

vent new amusements and diversions in order to gain health. They learn to depend on excitement and are uneasy without it. Such are not true Christians. They go to another extreme. The true principles of Christianity open before all a source of happiness, the height and depth, the length and breadth of which are immeasurable. - The Adventist Home, p. 493.

On this topic of such wide interest, the Spirit of Prophecy counsels are clear:

It is the privilege and duty of Christians to seek to refresh their spirits and invigorate their bodies by innocent recreation, with the purpose of using their physical and mental powers to the glory of God. Our recreations should not be scenes of senseless mirth, taking the form of the nonsensical. We can conduct them in such a manner as will benefit and elevate those with whom we associate, and better qualify us and them to more successfully attend to the duties devolving upon us as Christians. -*Ibid.*

Vital Reforms Were Recommended by Precept and Example

The counsels on diet illustrate this point. Note the understanding of a need for latitude in the individual application of the principles of proper diet:

Mrs. White stayed in the middle of the road. She did not support extremes in any direction. "Where her principles are applied in our homes and churches, there is harmony and happiness."

Tests to Come on Question of Spirit of Prophecy

More than fifty years ago Mrs. White warned (*Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 41) that "soon every possible effort will be made to discount and pervert the truth of the testimonies of God's Spirit." And some twenty years still earlier she revealed the subtle means by which the enemy would seek to accomplish that work:

It is Satan's plan to weaken the faith of God's people in the *Testimonies*. Satan knows how to make his attacks. He works upon minds to excite jealousy and dissatisfaction toward those at the head of the work. The gifts are next questioned; then of course, they have but little weight and instruction given through vision is disregarded. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction. By giving place to doubts and unbelief in regard to the work of God and by cherishing feelings of distrust and cruel jealousies, they are preparing themselves for complete deception. - *Testimonies*. Vol. 5. p. 672.

Mrs. White also warned that false prophets would arise, claiming to have special messages from the Lord:

There will be those who will claim to have visions. When God gives you clear evidence that the vision is from Him, you may accept it; but do not accept it on any other evidence; for people are going to be led more and more astray in foreign countries and in America. - *Selected Messages*, Book II, p. 72.

In His sermon on the mount (Matthew 7:16-20) and through the Apostle John (1 John 4:1-3) Jesus warned of false prophets. And in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 Paul admonishes us to "despise not prophesying, prove all things, hold fast that which is good." We must be ever on guard and, in the light of the Bible tests (see Lesson 7), carefully examine the claims of those who say they speak for God.

We are to stand firm and be alert for God, watch and pray, and hold fast to the Bible and the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy till the end; for they "will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last." - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 55. Especially should we avoid all who misuse the Spirit of Prophecy to support their own twisted views. We must not overlook the message to the Laodicean church that "as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Revelation 3:19. Simply because God rebukes and chastens His church on occasion, should we feel that He has forsaken it? To the contrary! The Scriptures declare chastisement to be a sign of sonship. Read Hebrews 12:1-15.

Misuse of the Spirit of Prophecy writings

Some who are not willing to receive the light, but who prefer to walk in ways of their own choosing, will search the testimonies to find something in them to encourage the spirit of unbelief and disobedience. - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 48.

Through the years there have been some who have opposed the work of the Spirit of Prophecy. But it is worthy of note that, though Ellen White lived and worked over a period of seventy years, traveled widely, and published many books, *there is little that can be distorted or misrepresented in such a manner as to disparage her work.* The relatively few criticisms that have been made may be grouped under two classifications:

1. That her teachings on certain points of doctrine contradict Bible teaching; and
2. That her conduct and counsel do not harmonize with that which should be expected of a prophet of God.

Full and honest examination of her teachings and the story of her life overwhelmingly disproves any charges that may be brought under either heading.

The principal criticisms brought against Mrs. White have been met in a recent carefully-documented work entitled, *Ellen White and Her Critics* as well as other recent works in defense of the truth.. Those who may be called upon to meet these charges should secure these books from their Book and Bible House. Queries can also be sent to the EG White Research Center in each Division. These centers are equipped to assist with answers to questions that church members may have in connection with the Spirit of Prophecy.

Let the messages from God's acknowledged messenger be read in their fullness and respected and accepted as messages from God, and a balanced Christian life must follow. The Christian must face many tests and trials in the process of sanctification, as Mrs. White wrote in *Selected Messages*, Book II, p. 317: "Every true child of God will be sifted as wheat, and in the sifting process every cherished pleasure which diverts the mind from God must be sacrificed."

Will we do this work? Will we be balanced Christians here? And will we make the needed preparation for the future life with the pure and the blest? Reforms will appear in our lives, as we remember Paul's words to Timothy: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7.

Lesson 22 is entitled, "Mrs. White and Church Leaders Answer Questions About Her Work,"

PROPHETIC GUIDANCE IN THE ADVENT MOVEMENT

SPIRIT OF PROPHECY AND CHRISTIAN LIVING

Test Questions – Lesson 21

1. Supply the missing words in these E. G. White statements:

1. "The kingly power of _____, sanctified by _____, is to bear sway in the life."

2. "If Satan cannot keep souls bound in the _____ of indifference, he will try to push them into the _____ of fanaticism."

2. Answer these questions:

1. Is it possible to use statement from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy in such a way that they appear to support error and extreme teaching?

2. Is the work of extremists an up building and saving influence?

3. Supply the information called for:

1. Foes of the early church, from without, included –
a. _____
b. _____

3. "Shun the _____, both of _____ and of _____"

6. List two dangers threatening the church as mentioned in Section 6:

1. _____
2. _____

7. Answer these questions:

1. For what purpose will some who are unconverted search the Testimonies?

2. In the "sifting process," what must be sacrificed for God?

c. _____

2. Foes from within were _____ and _____



Under line the words which correctly complete these statement:

1. Sargent and Robbins were silenced when their unbiblical ideas and fanaticism were exposed by (logic and a sermon) (the vision and the Bible) (a special trip to Randolph).

4. Mention three areas of reform in which Mrs. White's wise counsels to the church is often distorted by those tending to extremes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. Fill in the missing words from these E.G. White statements:

1. "I make myself a _____ for no ones else."

2. Let no one think himself a _____ for all."

THINK ON THESE THINGS (No written answer)

Are deep feeling and emotion proper in the life of a true Christian?

Is there a danger that we shall consider all zeal, enthusiasm, and deep religious feeling to be fanaticism?

What does the word "balanced" mean to you in reference to Christian living?

How do you measure up?

Was Jesus' life balanced?

How may we become like Him?



PROPHETIC GUIDANCE

GUIDING TEXT: But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. - Proverbs 4:18.

INTRODUCTION

The Spirit of Prophecy writings have been used by God to help shape the lives of many Seventh-day Adventists in harmony with the life of the Great Exemplar. Satan also works through those who tend to extreme and fanatical application of one phase or another, thereby introducing confusion and bringing reproach upon the church.

Like the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy emphasizes the fact that Christianity is more than a cutting loose from sin and Satan, it is more than mere negation of a life of sin. It is also a tying of the soul to Christ and His righteousness, a vigorous and happy affirmation of a new and righteous life, exemplified in a well balanced and consistent course of action.

Religion means the abiding of Christ in the heart, and where He is, the soul goes on in spiritual activity, ever growing in grace, ever going on to perfection. - Ellen G. White, in *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1892, p. 321.

The progressive experience of Christian life is beautifully pictured in these words:

We need constantly a fresh revelation of Christ; a daily experience that harmonizes with His teachings. High and holy attainments are within our reach. Continual progress in knowledge and virtue is God's purpose for us. His law is the echo of His own voice, giving to all the invitation, "Come up higher; be holy, holier still." Every day we may advance in perfection of Christian character. - *Gospel Workers*, p. 274.

The earnest follower of Jesus is guided by love which leads him to obey God's law. His life is not a round of forms and rules and a whirl of ceaseless activity. It is union with Christ, peace in Christ, cooperating with Christ. On this Ellen White wrote:

Many fail of imitating our holy Pattern because they study so little the definite features of that character. So many are full of busy plans, always active; and there is no time or place for the precious Jesus to be a close, dear companion. They do not refer every thought and action to Him, inquiring: "Is this the way of the Lord?" If they did they would walk with God, as did Enoch. - *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 393.

The messenger of the Lord was not extreme, nor did she advocate extremes. She always defended sane, sensible views. We may learn much from her own experiences in teaching truth and in dealing with those who tended to extremes.

Spirit of Prophecy Points to Balanced Christian Life

These Ellen White comments are helpful:

Let the kingly power of reason bear sway.

... The higher powers of the being are to rule. The passions are to be controlled by the will, which is itself to be under the control of God. *The kingly power of reason, sanctified by divine grace, is to bear sway in our lives.* . . .

Apart from divine power, no genuine reform can be effected. Human barriers against natural and cultivated tendencies are but as the sand-bank against the torrent. Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the temptations that assail us from within and from without.

Christ came to this world and lived the law of God, that man might have perfect mastery over the natural inclinations which corrupt the soul. The Physician of soul and body. He gives victory over warring lusts. He has provided every facility, that man may possess completeness of character. - *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 130. 131. Italics supplied.

Avoid extremes of indifference and fanaticism.

We have found in our experience that if Satan cannot keep souls bound in the ice of indifference, he will try to push them into the fire of fanaticism. When the Spirit of the Lord comes among His people, the enemy seizes the opportunity to work also, seeking to mold the work of God through the peculiar, unsanctified traits of different ones who are connected with that work. Thus there is always danger that unwise moves will be made. Many carry on a work of their own devising a work which God has not prompted. - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 644. Italics supplied.

Warnings Concerning Fanaticism and Apostasy

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. - 2 Peter 2:1, 2.

Here Peter traces fanaticism and apostasy back to its origin in the work of "false prophets" and "false teachers." Dissatisfied with the Lord's duly-appointed teachers and prophets, these self-appointed and self styled teachers and prophets, with their peculiar and unsanctified traits of character, presumed to counsel and lead the church. They advanced personal and unbiblical views here described as "damnable heresies," by which they denied "the Lord that bought them."

Through the years, a few professing Seventh-day Adventists and some who have left the faith have taught unsound and unbiblical views, supporting their notions by using disconnected Scripture passages and out of context extracts from the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy. Mrs. White in writing to a minister gave strong counsel concerning such a practice:

There are those who pick out from the Word of God, and also from the Testimonies, detached paragraphs or sentences that may be interpreted to suit their ideas, and they dwell upon these, and build themselves up in their own positions, when God is not leading them. Here is your danger.

You will take passages in the Testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God's people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy. We should not needlessly take a course that will make differences or create dissension. We should not give the impression that if our particular ideas are not followed, it is because the ministers are lacking in comprehension and in faith, and are walking in darkness.

Your mind has been on an unnatural strain for a long time. You have much truth, and precious truth, but mingled with suppositions. Your extreme ideas and strong language often destroy the effect of your best efforts. *Should many accept the views you advance, and talk and act upon them, we would see one of the greatest fanatical excitements that has ever been witnessed among Seventh-day Adventists. This is what Satan wants.* - *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 179. Italics supplied.

Religious extremists will often attack, not the world, but the church - the only instrument God has on earth to save the world. Thus is extended Satan's work as "the accuser of our brethren." Revelation 12:10. The work of one who tends to extremes will inevitably tear down and destroy; it does not build up and save the flock of God.

Those who see that the church needs reforming should let the Spirit of Prophecy work as God has appointed. *Let all read the volumes for themselves.* Privately-issued materials - in pamphlets or in mimeographed form - which quote much from Mrs. White's writings, should be approached with caution. Denominationally authorized productions carry the official imprint of the issuing organization, and may be relied upon. All heaven is cooperating for the purification of God's people. Let God's messages reach the reader *in the setting* in which they were originally set before the church in the E. G. White books.

How Mrs. White Met Discordant Teachings in Early Years

From the very beginnings of our work Mrs. White had to meet and expose fanaticism and apostasy. Read a biographical sketch of Mrs. White's early labors in *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2. The pioneers of the church were challenged by foes of truth, from within the church as well as from outside it. From without, the Advent Movement was threatened by the daring new evolution theory, the spectacular spiritistic manifestations, and the attacks of the world. From within, extreme teachings were advocated by some members, and several false teachers arose speaking forth the errors and delusions of Satan. All these made war against God's truth and the church.

In facing the reality of apostasy and fanaticism, we must remember that God is permitting certain developments - He is allowing men to be shaken in order that the solid, unshakable things may remain. We must be sure that we stand solidly with God's church. See Hebrews 12:27.

Almost a century ago Mrs. White wrote concerning her work as a defender of God's remnant and describing the apostasy of certain unstable persons, in a letter to a Mrs. Howland, of Topsham, Maine. We quote a portion of the letter:

God is sifting his people. He will have a clean and holy people. We cannot read the heart of man. But he has provided means to keep the church pure. A corrupt people has arisen who could not live with the people of God. They despised reproof, and would not be corrected. . . . They had time to repent of their wrongs; but self was too dear to die. They nourished it, and it grew strong, *and they separated from the peculiar people of God, whom he was purifying unto himself.* We all have reason to thank God that a way has been opened to save the church, for the wrath of God must have come upon us, if these corrupt individuals had remained with us. Every honest one that may be deceived by these disaffected ones will have the true light in regard to them if every angel from heaven has to visit them, and enlighten their minds. We have nothing to fear in this matter.

As we near the judgment all will manifest their true character, and it will be made plain to what company they belong. *The sieve is going;* let us not say, Stay thy hand, O God. We know not the heart of man. *The church must be purged, and will be.* God reigns, let the people praise him. - *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, pp. 201,202. Italics supplied.

Specific Instances of Spirit of Prophecy Warnings Against Extremes

Regarding the use of pictures

While in Europe [188.3-1887], Mrs. White made her home in Switzerland. Twice during this time she visited Scandinavia and Italy. In some of these countries she met fanaticism. In Norway some had begun to teach that all pictures were sin. They wanted no photographs in their homes, in our books, or anywhere else.

They did, however, use postage stamps and money with pictures, since it was unavoidable. Mrs. White explained to them that their views were extreme, and that the second commandment did not forbid the things they warned against. Her instruction concerning this and other extreme ideas built as it were a hedge about our people, and led them to be careful when other extremists arose, especially during World War I. - L. H. Christian, in *Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 164,165.

Regarding an adequate diet

Not all who profess to believe in dietetic reform are really reformers. With many persons the reform consists merely in discarding certain unwholesome foods. They do not understand dearly the principles of health, and their tables, still loaded with harmful dainties, are far from being an example of Christian temperance and moderation.

Another class, in their desire to set a right example, go to the opposite extreme. Some are unable to obtain the most desirable foods, and instead of using such things as would best supply the lack, they adopt an impoverished diet. Their food does not supply the elements needed to make good blood. Their health suffers, their usefulness is impaired; and their example tells against rather than in favor of reform in diet. Others think that since health requires a simple diet, there need be little care in the selection or the preparation of food. Some restrict themselves to a very meager diet, not having sufficient variety to supply the needs of the system, and they suffer in consequence. - *Ministry of Healing*, p. 318.

Because it is wrong to eat merely to gratify perverted taste, it does not follow that we should be indifferent in regard to our food. It is a matter of the highest importance. No one should adopt an impoverished diet. Many are debilitated from disease, and need nourishing, well-cooked food. Health reformers, above all others, should be careful to avoid extremes. The body must have sufficient nourishment. - *Counsels on Health*, p. 118.

Spirit of Prophecy writings abound in balanced counsels relating to diet. See *Counsels on Diet and Foods*. This quotation presents the picture briefly:

God has furnished man with abundant means for the gratification of an unperverted appetite. He has spread before him the products of the earth, - a bountiful variety of food that is palatable to the taste and nutritious to the system. Of these our benevolent heavenly Father says we may freely eat. Fruits, grains, and vegetables, prepared in a simple way, free from spice and grease of all kinds, make, with milk or cream, the most healthful diet. They impart nourishment to against rather than in favor of reform in diet. Others think that since health requires a simple diet, there need be little care in the selection or the preparation of food. Some restrict themselves to a very meager diet, not having sufficient variety to supply the needs of the system, and they suffer in consequence. - *Ministry of Healing*, p. 318.

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the body, and give a power of endurance and a vigor of intellect that are not produced by a stimulating diet. - *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 92.

Regarding proper dress

Reference to the *Index to the Writings of Ellen White*, under the word "Dress," will direct you to sensible guidance in proper clothes for the Christian to wear. We quote briefly:

. . . In dress, as in all things else, it is our privilege to honor our Creator. He desires our clothing to be not only neat and healthful, but appropriate and becoming. - *Education*, p. 248; *Child Guidance*, p. 413.

. . . We should seek to make the best of our appearance. . . . Our appearance in every respect should be characterized by neatness, modesty, and purity. - *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 96; *Child Guidance*, p. 413.

. . . All matters of dress should be strictly guarded, following closely the Bible rule. - *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 499; *Child Guidance*, p. 430.

Since the manner of dress is an index to the heart (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 136,137), and we are judged by our dress (*Education*, p. 248), the abundant instruction available on the subject calls for serious reflection (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 641).). Not only does display and ornamentation betray vanity and weakness (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 376), but it denies Christ (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, Pl" 304,332), whose simplicity in dress as in an other things is the perfect example for Christians in an ages (*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 379).

At the same time Mrs. White counseled against extremes. She urged the shortening of skirts that dragged the streets, and reproved those who dressed in such an odd manner as to misrepresent the truth. In a letter to one Adventist sister, she wrote:

We as a people do not believe it our duty to go out of the world to be out of the fashion. If we have a neat, plain, modest, and comfortable plan of dress, and worldlings choose to dress as we do, shall we change this mode of dress in order to be different from the world? No, we should not be odd or singular in our dress for the sake of differing from the world, lest they despise us for so doing. Christians are the light of the world, the salt of the earth. Their dress should be neat and modest, their conversation chaste and heavenly, and their deportment blameless. - *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 424,425.

Regarding recreation

There are persons with a diseased imagination to whom religion is a tyrant, ruling them as with a rod of iron. Such are constantly mourning over their depravity and groaning over supposed evil. Love does not exist in their hearts; a frown is ever upon their countenances. They are chilled by the innocent laugh from the youth or from anyone. They consider all recreation or amusement a sin and think that the mind must be constantly wrought up to just such a stern, severe pitch. This is one extreme. Others think that the mind must be ever on the stretch to in-

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