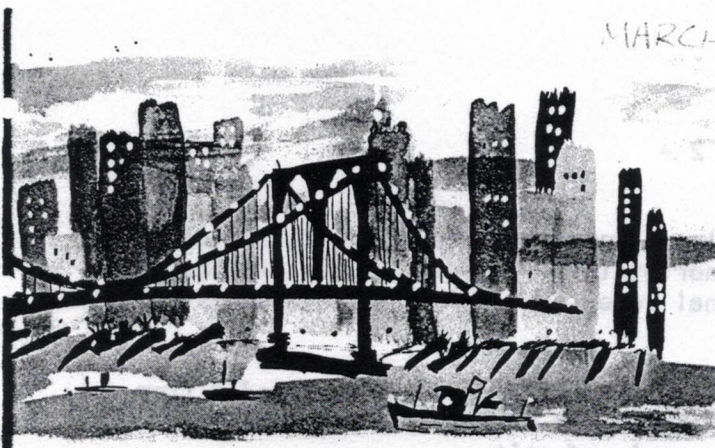


MARCH 28

"Watchman, what of the night?"

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12



DOCUMENTATION OF THE WAYS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY IS BEING MADE OF "NONE EFFECT"

(Introductory Note: This paper is not to be considered a "Thought Paper", but is rather a documentation of the February, Thought Paper - "The Foundation of Our Faith." Four ways were cited in which the "testimony of the Spirit of God" was being made of "none effect." These four ways will be listed again, and the evidence presented for your thoughtful study.)

I. Attempts have been made to redefine the clear-cut wording of Sister White so that certain doctrinal positions can be made more palatable to the religious leaders of "Babylon".

This point was documented by the late M. L. Andreasen in his, Letters to the Churches. In the second letter, "Attempted Tampering", he quotes from the minutes of the White Board of Trustees showing that two men involved in the book, Questions on Doctrine, appeared before the board and suggested "to the trustees that some footnotes or Appendix notes might appear in certain E. G. White books clarifying very largely in the words of Ellen G. White *our* understanding of the various phases of the atoning work of Christ." ¹ Observe closely the comments made by Elder Andreasen:

"Ponder this amazing statement. They admit that Sister White says that 'the atoning work of Christ is now in progress in the heavenly sanctuary', and then they propose that insertions be made in some of Sister White's books that will give *our* understanding of the atonement! They were, however, only acting in harmony with the official statement in Questions on Doctrine that when one reads 'in the writings of Ellen G. White that Christ is making atonement now, it should be understood that we simply mean that Christ is now making application' etc., page 354, 355.

"If Sister White were now living and should read this, she would most certainly deal with presumptuous writers and in words that could be understood. She would not concede the right to anyone, whoever he might be, to change what she has written or interpret it so as to vitiate its clear meaning. The claim which Questions on Doctrine makes that she means what she does not say, effectively destroys the force of all that she has ever written. If we have to consult an inspired interpreter from Washington before knowing what she means, we might better discard the Testimonies altogether. May God save His people." ²

And the book - Questions on Doctrine - received wide publicity and circulation. It has never been repudiated, nor officially repented of. All continues as if there is no need of a denominational repentance before the blessings of the Latter Rain can come upon us.

II. It is declared that the formative period of the church extended from 1844-1888, and that all the writings of the church leaders including Sister White prior to 1888 must be taken with a grain of salt.

This writer has had a personal experience in meeting this deceptive working of Satan to make of "none effect" the testimony of the Holy Spirit. At the 1960 Indiana Camp Meeting held on the campus of Indiana Academy, Elder R. A. Anderson, of the Ministerial Department of the General Conference gave a series of studies at the daily worker's meeting. He indicated that the formative period of the church was from 1844-1888. He stated without hesitation that all writers prior to 1888 are open to question because they were still uncertain as to the basic truths of this message. He also informed us that articles, books and other publications, including the writings of Sister White, were in contradiction with what was penned after 1888.

The reaction to this man's teaching both by workers and laity became so acute, that the conference president, Elder T. E. Unruh, called a special worker's meeting after an evening service. This meeting was held in the chapel of the old Administration building and lasted till one o'clock in the morning. The stated purpose by the president was to discuss freely and openly what was being taught at Camp Meeting, and any questions that anyone had in regard to the book - Questions on Doctrine. Two other ministers, and this writer withstood Elder R. A. Anderson to the face because of his teaching at the worker's meetings. Also one point from the book - Questions on Doctrine (p. 377) - was introduced to illustrate the book's departure from the fundamental teachings of the church.

In regard to the point as to when the formative period of our church's doctrines was, it was noted that in connection with the alpha apostacy at the turn of the century, Sister White had declared:

"What influence is it that would lead men at this stage of our history to work in an underhanded, powerful way to tear down the foundation of our faith, - the foundation that was laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the word and by revelation? Upon this foundation we have been building for the past fifty years. Do you wonder that when I see the beginning of a work that would remove some of the pillars of our faith, I have something to say? I must obey the command, 'Meet it!'"³

That night we told Elder Anderson, that fifty years of history did not indicate the date, 1888, but rather 1844-1850.

If the guidance of the Spirit was open to question from 1844-1888, what would make it so reliable after 1888? It was simply another attempt to make of "none effect" the testimonies of the Spirit! And this man who so taught, though now retired, is still sustained by the sacred tithes! Should there not be a revival and reformation as in the days of Asa, king of Judah. See II Chronicles 15:10-16.

III. The divine purpose in bestowing the gift - the Holy Spirit's interpretation of previous revelation - is being subjugated to human reasoning.

This is illustrated in a series of editorials appearing in the Review and Herald. (Vol. 144, Numbers 26, 27, 28) The associate editor, Raymond F. Cottrell, introduced the question of the time when the mass of the earth was created. (We shall discuss this aspect of these editorials in a coming thought paper.) His primary assumption was simply that the Bible "does not answer this question."⁴ In the articles, he proceeded to seek a definition of the words, "earth", "heaven" or "heavens", and "create" as used in the Scriptures. After drawing conclusions to support his first premise, he then turned his attention to the Spirit of Prophecy. He set forth what he termed "three established principles governing the relationship between the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy."⁵

The first principle is that the Spirit of Prophecy is an inspired commentary. This is true; but if we can arrive at truth through human deduction, of what value is the commentary? Even if the original assumption of the associate editor were true - that the Bible does not answer the question - does that mean we have no answer to the question as to the time of the creation of the mass of the earth in the inspired commentary?

The second principle was that the writings were to be judged by the Bible, and not "vice versa." As a church, we have already, long ago, judged the source of the inspiration of the writings of Ellen G. White and found them to be of God. Thus they stand as a guide, even as our founding fathers experienced, to a correct discovery of truth, and interpretation of what may appear obscure in the holy Scriptures.

The third principle was that the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy are in complete accord. This is also true; but when we seek to force on the words used by Sister White definitions to coincide with definitions we have assigned to Biblical expressions, we are making of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. This is what the editor did! He did not ask as others before him, for permission from the Ellen G. White Board of Trustees to do so. He just did it! ---- and in an editorial in the official organ of the church.

Our founding fathers when faced with a Biblical question they could not answer, let the Spirit of God reveal the answer, and then applied the answer to the sacred Scriptures for a correct interpretation. This example was not followed in these editorials in seeking an answer to the question as to the age of the earth. Rather human logic was applied, and the Spirit of Prophecy forced to concur in this reasoning. If this is the type of research that is to continue in the study of basic and fundamental truths which effect the future of the church, then may I borrow Elder Andreasen's prayer - "May God save His people."

Let it be clearly understood that I am not seeking to intimate that we are to study the Scriptures in a superficial way because we have the Spirit of Prophecy. However, when our human deductions of what we think the Bible teaches, or omits to teach, fails to harmonize with the revealed interpretations of the Spirit of God, we are not at liberty to force our human judgment in the face of the Spirit. Rather let us bow in humble thankfulness that God has chosen to guide us into all truth, and in simple faith accept these revelations.

IV. The written statements of certain pioneer church leaders are placed out of context so as to convey an impression of doubt in regard to the Writings and acceptance of Sister White by these leaders and others.

This subtle, underhanded attempt has been made in the ultra-liberal publication, Perspective.⁶ In the Summer issue of 1967, under the title, "Denominational Perspective," a series of questions appeared on church organization and history. One question read as follows:

"4. Which of the early pioneers seems to have been most anxious to avoid making Ellen G. White's visions a norm for the development of Adventist theology." ⁷

The answer given was:

"4. James White. In the Review and Herald, October 16, 1885 [1855], he vigorously asserts that Adventist doctrines have been developed without reference to her visions. Instead, 'We choose to believe Mrs. W's views which harmonize with the Word. . .'" ⁸

The conclusion to be drawn is self-evident. The doctrines of the church were not undergirded by the revelation of the Holy Spirit as stated clearly by Sister White herself. Also, in a covert way, it is suggested that certain Ellen G. White visions do not harmonize with the Bible. What would that make her then? Simply, a false prophet! Now the average layman does not have access to the reference quoted. He must assume that it was quoted accurately and in context. But was it?

The article quoted from was entitled, "A Test." It was written in answer to non-Adventist critics who unable to answer the plain truth presented by our ministers would resort to the subterfuge of calling a particular teaching, "the Vision view." Elder White lists the doctrines under fire as, "the two horned beast, Sanctuary, Time to commence the Sabbath, and the period of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth." Then follows the sentence - the vigorous assertion - "It should be understood that all *these views* as held by the body of Sabbath-keepers, were brought out from the Scriptures before Mrs W. had any view in regard to them." ⁹ Note, Elder White states, "these views", a restricted group of teachings, and not all Adventist doctrines.

In the same article, he protests as "unrighteous", a course that would demand the repudiation of any teaching of the Bible just because a vision was given to Sister White substantiating that viewpoint. He declared that those who were attacking the visions were the ones who were making them a test, and then concluded:

"Now we go right along believing and teaching the word of the Lord. This is our business. And if we choose to believe Mrs. W's views which harmonize with the Word, this is *our* business, and *nobody's else*." ¹⁰ (emphasis his)

How different is the whole picture when seen in context. What is the reason that we today in 1968 feel that we need to demerit the gifts of the Spirit?

Then another question was asked:

"5. Has the acceptance of Ellen G. White's prophetic gift ever been a test of fellowship among Seventh-day Adventists?"

To this question, the answer was given:

"5. No. In the Review and Herald, August 14, 1883, G. I. Butler offers evidence that her visions were not a test of fellowship; new members were accepted who had never heard of E. G. White; and some prominent ministers in the denomination did not accept the visions."¹²

The article referred to is entitled, "The Visions: How They Are Held Among S. D. Adventists." Naturally the question arises, was this article as inferred from the question and answer in the Perspective an attempt to downgrade the ministry of the Spirit through Ellen G. White? The answer is a positive - NO! What did he write:

While he stated emphatically, "We do not make the visions a test, and never have," Elder Butler listed former ministers of the church such as Moses Hull, B. F. Snook, W. H. Brinkerhoff, H. C. Blanchard, and E. W. Shortridge, who because of the visions left the church. Elder Butler also indicated plainly where this led - some into spiritism, others into universalism, and one into atheism. Then he added:

"The truth is, there never was a case among us of a man who became more devoted by giving up the visions, but thousands have increased in devotion by accepting them, and will thank God for the light and spiritual strength they have received thereby."¹³

In the first part of the article, Elder Butler wrote with positive conviction these words:

"Be it known to every reader of this Supplement, yea, to all who care to know it, that S. D. Adventists, as a body, firmly believe that there has been connected with this people, through their whole history, *one who has visions from the Lord*. If this be a disgrace, let our enemies make the most of it. We feel that it is a high honor. We would not deny it if we could, and we could not if we would."¹⁴

¹M. L. Andreasen, Letters to the Churches, "Attempted Tampering", Series A No. 2, p. 9

²Ibid.

³Ellen G. White, Special Testimonies, Series B, No. 2, pp. 57-58

⁴Raymond F. Cottrell, "'In the Beginning...' - 3", Review and Herald, July 13, 1967, p. 13

⁵Ibid.

⁶This journal is published quarterly by the Adventist Educational Publishing Association, Inc., Burbank, California. It is promoted as a "Journal of Discussion and Dialogue for Seventh-day Adventist Laymen and Students."

⁷Perspective, Vol. 1, No. 4, Summer, 1967, p. 18

⁸Ibid. p. 19

⁹James White, "The Test", Review and Herald, October 16, 1855. Reproduced in Witness of the Pioneers Concerning the Spirit of Prophecy.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Perspective, op cit., p. 18.

¹²Ibid., p. 19

¹³George I Butler, "The Visions", Review and Herald, August 14, 1883

¹⁴Ibid.