

Drama and the SDA Church:

Appendix 1

“FACING THE CRISIS”

(With the Lesser and Greater Light - Part 1)

Elder Lawrence Nelson, January 1, 2000

(Edited from original which was prepared for cassette recording. Author's emphasis in italics. Used with permission.)

Introduction:

Every day brings us closer to the Final Crisis! Inspiration describes it as a “time of trouble such as never was,” that is “soon to burst upon us as an overwhelming surprise!”

God foreknew the intensity of this end-time conflict:

He knew that you and I would never be able to stand before Satan's mighty “power of force” without special assistance from the Holy Spirit.

For Satan will very shortly cause “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

“And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” (Revelation 13:16,17)

How thankful we should be that God has given the Spirit of Prophecy to His church which together with the Bible will enable His people, through Christ's power, to prepare for and pass through the end-time crisis, and to do so with divine assurance of victory!

For only through His Word can we be assured that Christ will stand by each one who faithfully fulfills the divine conditions that are clearly revealed to us through these inspired writings.

Before we continue to explore heaven's guidelines, let us first seek the aid of divinity:

Loving Father, it is time for us to awake from Satan's fearful stupor which is enveloping Thy people. Please, dear Father, open our spiritual senses so we may comprehend the divine instruction that You have sent to us, that we may face this coming crisis fearlessly as soldiers of the cross. We ask this in the holy name of Jesus. Amen.

We will begin our study by reading from God's book, the Bible:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:19-21)

Ellen White writes concerning the Holy Spirit:

The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the Word of God is the standard by which all

teaching and experience must be tested. Isaiah declares, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20)—*The Great Controversy*, Introduction, p.7.

The writings of the Spirit of Prophecy have passed *every test* of the Holy Scriptures! They have been proven true to the Word of God! Indeed, Ellen White magnifies the light given by the ancient prophets, making their words clearer and more understandable in their special application to *our* time. The Lord has stated through His last-day messenger:

The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures *and* the Spirit of Prophecy.—*Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 30.

And, in Letter 92, 1900, we read:

The Bible must be your counselor. Study it, *and* the Testimonies God has given; for they never contradict His Word.

Therefore, since the Holy Spirit is the author of both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, I’m sure you will agree with me that the primary purpose of *both* is to lead men and women to *our Saviour* who is the light and salvation of the world!

There are two brief quotations in the Spirit of Prophecy that we frequently hear quoted among us. But they are often taken out of context. These statements are then misinterpreted and misrepresented, not only by individuals, but even by some of the leaders of our church! In this present study we will search for the true meaning of the first one of these two passages. A study of the second quotation will follow in Part 2 of this paper.

The passage we will consider today is taken from the *Review & Herald* of January 20, 1903, and reads as follows:

Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.

Immediately the question must be asked: Who is the “lesser light,” and who is the “greater light?” It is here that Satan has begun to destroy confidence in the writings of the Lord’s servant!

Now, the best way to learn the meaning of a perplexing expression is to ask the author what he or she meant. Surely Ellen White will explain just what the Holy Spirit, who inspired her thought, had meant for her to convey. It will be well for us to read this often-quoted passage in its context.

But first, there are a number of other passages in which Ellen White uses the expressions, “the lesser light” and “the greater light.” In solving this statement these should be helpful. We will begin with one that is found in the *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 2, pp 83, 84. Consider carefully her explanation of the work of John the Baptist:

The prophet John was the connecting link between the two dispensations. He was the lesser light which was to be followed by a greater. He was to shake the confidence of the people in their *traditions*, call their sins to their remembrance, and lead them to repentance; that they might be prepared to appreciate the work of Christ. God

communicated to John by inspiration, illuminating the understanding of the prophet, that he might remove the superstition and darkness from the minds of the *honest Jews*, which had, through false teachings, been gathering upon them for generations.

But the *least* disciple who followed Christ, witnessing his miracles, and receiving his divine lessons of instruction and the comforting words that fell from his lips, was more privileged than John the Baptist. No light *had ever shone or ever will shine* so clearly upon the mind of fallen man, as that which emanated from the teachings and example of Jesus. Christ and his mission had been but dimly understood and typified in the shadowy sacrifice....

Although not one of the prophets has a higher mission or great work to perform than had John, yet he was not to see even the result of his own labors. He was not privileged to be with Christ and witness the divine power attending the greater light....

Did you notice those last words —"the divine power attending" ... Who? There is no question, her answer is Christ, "*the greater light.*" This sentence definitely reveals that the greater light was Christ! And who did she name as the "lesser light?" The prophet John! In this passage she has defined both of these two terms in unmistakable language! And as we read other passages from her writings we will find that she will be consistent.

Now let us look at a second passage which is found in the *Review & Herald*, April 8, 1873. Herein Ellen White writes that John was:

...one of the greatest prophets that God had sent as a messenger to the earth.... Christ had said of him that he was more than a prophet...[that] "*there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.*"

In the context of these words Ellen White continues: "John was the lesser light which was to be followed by a *greater light.*" And who was that greater light who followed John? We would all answer: JESUS!

Passing on to a third statement, we'll turn to page 220 of *The Desire of Ages*:

The prophet John was the connecting link between the two dispensations. As God's representative, he stood forth to show the relation of the law and the prophets to the Christian dispensation. He was the lesser light, which was to be followed by a greater. The mind of John was illuminated by the Holy Spirit, that he might shed light upon his people; [and now notice these words:] but no other light ever has shone or ever will shine so clearly upon fallen man as that which emanated from the teaching and example of Jesus.

From this there can be but one conclusion: John, the lesser light, was to show the relation of the law and the prophets of the Old Testament to Christ, the "greater light," who followed him.

And the Bible confirms Ellen White's definitions to be correct! We read in John 1:6-9:

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

In John 5:35 and 36, Jesus said: He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness [light] than that of John.... Then, in John 9:5, Jesus declared: "I am the light of the world."

If no other light ever has shone or ever will shine so clearly as Christ, surely all the Old as well as the New Testament prophets of the Bible were "lesser lights." There can be no question about this!

In a fourth passage, Ellen White speaks of the Old Testament era as a "lesser light," and the New Testament era as "greater light." We quote from *This Day With God*, p. 246:

With the first advent of Christ there was ushered in an era of greater light and glory; but it would indeed be sinful ingratitude to despise and ridicule the lesser light because a fuller and more glorious light had dawned. Those who despise the blessings and glory of the Jewish age are not prepared to be benefited by the preaching of the gospel....

So, we can clearly see that Ellen White does not depart from her established definition. Christ's first advent ushered in a time of "greater light and glory." God, through the Old Testament prophets, had established the "lesser light and glory of the Jewish age." The purpose of this age was to establish the sanctuary services which pointed forward to the "greater light" to be ushered in with the first advent of Christ.

Now we are ready to discuss the passage in the *Review & Herald*, January 20, 1903: From this passage it has been declared from our pulpits and books that Ellen White refers to the Bible as the "greater light" and to herself and her writings as the "lesser light."

I refer particularly to a man-made caption: In *Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 30 [copyright 1980], it clearly promotes this mistaken position. The caption reads: *Relationship of E. G. White Writings to Bible—The Lesser Light*. Immediately after this caption, the passage from the *Review & Herald* is printed:

Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.—*Review & Herald*, January 20, 1903. (Quoted in *Colporteur Ministry*, page 125.)

Now, let me ask you: Have you ever *read this passage in its context*? As we read it, please note the purpose of this *Review* article. From its beginning to its ending she is promoting the sale of [what?] her books. To whom? To the people of the world. Why?—"to lead them to the Saviour"—the Greater Light!

Note carefully as we read this sentence in its context:

I thank my Heavenly Father for the interest that my brethren and sisters have taken in

the circulation of *Christ's Object Lessons*. By the sale of this book great good has been accomplished, and the work should be continued. But the efforts of our people should not be confined to this one book.... The larger books, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Great Controversy*, and *Desire of Ages*, should be sold everywhere. These books contain truth for this time,—*truth that is to be proclaimed in all parts of the world*. Nothing is to hinder their sale.

Many more of our larger books might have been sold if church members had been *awake to the importance of the truths these books contain*, and had realized their responsibility to circulate them. My brethren and sisters, will you not now make an effort to circulate these books?

She continues,

Sister White is not the originator of these books. They contain the instruction that during her life-work God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously *given his servant to be given to the world. From their pages this light is to shine into the hearts of men and women, leading them to the Saviour*. The Lord has declared that these books are to be scattered throughout the world. *There is in them truth which to the receiver is a savor of life unto life*. They are silent witnesses for God. In the past they *have been the means* in his hands of *convicting and converting many souls*. Many have read them with eager expectation, and, by reading them, have been *led to see the efficacy of Christ's atonement, and to truth in its power....*

The Lord has sent His people much instruction, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. *Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light....* [Surely this is clearly stated.]

Some of Ellen White's books were designed to be distributed widely to the public. Why? For the reason that from their pages "light is to shine into the hearts of men and women, leading them to the Saviour."

She surely expressed the same thought when, a few sentences later she said: "The Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light," because people had neglected the Bible which God had given to the world for this very purpose.

Ellen White pointed to her own writings, though they were precious and inspired, as the "lesser light" to lead the peoples of the world to Jesus Christ—the "greater light." If this passage meant what is commonly believed, that the "greater light" referred to here is the Bible, it would not be consistent with all of her other passages in which she defines the greater light to be Christ.

Therefore, one must conclude from this article that Ellen White is not demeaning her writings as inferior to the Bible. For since the Holy Spirit is the author of her writings, as stated in *Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 30, and since God, not Ellen White, is the originator of her writings, as found in the *Review & Herald*, January 20, 1903, *then who is it* that is teaching that the writings of Ellen White are second-class?

It is none other than the *Liberals among us* who are being used by Satan “to make of none effect” the Spirit of Prophecy. Ellen White was taught by the same Holy Spirit of God as were the ancient prophets. And if John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, was a “lesser light,” surely, the Bible prophets were all lesser lights. *Christ alone is the “greater light.”*

In the creation story, there is an interesting illustration which may help us to understand the difference between the lesser and greater lights. It is found in Genesis 1:16—

And God made two great lights; the great light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.

I like the way John Janiuk calls attention to this illustration in his book, *The Great Controversy Endgame, #3, pp. 23,24*. He points out that in the context of this verse, two questions are answered. Namely, (1) What is the greater light? The answer: the sun that rules the day. The sun is the greater light for it has original light, or light emanating from itself. And, (2) What is the lesser light that rules the night? The moon. Does the moon have light in itself? NO! All the moon can do is to reflect the light of the sun. Does this not teach an important Bible principle?

A greater light has light in itself, while a lesser light can only reflect light. A thousand moons together could never become the greater light, because the greater light is the original light—the sun!

Janiuk concludes that the *writers of the Bible* and *Ellen White* did not have light in themselves. As the moon they could only reflect the original light of Jesus Christ—THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Spiritually speaking, Christ is the Sun of Righteousness.

The Bible promises in Malachi 4:2 that as the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us “with healing in His wings.”

For Jesus is the Light of Life. From *Desire of Ages*, p. 463, I quote these beautiful thoughts:

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

When He spoke these words, Jesus was in the court of the temple specially connected with the services of the Feast of Tabernacles. In the center of this court rose two lofty standards, supporting lampstands of great size. After the evening sacrifice, all the lamps were kindled, shedding their light over Jerusalem. This ceremony was in commemoration of the pillar of light that guided Israel in the desert, and was also regarded as pointing to the coming of the Messiah. At evening when the lamps were lighted, the court was a scene of great rejoicing.

In the illumination of Jerusalem, the people expressed their hope of the Messiah’s coming to shed His light upon Israel. But to Jesus the scene had a wider meaning. As the radiant lamps of the temple lighted up all about them, so Christ, the source of spiritual light, illumines the darkness of the world. Yet the symbol was imperfect. That great light [here she speaks of the sun which He Himself had infused with original light] which His own hand had set in the heavens was a truer representation of the glory of His mission.

This same thought is expressed in *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, p. 54:

The sun rising in the heavens is the representative of Him who is the life and light of all that he has made....

But let us never forget that man has a part to act in the salvation of the world. For Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." But humanity has no light in itself. Men are likened, not to the sun, but to the *moon*. Man can only reflect the light of Jesus. Listen as I quote this from *Mount of Blessings*, p. 40:

Humanity has in itself no light. Apart from Christ we are like an unkindled taper, like the *moon* when her face is turned away from the sun; we have not a single ray of brightness to shed into the darkness of the world. *But* when we turn toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence.

Christ's followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world....

As in the moon, all human beings are "lesser lights," whether they be prophet, priest, or king. However, when men turn their faces toward Christ, and connect themselves to Him, they can reflect His light to the world.

I quote the following from *This Day With God*, p. 93:

It is the privilege of the Christian to connect with the Source of light, and through this living connection become the light of the world.

As the light of the sun is light and life and blessing to all that live, so should Christians, by their good works, by their cheerfulness and courage, be the light of the world. As the light of the sun chases away the shades of night and pours its glories on valleys and hills, so will the Christian reflect the Sun of Righteousness which shines on him.

Isn't that beautiful?

Oh, what a privilege to reflect the light that shines from the "Sun of Righteousness!" The book, *That I May Know Him*, p. 341, advises us:

O be sure you receive your illumination from the Source of all light. He is the great central Light of the universe of heaven and the great Light of the world.

May this beautiful counsel be fulfilled in each and every one of us:

The princely dignity of the Christian character will shine forth as the sun, and the beams of light from the face of Christ will be reflected upon those who have purified themselves even as He is pure.

Always remember that "The Sun of Righteousness has risen. Christ our righteousness is shining in brightness upon us" (*Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 932). Beloved, Christ does this for us because He

loves us!

We read further, this time in *Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1118:

Christ “loved the church, and gave himself for it.” It is the purchase of His blood. The divine Son of God is seen walking amid the seven golden candlesticks. Jesus Himself supplies the oil to these burning lamps. He it is that kindles the flame. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

No candlestick, no church, shines of itself. From Christ emanates all its light.

Again, in *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p. 249, we are promised:

The trials may be severe, but look to Jesus every moment—not to struggle, but to rest in His love. He careth for you. [I like that!]

We know that as trials press closer and closer, the hope grows stronger. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness shall shine into your heart with their healing power. Look beyond the clouds to the brightness, even the light of the Sun of Righteousness....

Now with these glorious truths before us, we can better comprehend the damage being done to the church when through misunderstandings, *or various means*, the writings of Ellen White are downgraded as a “lesser light” to the Bible. Satan understands the tremendous blessing and encouragement that the Testimonies are to God’s church when they are treasured and studied by its members. I fear this misunderstanding *is one way among others* that Satan is seeking to undermine the ministry of God’s messenger to the Remnant Church so that eventually her writings will become of none effect in the lives of many.

For, if Satan can downgrade the Spirit of Prophecy, by this and other implications, so that the Testimonies are neglected—left on our shelves to collect dust, *he knows* that God’s people may not detect his final deceptions—deceptions that the Spirit of Prophecy not only points out clearly, but also tells us how to avoid. Never forget that, if possible, Satan would have *all of us* perish!

Consider carefully this quotation from *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 48:

The *very last deception* of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Prov. 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God’s remnant people in the true testimony.

Oh, friend, let us not despise the last-day “lesser light,” or regard Ellen White’s *writings as inferior words from God*.

I must be honest with you. During my 60 years of ministry for the Lord I have constantly used both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy in my preaching to Seventh-day Adventists and in all of my tape ministry. For I have always believed that *both* the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy originated from the same source of authority—the Holy Spirit!

Now, one more important thought: In the beginning, when Christ created this world, He set *His* healing light upon this void and shapeless earth. God said, “Let there be light, and there was light. And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:3,5). On that first day there was no light from the sun or the moon—they were not created until the fourth day. But “there was light”! Who was that light? It was Jesus, the Creator, Who was that “light,” and in the earth made new, there will come a time when in the New Jerusalem there will be no need of “light” from the sun or the moon, for we read in Revelation 21:23:

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Jesus was, He now is, and ever will be the Sun of Righteousness. Our Greater Light forever! Oh, what a Saviour, praise His name!

I appeal to you in the name of our Lord and Master: Let us face the coming crisis with absolute assurance of victory *in Christ*, because we have accepted the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible as the lesser lights which lead us to the Great Light—the Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ Who alone is able to save us.

Let us pray —

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this positive information that encourages us to believe without question in the writings of Ellen White and the Bible as both authored by Thy Holy Spirit.

Please give us the courage to read, study and obey all of the teachings in these *two inspired sources* that Thou hast given that we may fully understand what is so soon to come upon the world.

We thank Thee for the promise of Thy dear Son: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.”

For we ask this in the name of Jesus. *AMEN*

In Part 2 of this paper, we will discuss the second passage from the Spirit of Prophecy which is often quoted out of context and misused, one which can have disastrous results insofar as God’s people are concerned!

“FACING THE CRISIS”
(With the Lesser and Greater Light - Part 2)
Elder Lawrence Nelson, February 1, 2000

Introduction:

In Part 1, we spoke of two brief quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy that are often taken out of *context*, misunderstood, and therefore misused. The one we presented is found in the *Review & Herald*, June 20, 1903. It reads:

Little heed is given to the Bible and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.

In Part 1 we read references where Ellen White clearly defines for us the meaning of these two terms: All prophets, she clarifies (including Bible prophets and Ellen White) are “lesser lights,” leading us to Christ who alone is the “greater light.” As the moon reflects light from the sun, so a prophet having no light in himself or herself, can only reflect light from the Sun of Righteousness. Who is Christ? —the light of life! (See *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 2, pp. 83, 84.)

Before I introduce you to the second brief passage, let us pray:

Oh, loving Father, we beseech Thee to open our understanding to Thy heavenly truth. Fill us with Thy Holy Spirit with an *unquenchable thirst* to be fed from Thy “*lesser lights*,” and be prepared to meet the “greater light”—Jesus, our Sun of Righteousness. May we thus be ready to meet Thy soon-coming without fear. This we ask in the name of Jesus. *AMEN*

Now let us identify the inspired statement under consideration. I will quote it as it is found in *Prophets and Kings*, p. 626:

The words of the Bible, and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit.

As we near the end in this Final Crisis, Satan seems more determined *than ever before* to keep the Spirit of Prophecy from being presented to God’s remnant people! An examination of *this sentence* in its *context* clearly reveals that she is *not* here referring to the *pulpits of Seventh-day Adventist churches*, but to those times when SDA ministers/workers stand before the professed Christians of the world. Read for yourself in *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 623-627, and it will become very apparent which pulpits are referred to.

Time will permit us to read but a few thoughts from pp. 625, 626:

Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. Upon this battle we are now entering.... Many have come to deny doctrines which are the very pillars of the *Christian* faith. The great facts of creation as presented by the inspired writers, the fall of man, the atonement, the perpetuity of the law—these all are practically rejected by a large share of the professedly *Christian* world....

I continue reading:

Christians should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise, and this preparation they should make by diligently studying

the word of God and striving to conform their lives to its precepts.... God calls for a revival and a reformation. *The words of the Bible and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit. But* the Bible has been robbed of its power, and the result is seen in a lowering of the tone of spiritual life. In many sermons of today there is not that divine manifestation which awakens the conscience and brings life to the soul.... Let the word of God speak to the heart. Let those who have heard only *tradition* and *human theories and maxims*, hear the voice of Him who can renew the soul into eternal life.

We might ask: Was Ellen White speaking of SDA churches when she said, “Many have come to deny doctrines which are the very pillars of the Christian faith?” She proceeds to name which pillars she is referring to:

The great facts of creation as presented by the inspired writers, the fall of man, the atonement, the perpetuity of the law —these all are practically rejected by a large share of the professedly Christian world.

She cannot be including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, because true SDAs *do* believe in “the great facts of creation as presented by the inspired writers, in the fall of man, the atonement, and the perpetuity of the law.” “God calls for a revival and a reformation.” To accomplish this, when *teaching these professed Christians*, she says, “The words of the Bible and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit.” *Please note* that Ellen White does not say from *our* pulpits, but “from *the* pulpit.”

How sad that some pastors of large churches have used this brief sentence to keep God’s people from hearing the Spirit of Prophecy. After retiring, I was once a church elder of a very large church in Southern California. In this church of some 1,200 members the pastor instructed his board of elders that they were never to use the Spirit of Prophecy from his pulpit. He then quoted this statement we have just read.

Certainly, when speaking before an audience made up of professed Christians and unbelievers, it is *not* proper to use the writings of Ellen White. We have this counsel in *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 669:

I stated that some had taken an unwise course; when they had talked their faith to unbelievers, and the proof had been asked for, they had read from my writings, instead of going to the Bible for proof. It was shown me that this course was inconsistent, and would prejudice unbelievers against the truth. The Testimonies can have no weight with those who know nothing of their spirit. They should not be referred to in such cases.

So, as a pastor, when I give Bible studies to non-believers, and in my evangelistic meetings when I preach, I have always proved *every statement* from the Bible. This is in keeping with *Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 29:

In public labor do not make prominent, and quote that which Sister White has written, as authority to sustain your positions. To do this will not increase faith in the

testimonies. Bring your evidences, clear and plain, from the Word of God. A “Thus saith the Lord” is the strongest testimony you can possibly present to the people.

We might also mention that when speaking before “professed Christians of the world [or before *any other* group for that matter], ministers should never deliver sermons consisting of stories or anecdotes, *or the gospel* according to *Time Magazine*, etc., just to entertain them. Ellen White declares, “Let those who have heard only traditions and human theories and maxims” hear “the words of the Bible and the Bible alone!” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 40.

We conclude that for *very good* reasons it is improper to use the writings of Ellen White in public meetings, such as evangelistic campaigns or when giving someone a Bible study, or even when having a discussion with unbelievers or members of the worldly churches.

Now that we have noted when it is *not* proper to use the Spirit of Prophecy, let us find the answer to the question: *When is it proper?*

Turning to the pages of the Spirit of Prophecy, we will quickly observe that on many occasions the Lord instructed Ellen White to send testimonies to be read from *our* pulpits, not only in our churches, but in *our* camp meetings.

Let me list a few examples:

Speaking of the Illinois camp meeting, from *Battle Creek Letters*, p. 49 (also in *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 27), I quote:

When I went to Colorado I was so burdened for you that, in my weakness, I wrote (in September 1881) many pages to be read at your camp meeting. Weak and trembling, I arose at three o’clock in the morning to write to you. God was speaking through clay....

But the document was entirely forgotten; the camp meeting passed, and it was not read until the General Conference.

In his biography of Ellen White, Arthur White comments that this testimony arrived from Ellen White during the middle of the Illinois camp meeting, and that there was *no excuse for the leaders* having neglected to read it as requested.

Thus we recognize that it is *not only* in our day that some SDA leaders avoid, if possible, the reading of the testimonies of God’s Spirit from the pulpits of our churches. Ellen White faced this same problem. Please note that she had felt such a great urgency that this testimony be read in that camp meeting that, though ill, she arose at 3:00 A.M. to write it. But, alas, it was *not* read.

It is recorded in *Manuscript 8*, pp. 250 and 296, that she *sent two* large manuscripts to be read at the Avondale, Australia, camp meeting. So this was not a singular practice of hers.

In addition to sending testimonies to the camp meetings, the Lord instructed her to send testimonies to the *churches* to be read to the congregations. Two such testimonies which she sent to the Battle Creek, Michigan, church are preserved for us today in *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pages 45-84. Even though the Lord instructed her to send these testimonies, *once again* she had some problem. Her request was ignored for several weeks. I quote from *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 62:

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Battle Creek:

I understand that the testimony which I sent to Bro. _____, with the request that it be read to the church, was withheld from you for several weeks after it was received by him. Before sending that testimony my mind was so impressed by the Spirit of God that I had no rest day or night until I wrote to you.

Once again she felt such a great urgency to get this testimony to the *church* that she had no rest day or night. But alas! Despite her feelings of urgency, her first testimony was withheld for weeks. Among other things it contained the following counsel found in *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 61. She points out here that there was a problem in the church. I quote:

Many of our younger ministers, and some of more mature experience, are neglecting the word of God, and also *despising* the testimonies of his Spirit. [And I add, we can surely see this today.] They do not know what the testimonies contain, and do not wish to know. They do not wish to discover and correct their defects of character.

The next testimony she sent to Battle Creek to be read to the church, contained a variety of counsels. Her main burden was to call them to *repentance*. She told them they were *spiritually dead*, *needed to crucify self*, *repent and be converted*. That the *church was corrupt*. Speaking directly to them, she continued, “‘Your sins have separated you from God.’ You must lay aside every besetting sin.” Then she warned: “If you continue on in your present spiritual state, nothing but evil can be prophesied against you.”

These testimonies from Ellen White answer our question, Is it proper to use the Spirit of Prophecy in our pulpits?

If the Lord requested that the testimonies of the Spirit of Prophecy rebuking sin, etc., be read from the pulpits in our churches *in her day*—surely it is equally proper *in our day*! Why would it *not* be proper to read counsel from the Lord in our churches and at our camp meetings—NOW—when it is undoubtedly even more urgently needed than it was in the 1880s?

We conclude that it is proper to use the writings of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy together in our church, namely:

- (1) in the Sabbath School
- (2) in the divine service
- (3) in prayer groups

I quote: “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)

So let us not be fearful to stand behind the pulpit and read from the Spirit of Prophecy. *Who knows better* how to give counsel than does the Lord?

Now we turn from these illustrations in modern Israel to a similar illustration from ancient Israel. For the purposes of this illustration, however, we will not consider Jeremiah as an ancient prophet, but as a modern living prophet—which indeed he was at the time of this graphic illustration which is recorded in Jeremiah 36:1-8, 18-23:

And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah,

that this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; and they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up: I cannot go into the house of the Lord: therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people. And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the Lord in the Lord's house.

I quote again, beginning with verse 18:

Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book. Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be. And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king.

So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

Now the king sat in the winter house in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.

These verses have illustrated two points: that the Lord commissions a prophet to write a message, with the request that it be read in the church in the ears of the people (in this case, the church was the temple). It also reveals the attitude of this leader as he rejected the testimony God had sent to awaken *himself and his people* to repentance that they might receive forgiveness and salvation. In anger, the king burned Jeremiah's testimony in the fire!

There is a very startling statement concerning our church pastors which the Lord has sent to us today—to His *modern* Israel. It is found in *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 409, 410. Let us not overlook that there are times when apostasy is so great that such startling pronouncements as this are needed. I quote:

Unsanctified ministers are arraying themselves against God. They are praising Christ *and* the god of this world in the same breath.... Let the sin of deceit and false witness

be entertained by a church that *has had* great light, great evidence, *and that church* will discard the message the Lord has sent, and *receive* the most unreasonable assertions and false suppositions and false theories. Satan *laughs* at their folly, for he knows what truth is.

Many will stand in *our pulpits* with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, [then note what will happen:] the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much....

In *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 77, we will read a passage that continues this same subject:

Who knows whether God will not give you up to the deceptions you love? Who knows but that the preachers who are faithful, firm, and true *may be the last* who shall offer the *gospel of peace to our unthankful churches*? It may be that the destroyers are already training under the hand of Satan and *only wait* the departure of a few more standard-bearers to take their places, and with the voice of the false prophet cry, Peace, peace, when the Lord hath *not* spoken peace. *I seldom weep, but now I find my eyes blinded with tears; they are falling upon my paper as I write.* It may be that ere long all prophesying among us will be at an end, and the voice which has stirred the people may no longer disturb their *carnal* slumbers.

What a picture! Are not these predictions being fulfilled today?

If Ellen White were shown in vision some of the new SDA churches that are being “planted” by the NAD—NOW—how could she keep from weeping? How could she keep the tears from blinding her eyes? Many of these new churches are typical celebration churches. Church leaders may deny this fact, but nonetheless they have all the right earmarks of such apostasy. The noise they make with their “music” and shouting and dancing would surely make Jesus Himself weep!

There is no doubt about it; through the servant of the Lord, God had predicted that this very type of satanic influence would be brought into our midst “just before the close of probation.” Consider the following sad prediction from *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, p. 36:

Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make *right decisions*. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit! [Did you get that?]

The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his *ingenious* methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the senses and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of *satanic agencies* blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit’s working.

Speaking of our present celebration churches, not only is their “bedlam of noise” that they call “music” an abomination, but also their *senseless* dramatic skits and other drama that are a part of their so-called “worship” services. All such drama is plainly condemned in the word of the Lord! God has counseled: “Let nothing of a theatrical nature be introduced.” (*Review & Herald*, February 14, 1907)

If we had read these startling warnings personally, and also to the people from the pulpits of our churches and at our camp meetings, we may have been spared from engaging in this terrible apostasy! By our neglect *do we not*, as did the king of Israel, virtually burn the writings sent from God in the fire?

While we have had celebration churches in our midst for several decades by “*planting*” such churches, it seems that the leaders are now making a more determined effort than ever to promote this type of worship.

In an official church paper, the *North Pacific Union Gleaner*, August 1999, we find the following advertisement for the OASIS CHRISTIAN CENTER in Vancouver, Washington. I quote: “A refreshing place for people who have given up on the church, but not on God. Great Kid’s Programs; Dramatic Skits; No-Jive Band, etc. Not your typical church. Check it out.” The Oasis Christian Center that is being advertized is one of the “*planted*” SDA celebration churches.

From *Selected Messages*, we just read that such exercises as these are an invention of Satan, and that “the powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise to have a carnival.”

It’s hard to realize that we are condoning and conducting “Adventist carnivals” in church! Could this be the work of the “destroyers” who have been trained “under the hand of Satan?” In this connection let us turn to *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 109, 110, and read again that *frightening prophecy*:

Many will stand in our PULPITS with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan!”

Just one more passage from the testimony that was sent to be read to the Battle Creek Church which surely applies to us today—to the leaders of God’s Remnant Church:

There are *men* among us in responsible positions who hold that the opinions of a few conceited philosophers, so called, are *more to be trusted than the truth of the Bible, or the testimonies of the Holy Spirit.*—*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 79.

Now I’m going to ask you a very thought-provoking question, and to some it may be disturbing: Which would you choose to hear from your church pulpit—the voices of the “Many [who] *will* stand in our *pulpits*,” teaching doctrines of devils and conducting services whose spirit is “kindled from the hellish torch of Satan?” Or would you prefer to hear the voices of faithful ministers standing behind the “pulpit” teaching biblical truths and, *when appropriate*, quoting from the Testimonies that are inspired by the Holy Spirit of God? Think it over....

The Lord pronounces a woe upon all false shepherds!

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 23:1, 2)

Then again in Jeremiah 34:18, 19:

Seemeth it a *small thing* unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? And to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?

And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

Thus God will bring woe unto the false pastors!

At such a time as this, what is the duty of God's faithful ministers? *Isaiah* shouts:

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah 58:1)

In *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 321, the servant of the Lord admonishes:

In this fearful time, just before Christ is to come the *second time*, God's faithful preachers will have to bear a *still more pointed testimony* than was borne by John the Baptist. A responsible, important work is before them; and those who speak smooth things, God will *not acknowledge as his shepherds*. A fearful woe is upon them.

Thus, to the congregations and the laymen of modern Israel, I quote this from *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 10:

Let no soul complain of the servants of God who have come to them with a heaven-sent message. Do not any longer pick flaws in them, saying, "They are *too positive; they talk too strongly*." They may talk strongly; but is it not needed? God will make the ears of the hearers tingle if they will not heed His voice or His message. He will denounce those who resist the word of God.

As we face the final crisis, we read in *Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, pp. 83, 84:

Men may get up scheme after scheme, and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White and has given her a message, will be *safe* from the *many delusions* that will come in these last days.

How sad that Ellen White had to write the following letter, written to those who would diminish her work which was authored by the Holy Spirit!

I have tried to do my duty to you and to the Lord Jesus, whom I serve and whose cause I love. The testimonies I have borne you have in truth been presented to me by the Lord. I am sorry that you have rejected the light given....

Are you betraying your Lord, because, in His great mercy, He has shown you just where you are standing spiritually? He knows every purpose of the heart. Nothing is hid from Him. It is not *me* that you are betraying. It is not *me* that you are so embittered against. It is the Lord, who has given me a message to bear to you.—*Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 5, p. 139.

In the same year, 1903, she wrote those who would give up their faith in the Testimonies:

One thing is certain: Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will *first* give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God's Spirit.—*Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 84.

Rather than neglecting the Bible and the Testimonies, let us eagerly ask: "Is there any word from the Lord?" (Jeremiah 37:17)

The following words from the Lord are found in Ezekiel 33:11 and Jeremiah 22:29:

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.

Let us pray:

Our loving Father, forgive thy people who have invited the power of Satan to enter our church through *celebration*, with *so-called Christian rock music and drama*, with the *use of drums* and even dancing.

Open the eyes of our leaders who are determined to force their devilish inventions upon Thy dear people!

Please help the faithful as they strive for a spirit of *holy reverence*, so all may feel Thy divine presence as we worship. Give us, *O God*, a ministry that will preach end-time messages from Thy word, the Bible, *and the Spirit of Prophecy*. Awaken our pastors to give us sermons that will help us to prepare and be ready for the coming crisis!

This we ask in the name of Jesus. *AMEN*