

The Story of the Spirit of Prophecy

Understanding God's Special Gift 07

Writing and Traveling

"Sabbath afternoon one of our number was sick, and requested prayers that he might be healed. We all united in applying to the Physician who never lost a case, and while healing power came down, and the sick was healed, the Spirit fell upon me, and I was, taken off in vision.

"I saw four angels who had a work to do on the earth, and were on their way to accomplish it. Jesus was clothed with priestly garments. He gazed in pity on the remnant, then raised His hands, and with a voice of deep pity, cried: 'My blood, Father, My blood! My blood! My blood!' Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from God, who sat upon the great white throne, and was shed all about Jesus. Then I saw an angel with a commission from Jesus, swiftly flying to the four angels who had a work to do in the earth, and waving something up and down in his hand; and crying with a loud voice, 'Hold, hold! hold! hold! until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. '.. "- Life Sketches, pages 118-119.

This vision, referring to the incident seen by John in Revelation 7:1-4, speaks about the concern of Jesus lest the four winds of strife that shall come with all their fury just before the end of the world, be turned loose before God's faithful ones have been sealed with the seal of the living God.

But there was more to this vision: Ellen was also told that a publishing work must be started so that people everywhere could be warned to seek God--for a terrible crisis was ahead.

"After coming out of vision, I said to my husband: 'I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people. Let it be small at first; but as the people read, they will send you means with which to print, and it will be a success from the first. From this small beginning it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world.'" Life Sketches, page 125.

Not long after Ellen was called to be a special messenger of the Lord, she was told that she must not only travel and speak, but that she must also write. And yet, her physical condition was so poor that it seemed impossible to do either.

"Early in my public labors I was bidden by the Lord, 'Write, write the things that are revealed to you.' At the time this message came to me, I could not hold my hand steady. My physical condition made it impossible for me to write. But again came the word, 'Write the things that are revealed to you.' I obeyed; and as a result it was not long before I could write page after page with comparative ease. Who told me what to write? Who steadied my right hand, and made it possible for me to use a pen —It was the Lord." Review and Herald, June 14, 1906.

"Streams of light. . . clear, around the world"! How could this be? There were so few to help and so much to be done. Yet at the urging of this young woman the publishing work began with that first publishing order, six months later, by her penniless husband, for a thousand copies. And, as promised, that publishing work was to grow until it encircled the globe.

But just how does a prophet write? Let us ask a prophet:

"I am very busy with my writing. Early and late, I am writing out the matters that the Lord opens before me. The burden of my work is to prepare a people to stand in the day of the Lord." Selected Messages, Book 1, page 56.

“Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.” Review and Herald, October 8, 1867.

“While my husband lived, he acted as a helper and counselor in the sending out of the messages that were given to me. We traveled extensively. Sometimes light would be given to me in the night season, sometimes in the daytime before large congregations. The instruction I received in vision was faithfully written out by me, as I had time and strength for the work.

“Afterward we examined the matter together, my husband correcting grammatical errors and eliminating needless repetition. Then it was carefully copied for the persons addressed, or for the printer.” Selected Messages, Book 1, page 50.

“Since the warning 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.. Perhaps there is no more direct and forcible way of presenting what the Lord has shown me.” Testimonies, Volume 5, pages 658-659.

“In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit. There was never a time when God instructed His people more earnestly than He instructs them now concerning His will and the course that He would have them pursue.” Testimonies, Volume 5, page 661.

“Little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.” Colporteur Ministry, page 125.

“Let the ‘Testimonies’ be judged by their fruits. What is the spirit of their teaching? What has been the result of their influence? All who desire to do so can acquaint themselves with the fruits of these visions.” Testimonies, Volume 5, 671

“God is either teaching His church, reproofing their wrongs and strengthening their faith, or He is not. This work is of God, or it is not. God does nothing in partnership with Satan. My work for the past thirty years bears the stamp of God or the stamp of the enemy. There is no halfway work in the matter. The Testimonies are of the Spirit of God, or of the devil.” Testimonies, Volume 4, 229.

“Whether or not my life is spared, my writings will constantly speak, and their work will go forward as long as time shall last.” Selected Messages, Book 1, page 55.

“Perilous times are before us. Everyone who has a knowledge of the truth should awake and place himself, body, soul, and spirit, under the discipline of God. The enemy is on our track. We must be wide-awake, on our guard against him. We must put on the whole armor of God. We must follow the directions given through the Spirit of Prophecy. We must love and obey the truth for this time. This will save us from accepting strong delusions. God has spoken to us through His word. He has spoken to us through the testimonies to the church and through the books that have helped to make plain our present duty and the position that we should now occupy. The warnings that have been given, line upon line, precept upon precept, should be heeded. If we disregard them, what excuse can we offer?” Testimonies, Volume 8, page 298.

Ellen was told this in vision: “Your work is to bear My word. Strange things will arise, and in your youth I set you apart to bear the message to the erring ones, to carry the word before unbelievers, and pen and voice to reprove from the Word actions that are not right. Exhort from the Word. .

“ ‘Be not afraid of man, for My shield shall protect you. It is not you that speaketh; it is the Lord that giveth the message of warning and reproof. Never deviate from the truth under any circumstances. Give

the light I shall give you. The messages for these last days shall be written in books, and shall stand immortalized." Review and Herald, June 14, 1906.

From the very moment when she first sat down to write in 1845, and God placed strength in her arm to do the task assigned, she continued writing from then on. The feeble girl, expected soon to die, wrote message after message for the next seventy years, and turned out forty-five hundred magazine articles, and scores of books. Over fifty-five of her books are in print today. And all this literary work was done by hand. One hundred thousand manuscript pages, written over a period of seventy years. All of it handwritten. It is generally recognized that Ellen White wrote more material than any other woman who has ever lived throughout recorded history. But there is a reason. And we have just learned it. She simply did what she was told to do: 'Write out the messages given to her.'

Thousands have found the writings of Ellen White to be filled with practical help and encouragement in daily life. Here are but two samples from her writings:

How Men Are Converted: "The work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. . . can no more be explained than can the movements of the wind. A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or to trace all the circumstances in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted.

"By an agency as unseen as the wind, Christ is constantly working upon the heart. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of a long wooing by the Spirit of God, —a patient, protracted process.

"While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God." Desire of Ages, pages 172, 173.

Answers To Prayer Through Faith: "Faith is trusting God, believing that He loves us, and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessing. Truth, uprightness, purity, have been pointed out as secrets of life's success. It is faith that puts us in possession of these principles.'

"Every good impulse or aspiration is the gift of God; faith receives from God the life that alone can produce true growth and efficiency.

"How to exercise faith should be made very plain [to your children]. To every promise of God there are conditions. If we are willing to do His will, all His strength is ours. Whatever gift He promises, is in the promise itself. 'The seed is the Word of God.' Luke 8:11. As surely as the oak is in the acorn, so surely is the gift of God in His promise. If we receive the promise, we have the gift.

"Faith that enables us to receive God's gifts is itself a gift, of which some measure is imparted to every human being. It grows as exercised in appropriating the Word of God. In order to strengthen faith, we must often bring it in contact with the Word.

In the study of the Bible the student should be led to see the power of God's Word. In the creation, 'He spake, and it was; He commanded, and it stood fast.' He calleth those things which be not as though they were;' for when He calls them, they are. Psalm 33:9; Romans 4: 17." Education, pages 253-254.

For decades Ellen traveled and wrote: wrote and traveled. Many incidents occurred during these years that we do not have space to tell you about. But here are several:

They were traveling in a ship. The small craft was tossed about like a cork on the large waves. It was the summer of 1845 and Ellen had gone with some friends in a small sailboat to speak to people on West Island, off the coast of Maine.

But without warning a storm came up that threatened to destroy the small craft. Rain fell in torrents, and as the lightning flashed, howling winds ripped the sails. The waves were so large that the little boat would nearly capsize as it slid down into the troughs between them. About the time that the rudder broke loose and was lost, those on board realized that they were in grave danger of running onto the rocks along the island. And then the darkness came. It had only been a few months since her first vision and Ellen had faithfully shared the messages with others. Now, as she knelt in the boat and asked God to save them, she saw an angel standing by her side. She recognized him as the one who had appeared to her several times in vision. Never was she to forget the words he spoke to her that night: "Sooner would every drop of water in the ocean be dried up than for you to perish, for your work has only begun."

Immediately, she called out to her companions, "You need not be afraid! Angels are all around us. We are perfectly safe. The storm cannot hurt us!"

And it didn't. Although the frail craft continued to rise and fall on the waves, none feared any more. Soon the captain cried, "The anchor holds!" Then, through the darkness, they saw a glimmer of light from a house on the island. Although all were in bed for the night, one child heard their cries and alerted the rest. Soon the father rowed out and brought them safely into shore and the warm house.

During the winter of 1849-1850, James and Ellen held meetings in Oswego, New York. A young man attending the meetings, named Hiram Patch, was uncertain what to do. Although he and his fiancée were convicted that Ellen's messages were right, yet the county treasurer declared them to be full of error and the treasurer seemed like such a good man, for he preached in the big church and right then was holding revival meetings in town.

Hiram and his girlfriend were sincerely puzzled, and one evening as they attended a meeting of the White's, Ellen was taken into vision. Coming out of it, she turned to Hiram Patch and said, "Wait a month, and you will know for yourself the character of these persons" (speaking of the county treasurer and his associates).

Within two weeks the county treasurer became very ill while praying in a meeting and was taken home where he remained in bed. The local constable and the sheriff were appointed to manage his office till he recovered. But while checking the account books, they found a shortage of \$1,000. They decided that, surely, the treasurer had somehow taken the money home by accident, and they would go to his home and ask him. But then the thought came that they should be cautious in doing it. So it was arranged that the constable would hide himself in a shed near the back door, while the sheriff knocked on the front door. Almost immediately the back door opened and a woman ran out, with a sack in her hand. Going quickly to a snow bank, she dug a hole, put in the sack, and then covered it over.

Inside, the sheriff asked the treasurer about the missing money. Raising his hand to heaven, the sick man cried, "I call God to witness that I know nothing about the money." Then his wife entered the room, and raising her hand upward said, "God is my witness that we do not have the money, nor do we know

anything about it." Just then the constable walked in carrying the sack. "I saw you rush from the house with this sack and bury it, and it is marked '\$1,000'"

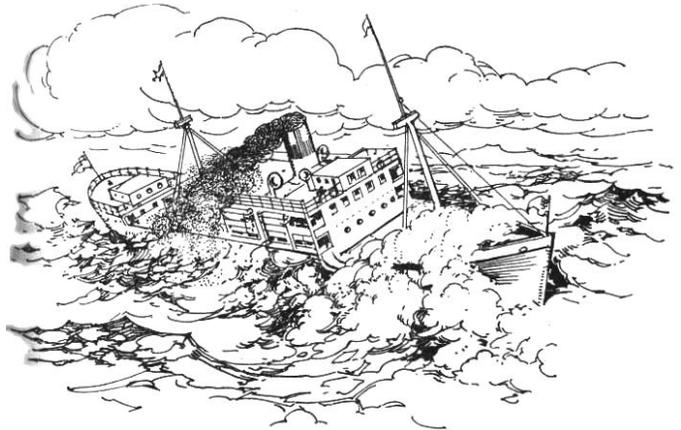
The news quickly traveled around town, and people were better able to make wise decisions, including Hiram Patch and his fiancée.

It was in Michigan, and James and Ellen were traveling by carriage to Vergennes, where they were to hold meetings. But the driver, though knowing the route well, became confused and lost his way. For several hours they drove through the woods, following faint wheel tracks, as they tried to find their way out. At the same time they looked for a cabin where they could obtain directions.

Then they saw small log cabin in a tiny clearing. The folk there were kindly and heartily welcomed them. Before leaving, they visited with the family and Ellen gave them a copy of one of her books..

For years they wondered why they became lost that hot afternoon. Twenty-two years later Ellen learned the reason why. After speaking in a meeting, a woman came up to her and reminded her of the log cabin they had visited so many years before. "You talked to us about Jesus, how to come to Christ, and what heaven would be like. And you left that Book with us. We read it and loaned it to all the neighbors,-and now most of us in that entire area have accepted Christ and His Bible truths." God leads you when you arrive on time; He leads when you lose the way. Make the most of every opportunity to tell others about Him.

While traveling by steamer one day, a terrible storm arose; so fierce that all on board feared they would die before arriving at port. Ellen tried to encourage them, but they were so distraught that but few would listen. Ignoring her; many knelt and prayed to God to save them. One woman cried in fear, "O God, if You will save us from death, I will serve You forever!"



A few hours later, the storm subsided and the steamer pulled safely into dock. As the passengers stepped off the boat, Ellen heard a woman mockingly callout, "Glory to God! I'm glad to step on land again!" Turning, she saw that it was the same woman who but a few hours earlier had pled with God and Promised to serve Him forever if He would but save her life that day looking earnestly into the woman's face, Ellen said, "Go back a few hours and remember your vows." With a sneer, the woman walked away.

It was summer in Jackson, Michigan, and the White's were about to leave for Wisconsin where they were to speak. Other friends were headed for New York. Kneeling and praying that all would be protected, the White's then boarded an evening train, where they entered a sleeping-car coach and sat down. But Ellen immediately exclaimed, "James, I can't stay in this car! I must get out of here!" So they carried their parcels to the next car. As they settled themselves, Ellen sensed that all was well now. The train began moving and their journey was begun.

But they had only gone about three miles when the coaches began to jerk violently. Then their coach stopped moving. Opening a window, they looked out. Coaches were thrown about everywhere; upended, turned over. All was in confusion.

James picked up his wife and carried her across a swampy piece of land to a wagon road, and from thence they walked to a farmhouse. Alerted, the farmer saddled a horse and rode to Jackson for help."

Visiting the scene of the accident the next day, this is what they learned: A large ox had laid down on the track and the train, hitting it, was thrown off the rails. The cars behind it had so much momentum that they piled up on top of it and were thrown all about. The coach that James and Ellen were in was the last coach. Walking to it, they found that it alone was undamaged and on the track. Separated from the wrecked cars, it stood alone about a hundred feet from the one in front of it. When the accident took place, this coach at the end had become uncoupled from the others and then slowed to a halt without crashing into those in front of it.



There lay the bolt and chain as though placed there by a careful hand.

The brakeman was asked, but could not explain it. "It is a complete mystery how that car became detached from the cars ahead," he said. The big bolt that linked the two cars together had been lifted out when the accident struck, and now it lay on top of the front tongue of the car as if someone had placed it there.

It was midnight and Ellen stood looking out the window into the darkness. All were concerned that the rain stop before, it melt the snow. The meetings in Round Grove, Illinois, were concluded and now, they must go in a sleigh west, across the Mississippi River, to Waukon, Iowa. It seemed best to cancel the two-hundred-mile midwinter trip. But Ellen had been shown in vision that she must go there, for the people there needed help.

As daybreak neared, the snow began to fall again, making possible the trip by sleigh. After many adventures, they finally reached the Mississippi River and stopped for the night. But about 4 a.m. they heard rain beginning to fall. Immediately they arose and prepared to head off. The river must be crossed before the rain had melted the ice. The horses broke through the snow crust at almost every step. Approaching the river, decayed ice was to be seen. Others, passing by, said, "Stay off the river! I wouldn't try it for all the money in the world." Another added: "They say one team broke through the ice and the driver nearly lost his life."

Pulling away, they headed on down to the riverbank. Standing up in his sleigh, Mr. Hart asked, "Is it on to Iowa, or back to Illinois? We have come to the Red Sea. Shall we cross?"

Without hesitation, Ellen replied, "Go forward, trusting in Israel's God." She was convicted that they must go forward.

As the sleigh moved steadily across the broad Mississippi, the ice held beneath them. Ascending the opposite bank, men who had been watching their approach, cheered. They had expected every moment to see the team break through and go under. The party in the sleigh praised God. Moving forward at His bidding, they were safe. Wherever God leads His children, it is safe to go forward.

On another occasion, a retired sea captain, Joseph Bates, was riding with James and Ellen in a carriage behind a partly broken colt. James knew he could handle the horse even though it was not fully trained to the harness. (The young horse had a reputation of being vicious, and shortly before had caused a serious accident.)

White kept the horse on a taut rein and gave his attention to driving, when, suddenly, as Ellen was speaking to them about a Bible subject, she was taken into vision. The moment she shouted "Glory," the horse stopped, dropped his head, and stood perfectly still.

Stepping down off the wagon from the front, Ellen put her hand on the colt's haunches as she lowered herself to the ground.

Thoroughly frightened, Captain Bates cried out, "That colt will kick her to death!" To this, James replied, "The Lord has the colt in charge now; I don't wish to interfere." normally, the half-wild colt would have kicked furiously the instant anything touched his flanks. But now he stood as gentle as an old horse.

Climbing a six foot embankment, she walked back and forth along a grassy spot, describing aloud the beauties of the new earth. Then, with her eyes still directed upward, she walked down the embankment, over to the horse, put her hand on his rump again, climbed into the wagon and sat down. Immediately she came out of vision, and suddenly the horse raised his head, and without any command from the driver, started up and quietly began pulling the wagon along.



The young horse bowed his head and remained quiet during the vision.

While Ellen had been out of the wagon and up on the embankment, James decided to test the colt. First he touched it lightly with a whip, and then several that were still harder. But the horse did not give any hint of noticing it. At any other time, he would have responded with a vicious kick. Softly, Captain Bates said, "This is a solemn place."

And so the years passed, and the frail girl that was supposed to die before spring, traveled across North America for over half a century, plus over ten years spent in foreign lands.

Always helping, encouraging, pointing men and women to heaven and to their God; Ellen White did the work of a prophet. And nowhere is this to be seen more clearly than in her writings.

Ellen G. White spent almost ten years in Australia after being asked to go to help guide the newly formed groups and institution there. On November 12, 1891, she, her son William C. White, and several assistants sailed from San Francisco aboard the steamer Alameda.

There was to be a campmeeting held near Melbourne from December 29, 1893, to January 15, 1894. It was the first Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting ever held in Australia. At first the people setting up the camp meeting tents set up thirty-five family-sized tents. Few thought more than that would be needed. But so many people contacted that they were coming, that they had to buy and rent additional tents.

When Mrs. White arrived, the campsite contained more than one hundred tents, housing 511 people. The careful, orderly arrangement of the tents and grounds impressed the many non-Adventist visitors who flocked to the meetings. Sister White said that she had not seen such deep religious dedication and enthusiasm since the Millerite meetings of 1843 and 1844.

But there were some who determined to cause trouble at that campmeeting. A group of young ruffians living in a nearby town began to do little acts of vandalism and mischief. They attacked the tents, hurling stones at them and pulling one down. The camp meeting staff had appointed several students from the Australian Bible School to act as guards. This helped control these hoodlums but then they decided on a bolder scheme. Their leader announced a plan to pull Mrs. White's tent down on her the next night. He considered her the most important person among the Adventists.

Some of the gang bragged about their evil intentions to the student guards at the camp. Fairly Masters, one of the Bible School's students, went to the faculty and warned them about the teen-age gang's schemes. The teachers hurried to the police headquarters and asked for protection for the campsite. The city sent a tall, heavy-built Irish Roman Catholic policeman out to the little tent city to guard Mrs. White's tent.

Mrs. White wasn't worried when she heard about the young rascal's plan. She had often faced greater dangers. Time after time angels had protected her from disease, accident, violence and the hatred of men. God had taken care of her for so long, she did not see any reason for fear. Now she accepted the police protection only to please those with her. After the meeting that night, she walked to her tent, prepared for bed, prayed, and fell asleep in perfect peace. Outside, the policeman patrolled the area around the tent, watching for the troublemakers. But the gang members had been warned not to try anything, because the city had sent a law officer and they never showed up.

Yawning occasionally, the policeman kept at his post. Not long after midnight, he paused in his circuit of the tent and glanced toward it. All at once, he saw a beam of light suddenly hover over Mrs. White's tent. Gradually the light assumed a shape and became more solid looking. Gripping his night stick, he watched the shape of an angel form in the light and stand guard above the tent. Instinctively he dropped to his knees and crossed himself. Awestruck, he stared at the angel for several minutes, then slowly rose to his feet and began to walk away. He had decided that Mrs. White no longer needed his protection. God was guarding her.

Back at the station, he explained to his sergeant why he had left his post. He explained that he felt Mrs. White had greater safety than he could give her. They did not question his story, and did not send him back to the campground that night. The Irish policeman, however, went to the campsite himself the next day to see the woman the angel guarded, and hear what she had to say. He attended the main services that day and every following day. The more he heard, the more interested he became. Seeing the angel was the key to his mind, the thing that created his interest in Adventism and eventually he joined the church and became active in soul winning.