form of letters. Mrs. White wrote concerning the general use of some of these communications addressed personally to individuals:

Since the warming and instruction given in testimony for individual cases applied with equal force to many others who had not been specially pointed out in this manner, it seemed to be my duty to publish the personal testimonies for the benefit of the church I know of no better way to present my views of general dangers and errors, and the duty of all who love God and keep His commandments, than by giving these testimonies. Perhaps there is no more direct and forcible way of presenting what the Lord has shown me. - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 658, 659.

And Mrs. White explains why the publishing of these personal communications was effective in getting important instruction before others generally:

... I was then directed to bring out general principles, in speaking and in writing, *and at the same time specify the dangers, errors, and sins of some individuals, that all might be warned, reproved, and counseled.* I saw that all should search their own hearts and lives closely to see if they had not made the same mistakes for which others were corrected and if the warnings given for others did not apply to their own cases. If so, they should feel that the counsel and reproofs were given especially for them and should make as practical an application of them as though they were especially addressed to themselves. - *Ibid.*, p. 660. Italics supplied.

In following this course, Mrs. White was given the assurance of God's approval:

In a vision given me June 12, 1868, I was shown that which fully justified my course in publishing personal testimonies: "When the Lord singles out individual cases and specifies their wrongs, others, who have not been shown in vision, frequently take it for granted that they are right, or nearly so. *If one is reproved for a special wrong, brethren and sisters should carefully examine themselves to see wherein they have failed and wherein they have been guilty of the same sin.* They should possess the spirit of humble confession. If others think them right, it does not make them so. God looks at the heart. ... In rebuking the wrongs of one, He designs to correct many. But if they fail to take the reproof to themselves, and flatter themselves that God passes over their errors because He does not especially single them out, they deceive their own souls and will be shut up in darkness and be left to their own ways to follow the imaginations of their own hearts. - *Ibid.*, p. 659. Italics supplied.

Why should the Lord give a special testimony to *each* erring believer when his case has already been covered in a particular testimony to another in like circumstances? In this plan of communication God's wisdom can be seen at a glance. And remember that while the testimonies may apply with equal force to others than the one addressed, the reader *must avoid applying the messages* to others and using them as a club. "Brethren and sisters should *carefully examine themselves* to see wherein *they* have failed." *Ibid.* Italics supplied.

Because the testimonies reprove sin they are like the Bible, the objects of Satan's attack. The work of correcting wrongs and reproofing sins is not pleasing to the great enemy of souls.

There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic. The workings of Satan will be to unsettle the faith of the churches in them, for this reason: Satan cannot have so clear a track to bring in his deceptions and bind up souls in his delusions if the warnings and reproofs and counsels of the Spirit of God are heeded. - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 48.

Testimony Messages Not All Reproof

Only a relatively small portion of the testimonies is in the nature of reproof. Read the many hundreds of pages devoted to biography, positive spiritual counsels, and penetrating, practical discussions on Bible themes. W. A. Spicer, for years a General Conference president, and personally acquainted with Ellen White, wrote concerning the *Testimonies*:

One might think these volumes would not be so interesting. But they are largely messages written to persons who needed help - just the help that we all need. They were personal messages to living people, and that is why they come as living words to the heart. Besides the personal messages there is vital matter on every phase of life and service

Every phase of home life, of church relationships, of service, is dealt with in just the way to help the brethren and sisters of today. - "God's Special Gift to the Remnant Church," p. 10.

What Is Included in the Testimony Treasures

The Testimony Treasures are three conveniently handled, Christian Home Library volumes of about 600 pages each. Choice articles have been selected from the nine volumes of the *Testimonies for the Church* - about one third of the total material. In selecting the articles, if a subject had been treated two or three times in the various testimonies over a period of 55 years, it is here represented only once.

For instance, the Testimonies deal with tithes and offerings in three major general articles of from 20 to 30 pages each. The most comprehensive one was selected for *Testimony Treasures*, and a few "detached paragraphs" from the others were added.